



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2016–2019

Towards a world free of anti-personnel mines,
cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war



Foreword

Testimonials and images from current armed conflicts demonstrate the long-term effects these conflicts may have on human beings. The question of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war reinforces this observation. Indeed, these arms have negative humanitarian impacts long after the end of conflicts and continue to strike indiscriminately. They thus prevent the return of those displaced, hamper sustainable development, pose a threat to human security and are obstacles to peace.

The international community – including Switzerland – has now been fully committed to mine action for more than 25 years. During this period, many successes have been achieved: the number of victims has fallen from 70 to an estimated number of 10 per day. Moreover, stocks of almost 50 million anti-personnel mines and about 2 million cluster munition units have been destroyed, vast territories have been cleared, and international cooperation and assistance have been reinforced. On the political level, the entry into force and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions not only had a concrete effect on the humanitarian consequences of these arms, but they also allowed a change in the perception of their use: though certain states unfortunately continue to use them, the utilisation of these weapons is now largely perceived as unacceptable.

These successes show that a long-term and joint commitment in the fight against mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war can help to save lives and improve the future of populations threatened by these hazards. The international community reaffirmed its commitment to end the era of anti-personnel mines by 2025. This ambitious goal calls for continuous efforts in order to implement these instruments of utmost importance in international law, and to continue to mobilise all the necessary resources to achieve it.

Indeed, many challenges remain. On the one hand, several states have still not ratified the above Conventions. Switzerland, together with other states, is thus fully committed to promoting the universalisation of these instruments. We will be able to ensure a sustainable protection of the affected populations only if these Conventions are fully implement-



Massive destructions after fighting in a Syrian city © Handicap International/Philippe Houllat

ed and respected. On the other hand, some states are not always in the position to implement their obligations with the necessary speed. This is why delays have notably arisen in the clearance of contaminated areas.

Due to its long-standing humanitarian tradition, Switzerland is fully committed against anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and the humanitarian consequences of explosive remnants of war. This commitment is one of its foreign policy's top priorities. The following strategy for the 2016–2019 legislative period ensures the continuity of our engagement towards the promotion of peace, human security and sustainable development. It is in line with Switzerland's efforts in this field for many years and seeks to ensure the right conditions for a more effective involvement in favour of a world without new victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. In this context, Switzerland is deeply convinced of the essential role of cooperation and assistance. Due to the characteristics of current conflicts, our country also wants to underline the increasing importance that mine action will play in urban areas in the future. Moreover, humanitarian demining will be a crucial instrument to fulfil the goals of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

More specifically, the engagement of our country consists of a full commitment to support the international community's political action, to finance concrete mine action projects, and to deploy experts in the field in order to train and reinforce local capacities. Furthermore, Switzerland continues to provide financial support to and works closely with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the field of mine action.

We sincerely want to thank all actors involved in the fight against anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. We are grateful for their work and encourage them to maintain their efforts in this key area. Thanks to their commitment, whole populations can return to their lands safely and build a new future.



Didier Burkhalter
Head of Department
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs



Guy Parmelin
Head of Department
Federal Department of Defence,
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1. The results of 25 years of engagement: a great deal has been achieved, but there is still important work to be done

1.1 Countless success stories

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the ending of a large number of proxy and civil wars demonstrated the grave humanitarian consequences mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war have for the affected population even after the conflict is over. Mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war cannot simply be “turned off”: they remain active, often for lengthy periods, posing a threat to humans and non-humans alike, impeding humanitarian aid and rendering unusable land that is of importance in terms of reconstruction, economic development and the return of those displaced.

The first mine clearance programme involving the international community was initiated under the auspices of the UN in 1989 in Afghanistan, following the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Further UN programmes followed in Southeast Asia and Africa. In Europe too, the issue of mine action was placed on the agenda following the series of wars in the former Yugoslavia. It quickly became clear that the affected communities and states would not be able to cope with the problems of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war and the attendant social, economic and peace impacts on their own, making these programmes necessary.

