



Annual Report 2012 on the Implementation of the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2012 - 2015

The efforts of the Swiss Confederation towards a world free of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war have been pursued on political and operational level throughout the year 2012. This unfolded on the basis of the guidelines provided by the **Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2012-2015**¹, a document which was developed in close co-operation between the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) and as well as in consultation with external partners.

1. Overview

Anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war mutilate and kill thousands of persons per year and generate high economic and social costs. Despite the fact that the figure of over 10'000 victims worldwide per year has dropped by a third during the last decade, it remains an urgent task to avoid new victims and to support the affected population with medical care as well as with socio-economic development.

The engagement of Switzerland is based on various instruments of international law, such as the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty ("Ottawa Convention"), the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as well as the Cluster Munitions Convention (CCM). The latter was ratified by Switzerland in 2012 and entered into force for our country on 1 January 2013.

The Swiss Confederation has spent in 2012 a total of **17.25 million Swiss francs** for political and operational engagements in the framework of the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation, signifying once again a slight increase when compared with 2011.

1.1 Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

The FDFA contributed during 2012 around 14.8 million Swiss francs for activities in the framework of the mine action strategy. This amount in particular includes contributions for concrete projects in affected regions, as well as for advocacy, mine risk education and victim assistance. Moreover, the FDFA co-ordinated the political activities of Switzerland, for example the contributions to the 12th Meeting of States Parties of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention ("Ottawa Convention"), which was opened, among other notables, by **Federal Councillor, Mr. Didier Burkhalter**. Furthermore, the position of the Secretary-General of this Meeting of States Parties was, as in previous years, entrusted to Switzerland

¹ See also: [Mine Action Strategy 2012 - 2015](#)



In the framework of the Cluster Munitions Convention, Switzerland has proactively lobbied for the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in Geneva. This future secretariat of the Convention will be important for the support of the States Parties, especially those who are affected by cluster munitions. A decision has been postponed until the next Meeting of States Parties due to questions of a financing model.

Concrete projects have been supported in 2012 in the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, Kosovo, Laos PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Somalia / Somaliland, South-Sudan and Chad.

In addition, the FDFA provided important contributions to non-governmental organisations such as, for example, to Geneva Call. This organisation advocates for armed non-state actors to refrain from using anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. This is important for the protection of the civilian population in areas under the control of armed non-state actors. Another example would be the support to the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), an organisation which advocates for the inclusion of the different needs of women, men, boys and girls in mine action programmes.

The FDFA also contributed in 2012 significantly to the activities of the **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)** with a total pledge of around 9 Million Swiss Francs. This includes in-kind contributions to the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Ottawa Convention, which was established by the States Parties in 2012, and which is hosted by the GICHD. The ISU provides professional advice, support and information exchange in regard to all political and legal aspects concerning the implementation of the Convention.

1.2 Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS)

In 2012, the Swiss army provided an average of 12 persons as contributions to UN mine action programmes, which is the monetary equivalent of over 2.3 million Swiss francs. Compared to the previous year, once again more man-years were provided.

The objectives of these deployments consist of capacity building elements and trainings for national demining personnel. This includes the establishment of the respective management and leadership structures in the affected countries.

The deployments in 2012 concern personnel from the militia system as well as professionals from the Center of Competence for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Demining in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Laos PDR, Somalia /Somaliland, South-Sudan, West-Sahara and from the UN Headquarters in New York. The Swiss experts worked in the areas of logistics, finance and information management (IMSMA).

It has to be highlighted that the multi-year engagement of the Swiss army in Laos PDR ended in 2012. The established structures and procedures allowed, in consultation with

the UN and the authorities of Laos PDR, to hand-over the responsibilities for information management, finances and quality management to the national mine action authorities.



Capacity building in quality management by Swiss experts in the framework of mine action in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A fact-finding mission in 2012 confirmed the impact of the Swiss engagement.

In the framework of capacity building, experts of the Center of Competence for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Demining carried out two training courses between August 2011 and March 2012 for EOD-specialists in Somalia / Somaliland. The objective consisted in training the national experts in such a way that they would later be accredited by mine action operators, as defined by the UN. This proves that the approach of “train the trainers” is the appropriate one and that the training courses have been adequate.



An expert of the Center of Competence for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Demining giving training to EOD specialists in Somaliland.



