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**8th Meeting of States Parties**

**Amman**

**18-22 November 2007**

**Victim Assistance**

**SWISS DECLARATION**

Your Royal Highness,

First, we would like to thank the Co-chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and socio-economic reintegration, Sudan and Austria, for their commitment and their efforts to promote the main principles starting with the non-discrimination of victims.

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While much has been achieved, we need however to acknowledge that time is pressing for Member States to fulfil their Victim Assistance obligations according to the Nairobi Action Plan before the next review Conference and to put into action without delay the Victim Assistance principles we all agree upon.

In this regard and in order to make sustainable improvements, it is of primary importance to consider Victim Assistance as an integral part of national policies not only for humanitarian aid and development policies, but also supporting public health, social services and human rights. Thus, Victim Assistance programmes should always be part of and contribute to national and intersectorial policies for all victims including Persons with Disabilities. To this end, the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol will also be instrumental to pursue the goals of the Victim Assistance principles as outlined in the frame of the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. President,

It is also important to keep in mind that Victim Assistance activities should be non-discriminatory and benefit from an integrated approach, from first aid to medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, and take into consideration the socio-economic reintegration as well as the gender perspective.

Today in different fora, the international community agrees on the same basic principles concerning Victim Assistance; would it not be appropriate to have an overarching platform for exchange of views and for insuring recommendations for actors involved in VA?

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Switzerland welcomes the fact that the contamination by landmines, Explosive Remnants of War and particularly those from cluster munitions is now internationally recognised as an important obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction and development.

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National and international efforts are expected to better integrate Mine Action - that should always include the action in favour of victims - into development plans, programmes and strategies.

We welcome and we are looking forward to the guidelines and recommendations in this regard by the "Linking Mine Action and Development" initiative from the GICHD, as well as by the Development Aid Committee of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.

Mr. President,

Since its Co-chair together with Afghanistan, Switzerland has adopted a follow-up Strategy for 2007 and 2008 in order to ensure durability of the action initiated and carried out in 2006. We essentially continue our efforts through the financing of projects in the field for:

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1. the implementation of national plans and interministerial coordination with the support of ISU's victim assistance specialists;
2. the promotion of the access to and quality of medical first aid, not only through the leaflet distributed during the 7MSP, but also through its further dissemination and implementation in different countries,

3. the dissemination of best practices for socio-economic reintegration, in cooperation with NGOs and organisations active in the field, such as Handicap International and the Special Fund for the Disabled of the ICRC.

Always concerned and supportive of the complete integration and full participation of all the victims without any kind of discrimination, in the social, economic and political life, the Swiss Delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for your attention.

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