Calls for a widely accepted solution enshrined in international law and for technical measures and financial support based on the principle of “local capacity building” grew louder and louder until, in 1997, the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (also known as the “Ottawa Convention”), which is now ratified by over 160 countries,

was adopted. The Convention not only created a sound legal basis for national implementation, it also promotes international cooperation and assistance between countries as well as international and civil society organisations.

In this context, *amended Protocol II on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices (1996) of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects* (UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – CCW) as well as Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (2003) of the CCW are to be mentioned: through restrictions and prohibitions, these instruments of the UN cover a large spectrum of explosive hazards and represent an important framework for the clearance of various unexploded ordnances or the containment of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Due to the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions, the international community equally agreed in 2008 to intervene and regulate. The *Convention on Cluster Munitions* comprehensively prohibits the use as well as the development, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and further promotes international cooperation. Moreover, the Convention anchored legally binding provisions on assistance for surviving cluster munition victims, thus further strengthening the rights of victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

Almost a generation after the launch of the first international mine action efforts, and bearing in mind the endeavours that have since taken place, we can note that many successes have been achieved in the fight to stem the humanitarian impact of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war: of the more than 80 countries originally affected, 29 have now been completely cleared. The local populations once again have risk-free access to land, water and resources, which is one of the conditions necessary for the creation of sustainable development.



Providing a perspective to mine victims: integration into the working environment in Thailand
 © ISU AP Mine Ban Convention

In addition to clearing landmines, the states which are party to the convention have also largely met their commitment to destroy national stockpiles of these weapons. To date, almost 50 million mines have been destroyed.

A positive trend can also be reported in terms of victim numbers. Whereas 25 years ago, one person fell victim to mines, cluster munitions or explosive remnants of war every 20 minutes, at present it is estimated that there are 10 casualties a day¹. Although that is still too high a number, the improvement in the situation cannot be overlooked.

Particular attention should also be drawn to the fact that affected states are increasingly in the position to fully and directly take ownership of the situation. For example, the proportion of these states' resources earmarked for mine action continues to rise: around one third of the funds provided for clearance globally now come from the mine, cluster muni-

¹ This and other statistics in Section 1 are from *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*, www.the-monitor.org

tion and explosive remnants of war-affected countries themselves. In addition, a positive development can be noted in relation to the national legal bases and administrative requirements: supporting organisations can now rely on predictable and stable conditions when working locally.

The establishment of technical norms and standards for clearance processes at the international level has also had a major impact. Only when a shared understanding, common language, coordinated approach and standardised learning process had been established did it become possible to present improvements and developments that met with global acceptance. This, in turn, greatly accelerated the pace at which the number of affected areas was reduced. In addition to clearance, particularly the development of methods allowing the rapid release of territories mistakenly categorised as hazardous is to be mentioned (also known as “land release”). This has also had a significant impact in ensuring a more appropriate allocation of financial and human resources.

1.2. Remaining challenges

Although substantial progress has been made, the time has not yet come to end the international community’s mine action efforts. While many areas can now be used by the local population without risk, countless tracts of land that are needed for humanitarian or development reasons – mostly situated in areas in which removing the hazard is complex, and therefore expensive – remain to be cleared.

Simultaneously, new armed conflicts continue to erupt, while others persist and no settlement is in reach. Under such circumstances (also known as protracted conflicts), sustainable clearance operations are impossible. Particularly the use of booby traps and IEDs but also explosive remnants of war hinder humanitarian action such as humanitarian emergency relief or the protection of civilians. Therefore, preventive work and a sensitisation for dangers (generally referred to as “mine risk education”) or also victim assistance become even more important in these phases.

Surviving victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war will need specialised medical attention for the rest of their lives, help to ensure they are socially and economically included into the community in which they live, as well as help to ensure that they are able to exercise their human rights on an equal basis with others in the community. Sustainable support requires a functioning national health system, the possibility of earning a living and practices for overcoming discrimination, among other factors. These measures ultimately have an impact that extends beyond mine action and supports general development policy goals. At the international level, however, victim assistance is the least well-funded area of mine action and – despite the generally recognised right to assistance – is often marginalised by a lack of national responsibility and the failure to include survivors into the health system. All too often, victim assistance is left to international aid organisations.