Furthermore, the Swiss army provided specialised demining equipment ("SM-EOD-systems"), which was developed in Switzerland, for selected UN mine action programmes. These systems allow for a non-contact destruction of explosive ordnance devices, mines and other explosive remnants of war. The DDPS provides adequate monitoring of the appropriate use of these SM-EOD systems. In 2012, the DDPS provided SM-EOD systems with the value of 15'000 Swiss francs to the UN.

2. Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2012-2015

Switzerland boasts its share in regard to the success story of the Ottawa Convention and also has the intention of playing an active role and displaying political leadership in the framework of the Cluster Munitions Convention. Switzerland has genuine and vested interests thanks to its humanitarian tradition and with a view to strengthening its profile in the domain of human security, development co-operation as well as civilian and military peacebuilding. Switzerland has the same interests in its capacity of host state to important disarmament institutions in Geneva. Together with the GICHD, Geneva should strengthen its significance as a center of competence for disarmament issues.

Switzerland has defined six concrete principles of action as a basis for the activities in the framework of the mine action strategy:

- The national engagement and commitment in the framework of the relevant international conventions and/or the progress made towards ratification, as well as efficient national co-ordination mechanisms are important criteria for contributions by Switzerland (be it financial contributions, or in-kind contributions with experts and material of the DDPS).
- The environment and the design of mine action programmes are important. This means that humanitarian and socio-economic needs are primordial, a "do-no-harm" approach is used and criteria such as the respect for human rights and a participatory approach for the affected population in regard to decisions and implementation of projects are taken into account.
- Local conditions and priorities are decisive. Components of capacity building and help for self-help as well as the support for co-operation between affected states (South-South exchanges) are specifically addressed.
- Switzerland concentrates its mine action programmes in countries where synergies with development co-operation, humanitarian aid or peacebuilding are possible. If possible and where need be, Switzerland remains active in a country until the obligations under the conventions have been fulfilled.
- Switzerland pays specific attention to aspects of gender mainstreaming and also assesses all projects in terms of gender issues. This also holds true in the framework of the National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution



1325 regarding women, peace and security, a joint-venture between FDFA and DDPS.

- Switzerland uses bilateral as well as multilateral instruments for the advancement of mine action, thereby taking into account the relevant action plans from the respective Review Conferences.

Switzerland has defined the following four strategic goals for the next four years to contribute as efficiently and with the most impact as possible to the vision of a world without new victims of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war:

- Switzerland contributes actively to the strengthening, the implementation and universal application of the relevant international legal instruments; this especially concerns the Ottawa Convention, but also the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Cluster Munitions Convention.
- Switzerland aims to improve the living conditions of populations affected by anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.
- Switzerland enhances the integration and the synergies between mine action and other policy fields. Furthermore, instruments for monitoring and evaluation will be developed to enhance the visible impact of the activities.
- Switzerland will contribute proactively to new instruments, policies and activities in mine action, thereby taking into account new challenges.
- The strategy also foresees continuation of the well established co-ordination mechanisms between DFDA and DDPS.

3. Conclusion

Significant progress has been made throughout 2012 in achieving the goals of the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2012-2015. Thereby, the following points seem particularly important:

- Switzerland contributed politically to the success of the 12th Meeting of States Parties of the Ottawa Convention in Geneva in November 2012. Switzerland continues to be an active and reliable partner in the fight for a world with mines.
- Switzerland continues to engage proactively for the establishment of an implementation support unit for the Cluster Munitions Convention in Geneva, thereby strengthening Geneva as a center of competence for disarmament issues. The ratification by Switzerland allows for a constructive role in the framework of the Cluster Munitions Convention and for continued support to affected states.



- Mine Action has been further supported in 2012 with financial and material contributions, as well as with the deployment of military and civilian experts. The approach of know-how transfer and self for self-help has been pursued. Switzerland engages with a clear focus and in a co-ordinated approach in priority countries of development co-operation and/or peacebuilding. This ensures a maximum impact of the Swiss contributions.
- The Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining continues to be supported by important financial and political contributions, with a view to contributing to a faster, cheaper and more effective mine action.
- It is one of the important aims for 2013 to enhance the monitoring and evaluation instruments, as provided for in the Mine Action Strategy of Switzerland.