

Standing committee on mine clearance, mine risk education and mine action technologies
(co-chair : Jordan and Slovenia)

Brief presentation by Switzerland in response to the questions for State Parties in a position to assist State Parties with needs for external support for mine clearance and mine risk education (article 6 of the Convention).

1. What has your State done, since the First Review Conference, to promptly assist State Parties with clearly demonstrated needs for external support for mine clearance and mine risk education ?

Switzerland has maintained its commitment, in line with its 2004-2007 Mine action strategy, to keep a level of expenditure of about 16 millions Swiss francs per year for assistance in mine action. Of these, about 13 millions have been spent both in 2004 and 2005 for mine clearance in 12 countries and 1 million for mine risk education programmes. Swiss cooperation has been carried out by the humanitarian aid sector of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, by the Peace Policy and Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and by the Department of Defence through the assignment of specialised personnel and delivery of equipment for mine clearance (EOD system). The Swiss contribution includes the funding of the Geneva Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) with a total amount of about 8 million Swiss francs per year.

2. Since the First Review Conference, how has your State used the following means to provide support in the fulfilment of Article 5 obligations ?

- a. Dedicated funds to assist in the implementation of the Convention ?

Switzerland has dedicated about 12 million Swiss francs per year for mine clearance programmes in some of the most affected countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. The Department of Defence has budgeted 2 million Swiss francs for the assignment of personnel and equipment to mine and UXO clearance programmes carried out by UN agencies or International Non Governmental Organizations.

- b. The integration of support to mine action into humanitarian programmes ?

The humanitarian sector of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has dedicated more than 2 million Swiss francs per year for mine clearance programmes as part of the SDC humanitarian programmes in at least 10 countries.

- c. The integration of support to mine action into development programmes ?

Being aware of the negative impact of antipersonnel mines on development, Switzerland has taken part in the international dialogue on integrating mine action into development and supports the initiative led by Canada.

- d. The integration of support to mine action into peace-building / peace-support programmes ?

In line with its strategy, and based on the belief that the mine problem should not be considered from a humanitarian point of view alone, Switzerland carries out mine action projects as peace policy instruments. This means that when selecting the countries and projects, attention is given to possible synergies between the humanitarian needs and peace policy and mine action projects are conducted in countries where they constitute part or the

start of an overall process in the direction of lasting peace. In the context of its peace and human security policy, Switzerland has supported mine clearance programmes as part of peace consolidation efforts, or as a confidence building measure in countries where efforts need to be intensified in order to start or maintain peace dialogues. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has spent about 3 millions Swiss francs each year in mine clearance projects in countries that are the focus of its peace policy efforts.

3. What are your plans between now and the Second Review Conference to ensure the continuity and sustainability of resource commitments ?

In order to ensure an appropriate level of resources towards the Second Review Conference, Switzerland intends to promote the transcription of International Mine Action Standards into National Mine Action Standards. This should serve as a criteria to prove efficiency and willingness by States Parties in the process of fulfilling their obligations with respect to article 5 of the Convention. Switzerland will therefore continue to finance the services offered by the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining in the development of National Mine Action Standards and encourage mine-affected countries to take advantage of them. Switzerland will also encourage mine-affected States Parties to make use of their local resources and competence by supporting them through capacity-building measures, in line with action 42 of the Nairobi Action Plan. In 2007, a new Mine Action Strategy by the Swiss Confederation will be developed, with the aim of ensuring adequate funding for the challenges that lie ahead in view of the 2009 deadline, but also to assist countries whose obligations to clear mine-affected land are to be fulfilled at a later stage. The new strategy will have to include the additional efforts needed by Switzerland to integrate mine action into its broader humanitarian aid and development programs, in order to ensure sustainability of the necessary financial commitments. The inclusion of mine action into peace-building programmes will continue to be a priority.