At present, almost 60 countries and regions are still affected by mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Syria, Libya and Yemen have recently suffered additional contamination. These examples show that mines and, in particular, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war from current and future armed conflicts will continue to pose a threat for years and decades to come, although no reliable estimate can be made of the exact number of such devices in use.

Future mine action programmes will face considerable challenges in terms of the number of explosive remnants of war and the wider geographic spread of contaminated zones. Given that current conflicts are increasingly conducted in urban areas, it can be assumed that residential and business districts will be incrementally affected.

At the same time, the emergence of new challenges must not be overlooked. While industrially produced landmines are nearly unavailable and therefore barely used in current conflicts, IEDs are widely deployed. These devices may be mass-produced and are quick and easy to assemble, and raise the same humanitarian concerns as mines and cluster munition. Their makeshift nature also makes them relatively unstable and therefore more of a hazard to the local population as well as to clearance experts. Their disposal thus demands a special knowledge (also known as IED-disposal).

The long durability of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war is a risk factor that should not be underestimated. Even long after actual clearance work has been completed active hazards may still be discovered. Mines and explosive remnants of war from the two world wars are still being found today in Belgium, France and Germany, for instance. A residual risk of this kind generally applies to all countries on whose territory an armed conflict has taken place. Therefore, viable structures and capacities must be built to tackle the threat of residual contamination. At the same time, the affected population must be taught how to recognise the dangers so that people can carry on living their lives in spite of these risks. Prevention work is therefore key.

Development cooperation projects may find themselves hindered by left-over mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war long after a conflict is over. In this context, it is imperative to react swiftly and pragmatically when confronted with dangers of this kind: eliminating the hazard and completing the project may prove to be the most suitable course of action as it provides the population with lasting support. This allows a paradigm shift to take place in which clearance is no longer viewed as an independent ‹humanitarian demining› activity but as an integral part of development cooperation work.

Further questions arise following the completion of clearance work. For example, what is to happen to the local clearance experts on the ground once the removal operations have ended? In the wake of conflicts, former combatants have often been integrated into demining programmes, allowing them to make use of their military expertise and earn a living independently of the parties involved in the conflict. They have also been successfully involved in establishing a peaceful society. This leads to the question on how these experts can constructively and peacefully continue to contribute to their communities after the completion of clearance work.

1.3. Challenges facing the international arena

Worldwide recognition of the negative impact of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war is reflected both in their ongoing clearance and in the continuing willingness of states to be bound by the values enshrined in the legal instruments created at the international level.

Many states have already agreed to be legally bound to the relevant treaties. However, experience has shown that the number of additional States Parties tends to slow a few years after the treaty in question enters into force. This deprives the universalisation process of much of its momentum. Despite the fact that anti-personnel mines in particular now face widespread political condemnation on the international stage, several leading military powers have still not consented to be bound by the relevant treaties. Although a number of states not party share the basic humanitarian principles that underpin the conventions, national security concerns still tend to gain the upper hand.

The use of weapons outlawed under the treaties (such as landmines) by individual States Parties to the Ottawa Convention during the last four years gives particular cause for concern. The body of agreements includes specific processes for clarifying such cases. However, verifying that a treaty has been violated and identifying the party responsible is both difficult and politically sensitive. Moreover, a minority of what are known as “armed non-state actors” or armed groups are currently using amongst others mines, increasingly in the form of IEDs. Once again, the gathering of information and the identification of parties involved is a very difficult task. It is therefore even more important to draw the attention of armed groups to their obligations under international humanitarian law and to promote comprehensive compliance.

At the same time, it has become apparent that states vary widely in their implementation of the commitments they have entered into, and in some cases implementation has been insufficient or delayed. Progress in clearing contaminated areas has been sluggish at best in a large number of states, and the agreed deadlines are not being adhered to in numerous cases. The destruction of existing stockpiles is also being delayed in certain states. The reasons cited include a lack of resources, difficult climatic and geographical conditions, insufficient or incorrect data, and even military requirements. The duty to deliver reports and create transparency, which is embedded in the instruments of international law, also causes difficulty. The details provided are often incomplete and the quality tends to vary. This makes it difficult to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data and thus to monitor compliance with commitments. A lack of resources, know-how or clarity is often put forward in explanation.



