



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

Meetings of the Standing Committees 21-25 May 2012

Cooperation and Assistance

Geneva, 24 May 2012

Co-Chairs,

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

Switzerland considers this session as very timely and thanks the Co-Chairs for this initiative.

We are all called upon to find innovative ways of sustaining the contributions to mine action.

Switzerland has just concluded the process of revision of its mine action strategy for 2012-2015. The decisions on our strategic objectives are based on an analysis on what worked well in the past, what has to be improved, the perceived needs and what might be the future trends and challenges. We would like therefore to share with you some of these elements along the line of the three questions as the bases of our discussion today:

A) What assistance can be offered?

Our strategic approach is based on the principle of “whole of government” and on the premise that our limited resources, coming from various budget lines, in mine action are best invested in seeking synergies with other activities such as development co-operation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Therefore, we concentrate on a few regions and countries, where Switzerland has a comparative advantage and where impact can be ensured. We also aim at linking the political and advocacy work with concrete activities in the field.

Besides our considerable contribution to the GICHD, Switzerland will continue to support the whole range of activities, which is subsumed under mine action. Our resources will remain approximately the same, around 16 million Swiss francs per year.

Switzerland is not only support concrete projects financially, but has also the possibility of deploying experts from the ministry of defence, who work as secondees alongside with the UN or NGOs, thereby providing advise and support for national authorities.

B) For whom is the assistance available?

Switzerland has defined a number of criteria for its support to mine action. We will refrain from elaborating too much in detail, but here are some of our reflections in this regards:

- We would like to see a demonstrated commitment of the affected state towards ratification and implementation of the relevant instruments;
- It seems important to us that national ownership and elements of capacity building are clearly displayed, this includes national leadership and co-ordination in terms of mine action;
- South-south co-operation should be encouraged wherever possible;
- We find it particularly crucial that projects are based on a sound analysis of the context, which allows to ensure the “do no harm” principle.
- Mainstreaming of gender issues, taking into account the UNMAS Gender Guidelines are taken into account by Switzerland, thereby discharging obligations under our own national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325.

- We also would like to enhance the monitoring and the evaluation of mine action projects to be able to draw lessons learned and best practises.
- Switzerland will continue to focus specifically on the adherence of armed non-state actors to humanitarian principles.

C) How may those for whom assistance is available obtain it?

There are several ways, how Switzerland could be approached for assistance in mine action: Either directly in the affected states via the co-operation office or the embassy or in Bern with the relevant services. The assistance will depend on available resources and the basic criteria mentioned above.