



## **2016 Annual Report on the activities of the Swiss Confederation in humanitarian Mine Action**

The past calendar year represented a decisive year for the activities of the Swiss Confederation in humanitarian mine action: while continuing the work in numerous affected countries as well as in the political fora, the Confederation simultaneously reviewed its strategic framework in this domain in order to help even more needs-oriented in the future. This annual report presents an overview of the most relevant activities in mine action of the Confederation during the past calendar year.

### **1. Activities of the Swiss Confederation on the spot**

Also in 2016, the Swiss Confederation continued its commitment in numerous affected countries. In the context of the various armed conflicts particularly in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, mine action remains of undiminished and long-term relevance.

As part of its development work as well as of its peace policy projects, the Confederation supported mine action with a total of CHF 6 million in countries and regions like Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Gaza, Mali, Myanmar, Kosovo, Laos, Libya and Ukraine. Support was particularly provided to clearance projects of international partners, projects on victim assistance as well as projects on mine risk education among the affected population. In 2016, the Confederation extended its support namely in Colombia thanks to progress in the peace process after decades of civil war: today, it supports mine action on the spot with roughly 1 million Swiss Francs per year.

Support to affected countries and regions was also provided through the secondment of mine action experts of the Swiss Armed Forces, totalling up to CHF 2.4 million: specialists supported mine action programmes of the UN in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), in Mali (MINUSMA/UNMAS), in South Sudan (UNMISS) and in the Western Sahara (MINURSO) in information management, logistics and finances. In support of mine action, experts of the DDPS and the FDFA were also seconded to the UN headquarters in New York and Geneva. In the context of capacity building, the DDPS conducted training courses in collaboration with international partners such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as well as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

On the political level, Switzerland continued in 2016 to engage for the implementation of the relevant international instruments. Inter alia, Switzerland co-chaired the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention, engaged for a stronger ownership by States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munition's implementation architecture

and secretariat, or engaged against a silently increasing tolerance towards delays in implementing mine action obligations due to negligence and a lack of transparency.

The Confederation also continued its support for the GICHD as a globally valued centre of excellence with a core contribution of CHF 9.2 million, based on the parliamentary decision to approve the framework credit for the three “Geneva Centres” and with the aim of strengthening international Geneva.

## **2. New Humanitarian Demining Strategy 2016–2019**

Aside from the specific activities on the spot and in the relevant political fora, the Confederation also reviewed its strategic framework for mine action and published in early summer 2016 its new strategy for the 2016-2019 legislative period. It builds upon the proven guidelines of Switzerland's previous involvement and cooperation among partners in this field, but is aligned to the present day challenges that have been identified.

For example, the striking increase in the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) manufactured with illegally transferred components of arms and munitions confirms the need to contextualise mine action even more with adjacent domains such as the fight against the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, or the safe and secure management and disposal of ammunition.

The direct interlinkages between mine action and development cooperation are of equal importance. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 the interrelation between peace, security and development is firmly established. The commitment of the Swiss Confederation will therefore even more promote mine action as an enabler for peace, security, humanitarian action and sustainable development.

The vision of a world without new victims of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war and a world in which economic and social development progresses remains unchanged. The following three strategic objectives have been defined:

- The relevant treaties<sup>1</sup> are fully implemented and universally applied.

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<sup>1</sup> This particularly refers to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (SR 0.515.092), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (SR 0.515.093), 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 Effects<sup>4</sup> (“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 (SR 0.515.091, SR 0.515.091.3, SR 0.515.091.4); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SR 0.109).

- Safety from mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war is increased and the conditions for sustainable development improved.
- Ownership of mine action rests entirely with those affected (resp. their authorities) on the ground.

With the new development of an action plan for the current calendar year, individual activities can even be better coordinated and their impact measured.

### **3. Conclusion and way ahead**

The past calendar year confirmed that the activities and involvement of the Swiss Confederation for mine action are of undiminished relevance. The support to projects follows the needs-based approach. Despite many successes, many challenges both in the field and on the political level remain also today and demand a commitment by the Confederation.

Switzerland belongs to the few donor countries that have not reduced their support to mine action during the past few years and continued to provide between CHF 16 to 18 million per year. This support is also planned for the coming years, in favour of an involvement addressing current and future challenges. On this basis, Switzerland will continue to stem against signs of fatigue as for example continuously shrinking contributions, a lack of transparency or an incomplete and delayed implementation of the obligations in mine action.