Comprehensive sensitisation of the population to the dangers: mine risk education in a Cambodian monastery © DEZA/SDC Mekong

As far as the financial commitments of the mine action donor states are concerned, a very respectable level of funding has been reported to date. Since 2008, for example, over USD 600 million has been made available each year in the fight against mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war – despite the global financial crisis. Nevertheless, it should be noted that savings in this area are no longer politically taboo. Enthusiasm appears to have given way to pragmatism; at present this means that political support does not always translate into financial support.

1.4. Mine action now and in the future: A successful contribution to peace, security and development

Despite the successes of the last 25 years in the fight against mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, major challenges remain to be tackled at the humanitarian and development level, making continued involvement on the ground and in the international political arena an ongoing necessity.

Mine action makes an important contribution to peace, security and development. It is a fundamental prerequisite for humanitarian action, peace processes, security and socio-economic development among the affected communities of countries concerned. Mine action plays a very real role as an enabler: letting refugees and internally displaced people return home, allowing the affected population to regain access to areas where they live and work, permitting agricultural land and natural resources to be used again and the necessary infrastructure to be repaired or built. By doing so, mine action makes a contribution to a variety of policy areas which are of importance to Switzerland: whether within the scope of peace policy and peace promotion, or to the benefit of humanitarian action and long-term development policy. Mine action also represents an instrument for achieving a number of goals on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, sustainability may only be achieved if global engagement continues at its current level or higher and national ownership in affected countries is assumed, which in turn calls for the necessary financial resources. Provided there is no significant decline in engagement levels, it will be possible to implement a large number of mine action measures laid down in the treaties and, in doing so, to sustainably contain the threat posed by mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

Lastly, it should be remembered that the technical expertise and national capacity building which are so essential to mine action are also beneficial to other fields of activities. The safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition comes to mind: if not handled properly, munitions may create as much of a humanitarian and development burden as landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, as has been illustrated all too clearly by numerous cases of exploding ammunition stockpiles and the considerable humanitarian and economic consequences that followed. It is not intended to integrate these fields of action within humanitarian mine action; however, the potential to increase security, efficiency and effectiveness should be exploited wherever they intersect.

2. International instruments and definition

International humanitarian law, in particular the Additional Protocols of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 as well as the rules of customary international law, restricts and regulates the means and methods of warfare.

The international community has made considerable efforts over the past two decades to eliminate the humanitarian consequences of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, including establishing a number of international conventions:

- The Convention of 18 September 1997 on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction² (“Ottawa Convention” or APMBC);
- The Convention of 30 May 2008 on Cluster Munitions³ prohibiting all use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions (“Oslo Convention” or CCM);
- The Convention of 10 October 1980 on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects⁴ (“UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons” – CCW) with its Amended Protocol II on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 and its Protocol V of 28 November 2003 on Explosive Remnants of War;
- The Convention of 13 December 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁵.

² SR 0.515.092, Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

³ SR 0.515.093, Convention on Cluster Munitions

⁴ SR 0.515.091, SR 0.515.091.3, SR 0.515.091.4, Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

⁵ SR 0.109, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Terms used

The Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2016–2019 is based on the internationally established term “mine action”. This refers to all activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and explosive remnants of war including unexploded sub-munitions.¹

The term “mine” in “mine action” is often used as a catch-all term and includes specific types of mines (anti-personnel and anti-vehicle) as well as cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. The latter refers to unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance.

Mine action is not just about technical demining; first and foremost, it is about people and societies, and how their lives are affected by mines and explosive remnants of war. The objective of mine action is to reduce the risk from landmines and explosive remnants of war to a level where people can live safely, and to create the conditions in which economic, social and health development can occur free from the constraints imposed by mines and explosive remnants of war. Related to this are the victims’ rights to access to necessary services and equal social participation, whereby the victims’ different needs should be addressed. According to the international standards, mine action comprises five complementary groups of activities:

- a) mine risk education;
- b) humanitarian demining, i.e. surveys, mapping, marking and clearance;
- c) victim assistance, including medical care, rehabilitation and social and economic inclusion;
- d) stockpile destruction;
- e) advocacy against the use of anti-personnel mines.

