

# News Release



## **On the eve of the Convention's 18th anniversary, its President urges States Parties to redouble their efforts to implement the Convention**

*Geneva, 24 February 2017* — The President of the international treaty that bans the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines has made an appeal to its 162 members to maintain and/or increase funding to meet the ambition of a world free of landmines in less than a decade. The call is being made on the eve of the 18th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force.

“Just a few weeks ago, Algeria declared that after several decades of efforts it had completed its landmine clearance obligation under the Convention. This is a clear indication that our treaty works and that the end of this scourge is within reach,” said the Convention's President, H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the UN in Geneva, after issuing an invitation to all States Parties to participate in the Second Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Convention to be held on 28 February at the United Nations in Geneva.

“There have been major advances in stockpile destruction with more than 49 million landmines destroyed and 158 countries no longer holding these arms. There have also been advances in mine clearance with 30 States Parties having declared they no longer have any known mined zones. Nevertheless, challenges remain, 31 States Parties are still in the process of completing their mine clearance obligation and four States are still working to destroy their stockpiles. Today we have the tools and methodologies to deal with our remaining contamination. What we need is greater political will and funding to free the world from the humanitarian impact posed by anti-personnel mines by 2025,” said Ambassador Hajnoczi.

“This is also a call to strengthen the Convention's Implementation Support Unit's ability to provide States with advice and technical support. The ISU contributes—through a myriad of activities—in the push for the realization of our mine-free ambition, particularly enhancing awareness of the relationship between Convention obligations and operational aspects. In 2016 however, only 26 States Parties contributed to ISU funding. We encourage more States Parties to support their Secretariat.”

“Similarly, we cannot forget our responsibility to fund our annual meetings, paying assessed contributions in a timely manner, and complying with the financial obligations agreed to by the States Parties. The Convention indicates that we *‘shall meet regularly in order to consider any matter with regard to the application or implementation,’* yet, the Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties was called short due to underfunding and delayed disbursements. We count with your support to make these meetings possible and to make sure all mine-affected States Parties are able to attend by supporting the Sponsorship Programme.”

“Australia in its role as Sponsorship Coordinator importantly underlined that ‘the Sponsorship Programme enables participation and direct interaction with the Convention’s Committees by capital and field-based experts from States Parties with limited means. Such participation helps these experts coordinate their countries’ implementation of their mine clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance obligations,’ regrettably however, funding has been scarce and numerous appeals were needed in 2016 to sponsor even less delegates than in previous years,” said the Ambassador. “The engagement of sponsored delegates in our proceedings is key in supporting implementation of the Convention.”

The Pledging Conference will take place Tuesday 28 February from 15:00-17:00 in Room XII, at the United Nations Office in Geneva.