

Your royal highness

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of this conference and on the quality of the preparatory work that you and your team have done. The commitment of Jordan and your personal commitment to mine action and to the universalisation of the Convention are invaluable assets for the success of our work.

I would like to assure you of the full support and complete cooperation of my delegation.

I would also like to thank and to congratulate Australia, and in particular, Ambassador Caroline Millar and her team, for the huge amount of work that they have put in since the 7th Conference of the States parties in Geneva.

For Switzerland, universalisation of the Convention is one of our chief objectives, especially in light of the fact that nearly 10 years after the convention was signed almost half of the world's population does not enjoy its protection. The adherence this year by two Middle East countries, Iraq and Kuwait, is a hopeful sign in this region of the world which is the cradle of civilisation and in which Jordan plays a decisive role in advancing our common cause. We hope that the other States of this region will be inspired by these examples and will rapidly take the necessary steps to adhere to the mine ban treaty. Present and future generations will thank them for it.

The use of anti-personnel mines by armed non-state actors remains a matter of serious concern. It is essential that we should continue our efforts to persuade them to abandon this practice in order to improve the situation of the populations concerned and to prevent further deaths and injuries. The work of non-governmental organisations such as Geneva Call is extremely important. The adoption of the *deed of commitment* is a first step in the right direction but it now needs to be followed by implementation, follow-up and verification. For example the destruction of anti-personnel mine stocks held by these groups is a problem for which solutions urgently need to be found. At the 7th conference of the States parties, guided by purely humanitarian considerations, Switzerland distributed a document with practical recommendations on measures to be taken to implement measure 46 of the Nairobi action plan.

Mr President,

The deadline of ten years for complete demining envisaged in the Convention calendar must be met because its language clearly demands the destruction of all anti-personnel mines which contaminate the territory of the State concerned. Switzerland hopes that the approved procedure for examining possible requests for extensions will be used only in exceptional cases and that extensions will be granted only after close scrutiny and on the basis of a serious commitment by the country concerned to tackle the difficulties that have arisen. Switzerland encourages the States parties concerned by the obligations of article 5 to take advantage of the services of the International Centre for Humanitarian Demining in Geneva for the transcription of the international standards for the mine action into national norms.

Switzerland is about to finalise a new strategy for mine action. It involves the continuation of its 16 million franc investment, which will be dovetailed with its peace promotion, human security, development cooperation and humanitarian aid policies. Support for States and for populations affected in the construction and the maintenance of local structures capacities in the field of anti-mine action and the clearance of explosive remnants of war is one of the principle guidelines of our strategy.

This goes hand in hand with an understanding of the problem of mines and of explosive remnants of war and its negative impact on development and of the need to integrate action in this area into development programmes.

Switzerland also believes that anti-mine action can also benefit peace policy. It will continue to pay particular attention to possible synergies between responding to humanitarian and development needs and the peaceful transformation of conflicts.

Mr President,

The Nairobi Action Plan established an obligation to provide appropriate care for victims and to assist their socio-economic reintegration. It also established a requirement for donor countries to make available the finance to achieve these goals. My country has always believed that assistance to survivors must take the form of an integrated approach which makes maximum use of existing synergies with efforts to help other victims and handicapped persons in general. In this area there is no precise deadline for meeting our obligations. We therefore advocate – as we did when we chaired the ad hoc committee together with Afghanistan – support for the development of national objectives and plans to help victims as an element of national policies for handicapped persons. Finally, the recognition of the rights of survivors and of their active contribution to the well-being of society also strengthens efforts to consolidate peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr President,

The motivation to face the new challenges is strong.

The entry into force in November 2006 of Protocol V on explosive remnants of war, additional to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons poses major challenges for the fight against explosive remnants of war. Moreover, the discussions about cluster munitions now going on in various international bodies should ideally lead to the conclusion of a new legal instrument banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable damage to civilians.

Mr President,

I would like to conclude by welcoming the adoption at the end of this conference of the Dead Sea Progress Report, which stakes out the ground that we have covered but more importantly shows us how to continue to translate our words into actions.

Mr President, thank you for your attention.

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