Thematically related areas such as small arms and light weapons control, and the safe and secure storage and management of conventional munitions throughout their life cycle do not fall under mine action and are treated separately. However, synergies should be exploited wherever possible.

¹ In accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), 4.10 Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations, www.mineactionstandards.org (January 2016)



International Engagement: Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter at the 12th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention © ISU AP Mine Ban Convention

3. Consequences for Switzerland

Switzerland's commitment to mine action is implemented by the Confederation, in close cooperation with other countries and international, regional and civil society organisations. The Swiss Confederation has many years of experience which allow it to use the resources available at the political and operational levels to adopt a coordinated, inter-departmental approach to the challenges that have been identified.

Specific Actions

In the 2012–2015 period, the Confederation

- pushed ahead with the institutional strengthening of mine action (secondment of Swiss experts to the UN in New York and Geneva, firmly establishing the implementation support units in Geneva, reinforcing the financing arrangements for implementation support);
- promoted mine action at the political level in the multilateral forums (taking on functions such as Secretary-General and thematic coordination roles);

- provided financial support to programmes and projects in almost 30 countries, mainly in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East as part of its humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and development cooperation efforts;
- supported five UN programmes by seconding members of the armed forces under the auspices of United Nations peacekeeping operations;
- enhanced technical expertise and the establishment of international standards by supporting the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and providing training at the international level.

The current challenges referred to above lead Switzerland to conclude that continuing its mine action efforts during the 2016–2019 legislative period remains imperative, in spite of the many successes achieved. This is all the more important considering that the negative impact of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war – as well as the increased use of IEDs – creates a long-term obstacle to the Confederation's humanitarian, peacebuilding and development-related efforts, ultimately making it difficult to achieve the aims set out in the Constitution⁶. The Federal Council has therefore underlined the significance of mine action in various foreign and security policy reports.

On this base, alleviating the risks that emanate from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war has become a guiding principle of the Confederation's activities. As outlined above, a number of areas demonstrate a need for action, in particular

- promoting compliance with and implementation of the international treaties relevant for mine action and other applicable international law (in particular, international humanitarian law and customary international law), as the sustainability required in the fight against mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war – and thus the achievement

⁶ Art. 54, Paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution: The Confederation shall ensure that the independence of Switzerland and its welfare is safeguarded; it shall in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful co-existence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.

of humanitarian goals – can only be guaranteed if all states resolutely join together to meet their obligations efficiently. This also includes calling in an appropriate way on States Parties to comply with the treaties' obligations. The legal framework will be clarified or developed as required;

- universalising the relevant treaties and the standards they contain to allow them to achieve their full impact;
- supporting the international community of states in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the danger emanating from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war on the ground could considerably hamper the achievement of a majority of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals;
- supporting the international community in implementing the Maputo Action Plan (in the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) as well as the Dubrovnik Action Plan (in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions), as their concrete actions promote a pragmatic and tangible implementation of the respective treaty provisions;
- applying mine action as an integral part of humanitarian, peace policy, peacebuilding, development as well as indirectly security policy activities, as the successes and failures of mine action have a direct impact on the political, economic and social development of the affected communities;
- supporting affected public bodies in local capacity building, as the enhancement of local responsibilities and capabilities is the only way to ensure that those affected will be able to deal with the perils emanating from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war in the future;
- actively using and supporting multilateral processes and institutions, most of which are based in Geneva, as they provide platforms for reaching global, inclusive solutions to disarmament policy and humanitarian issues as well as multilateral governance issues.



Safe Disposal of UXOs: Thanks to the Swiss developed SM EOD-Systems UXOs can be destroyed contact-free (c) DDPS

The evaluation of the Swiss Confederation's strategy for 2012–2015 and Switzerland's activities during that period has shown that the Confederation has taken suitable measures to date. Therefore, there is no reason to make fundamental changes to the existing engagement. Instead, efforts should be adjusted to the latest challenges and continued accordingly. The potential of the current forms of cooperation both within the Federal Administration and with external partners to benefit mine action as a core contribution towards peace and security should be further leveraged. The increased importance of mine action in the field of economic and social development should also be given due consideration. Both elements – human security and the development dimension – are retained in the vision without change.

4. Vision

Over the long term, Switzerland will continue to pursue the vision of a world without new victims of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war – a world in which economic and social development progresses smoothly and the needs of the affected populations are adequately met.

5. Strategic objectives

Given the long-term horizon for realising this vision (extending beyond 2019), the following strategic objectives have been defined:

Strategic objective 1

The relevant treaties are fully implemented and universally applied.

Switzerland advocates full and measurable implementation of the obligations of all States Parties. Switzerland also promotes the universalisation of the relevant treaties (see Chapter 2) and works, within its possibilities, toward the application of their basic principles by states not party.

Strategic objective 2

Safety from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war is increased and the conditions for sustainable development improved.

The measures taken by Switzerland contribute to the safety of those affected and the communities they live in and thus improve the conditions for humanitarian action and sustainable development. In this way, Switzerland supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies), Goal 2 (Achieve food security and promote sustainable agriculture), Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being) and Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

Strategic objective 3

Ownership of mine action rests entirely with those affected on the ground.

Switzerland promotes and supports the competent authorities as representatives of the affected populations on the ground so that they can fully and sustainably assume the responsibility of minimising all risks emanating from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

6. Priorities until 2019

Building on the strategic objectives and in cooperation with its partners, the Confederation has set the following priorities for the period up to 2019:

Priority 1.1 The deadlines stipulated in the conventions are respected and the targets announced by States Parties in their extension requests are met; planned implementation measures are realistic.

- Within the scope of its peace policy, humanitarian action, development cooperation work, and security policy, Switzerland will provide financial support to at least five demining projects, which explicitly serve to attain the goals announced in the extension requests.
- During the strategy period, Switzerland will support at least one state applying for a deadline extension by providing expert help in planning and implementing the measures.

Priority 1.2 Reporting by the States Parties is meaningful and timely.

- Switzerland will support efforts to standardise and simplify the reporting processes to which the States Parties are subject.

Priority 1.3 Additional states accede to the treaties.

- In addition to its multilateral engagement, Switzerland will maintain a political dialogue with at least one state not party with a view to convincing it to accede to the relevant convention and will advise it on the process.

Priority 1.4 Compliance with the legal framework is strengthened and the clarification of alleged breaches is promoted.

- Within the scope of its political bilateral and multilateral contacts, Switzerland will actively call for compliance with the international legal framework. Switzerland will also appeal to states not party to abide by the basic principles.

- Switzerland will encourage clarification of alleged treaty violations, specifically by supporting the existing mechanisms and other organisations that make a contribution to clarification.

Priority 1.5 Dialogues with non-state actors aiming for compliance with the legal framework and the non-use of anti-personnel mines will be promoted.

- Switzerland will continue to provide financial contributions and ideas in support of the dialogue between independent humanitarian organisations and non-state actors and armed groups.

Priority 2.1 The clearance of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war reduces the risks to the populations and enables access to local resources.

- Within the focus on fragile contexts and existing country strategies, Switzerland will provide financial support to clearance projects as part of its peacebuilding, humanitarian, development and security policy efforts.
- In the same framework, Switzerland will provide project support in affected development cooperation partner countries with the aim of reducing the number of victims among both the human population and farm animals, enabling rural development by providing better access to land and forests, and increasing food security in particular. Conversion into agricultural land is to be supported wherever it directly benefits the population, specifically smallholders.
- Wherever appropriate, Switzerland will support projects geared towards the return of internally displaced persons or refugees and enabling them to resume their commercial or agricultural activities.
- Switzerland will support surveys (technical / non-technical) and clearance projects as part of peace processes and the handling of post-conflict situations as well as in the context of strengthening people's confidence in peace.



Hopefully soon on safe grounds: children play near a Buddhist shrine in Cambodia

© KEYSTONE/AP Photo/David Longstreath

- In the multilateral forums in question (APMBC, CCM, CCW), Switzerland will support the established clearance and international cooperation and assistance processes by providing analyses and expertise, taking on a coordinating role (where appropriate).
- Switzerland will maintain contact with other donor states on thematic issues in the appropriate forums (e.g. Mine Action Support Group).
- Switzerland will help develop concepts and operational instruments that are geared towards the current threats and challenges (e.g. mine action in urban areas).
- Switzerland will support at least four UN and OSCE mine action programmes with technical expertise in accordance with their needs, and will actively use synergies with related topics such as the safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition.

Priority 2.2 Victims will be given medical care and included into society and the economy.

- Within the focus on fragile contexts and existing country strategies, Switzerland supports international organisations, the ICRC and non-governmental organisations in the medical care and rehabilitation of mine victims.
- In the same framework, Switzerland will support victim assistance through a dual approach, namely a) through specific victim assistance efforts that benefit survivors and indirect victims, and b) through assistance provided through development, human rights and humanitarian initiatives that also include survivors and indirect victims amongst the beneficiaries.

Priority 2.3 The affected communities will be educated on the handling of existing risks.

- Switzerland will make a contribution by supporting mine risk education projects as part of its humanitarian and development policy commitment.
- Switzerland will join with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and UNICEF to create a training course in the field of mine risk education (MRE).
- Switzerland will provide experts with mine risk education know-how as of 2018 at the earliest.

Priority 3.1 Local authorities are able to take on responsibility for mine action themselves over the long term.

- Switzerland will support at least four UN and OSCE mine action programmes with technical expertise in accordance with their needs, and actively use synergies with related topics i.e. safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition.

- Switzerland will support the further development and running of training courses at the international and regional level in cooperation with its partners, e.g. the GICHD, UNMAS, UNOPS and UNICEF.
- Switzerland will support – in cooperation with international partners, foreign training centres and the GICHD – the coordination, development and running of training projects and programmes that use synergies between mine action and the safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition.

Priority 3.2 Norm setting and standardising processes are embedded locally and unanimously accepted.

- Switzerland will provide technical expertise and play an active role in the standardisation bodies.
- Switzerland will support efforts to involve affected countries in establishing norms and in the standardisation process.
- In connection with standardisation and implementation, Switzerland will exploit synergies that exist with thematically related areas such as the safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition (e.g. IATG).



Swiss logistics advisor working for the UN mine action programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo: training the handling of the generator © DDPS

7. Guiding principles

Switzerland's commitment to mine action follows the guidelines for action below:

- Switzerland promotes mine action as a political and operational contribution to peace, security, humanitarian action and sustainable development, and integrates the call for compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights into these activities.
- Switzerland supports projects to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly when these goals are hindered or threatened by mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Targeted use is made of mine action instruments in this context.
- Switzerland takes needs-based action, follows the principles of “local capacity building” as well as “local ownership” and adopts a “do no harm” approach. It aims to create an impact and makes appropriate use of the corresponding monitoring and evaluation instruments, making sure to involve the affected actors on the ground.
- As a rule, Switzerland concentrates its activities on countries in which it is already active and in which it can support projects over the medium to long term. It actively seeks to develop synergies between various lines of action (mine action, peace promotion, humanitarian action, development cooperation) and exploit them on the ground.
- Switzerland sees the actual engagement of the country in question – within the scope of the commitments that a country has entered into under international law or its efforts to accede to the relevant treaties, as well as in concrete activities and projects – as an important indicator when evaluating its own possibilities for providing support.
- Switzerland promotes the mainstreaming of gender and diversity issues in its activities, taking into account UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the “Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes”.

⁷ <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/publications/MA-Guidelines-WEB.pdf> (October 2015)

- Switzerland's efforts are conducted in a spirit of partnership with countries, international organisations and civil society actors, using the multilateral and bilateral platforms.
- The interaction between the international organisations, internationally active non-governmental organisations, civil society actors and countries that takes place in Geneva is to be promoted in order to maximise the exchange and fully leverage the synergies between humanitarian concerns, good governance issues, arms control and disarmament as well as other topics of relevance to mine action.
- Switzerland's activities contribute, where appropriate, to the implementation of the relevant action plans, particularly the Maputo Action Plan 2014–2019 (in the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) as well as the Dubrovnik Action Plan 2015–2020 (in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions).
- Switzerland analyses and anticipates developments in mine action with a view to identifying synergies with thematically related areas, in particular in the field of the safe and secure storage and management of weapons and ammunition, and adapts its toolbox of intervention instruments accordingly.

8. Distribution of tasks and coordination mechanisms

Switzerland has a number of methods and instruments at its disposal for achieving its stated goals. These may be used selectively and in a coordinated manner, depending on the situation. Switzerland's engagement takes the form of interdepartmental cooperation between the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) in what is known as a "whole-of-government" approach. Priorities are pursued on the basis of annual action plans, which set out Switzerland's activities. These action plans are impact-oriented, contain measurable indicators and are evaluated on a yearly basis.

Switzerland's efforts are coordinated at the interdepartmental level by the national Coordinating Committee on Mine Action: the FDFA is responsible for coordinating political efforts, while the DDPS is in charge for coordinating the operational aspects.

The FDFA takes the lead role in all political and policy-making aspects. Within the Directorate of Political Affairs, responsibility rests with the **Human Security Division (HSD)**, which is also in charge of peace policy measures and civilian peacebuilding. Implementation takes the form of funding for specific programmes, contributions to the GICHD and projects.

The **Permanent Missions of Switzerland** (especially the Permanent Mission in Geneva) ensure the safeguarding of interests with regard to mine action in the appropriate multilateral forums. At the same time, they analyse and anticipate relevant political developments on behalf of the headquarters. In Geneva specifically, Switzerland's mine action activities are also linked to its locational promotion and its host state policy.

The FDFA's **Directorate of International Law (DIL)** follows developments in mine action and its forums that are of relevance to international law, and advises the offices involved on legal issues. It supports the clarification and further development of the legal framework.

The FDFA's **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** is responsible for the development policy dimension, with particular attention being focused on Switzerland's contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its mine action activities are determined by the specific needs of projects and programmes.

The **DDPS** supports mine action by seconding personnel of the Armed Forces to UN and OSCE programmes within international peace missions. It may also provide demining programmes with special equipment and supplies. The DDPS additionally runs and finances training courses, also in cooperation with the GICHD and other partners. Lastly, on request the DDPS makes expertise available to the FDFA for specific programmes and projects, e.g. to conduct evaluations on the ground.

Based on the decision of Federal Parliament with regard to the respective framework credit line⁸, Switzerland continues its strategic partnership with the **GICHD** as an international centre of expertise on mine action. The GICHD supports Switzerland in achieving its strategic objectives in this area, while the Confederation in turn promotes the implementation of the Centre's strategic objectives⁹; the FDFA and the DDPS each have a seat on the GICHD Council of Foundation.

Switzerland is prepared to continue investing between CHF 16 and 18 million in mine action each year.

⁸ Decision of 19 November 2014 on continuing the framework credit to support the three Geneva centres from 2016 to 2019 (BBI 2014 9089).

⁹ GICHD Strategy 2015–2018 (<http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD/about-us/GICHD-strategy-2015-2018.pdf>) (October 2015)



Job well done: female de-miner in Mozambique © UNDP / Apopo

9. Monitoring and evaluation

Switzerland's activities are regularly monitored – on the basis of the annual action plans – through the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Mine Action. Monitoring is based on an analysis of the goals attained (priorities and strategic objectives) using the newly introduced results-based management model. It is intended to analyse and measure the effectiveness of Switzerland's engagement as objectively as possible. The results chain and results framework will be developed accordingly and regularly reviewed by the Committee.

The FDFA produces a brief annual report on the status of implementation on Switzerland's behalf.

To ensure that the strategic objectives underpinning Switzerland's commitment continue to be adapted and developed, an external evaluation of this strategy and its implementation is to be carried out by 2019 at the latest. The recommendations that emerge are intended to serve as input in the development of any subsequent strategy.

Bern, June 2016



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Glossary

APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
DIL	Directorate of International Law
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
HSD	Human Security Division
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IEDD	Improvised Explosive Device Disposal
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
MASG	Mine Action Support Group
MRE	Mine Risk Education
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UN	United Nations
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

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