



**Opening statement  
by  
Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener  
Head of delegation**

**Oslo, 22 February 2007**

Mr. Chair,

Switzerland much appreciates the initiative of Norway to offer to the international community the opportunity to come together in this marvellous winter paradise to search for effective and adequate responses to the grave humanitarian problems caused by the use of cluster munitions. Let this place inspire us to find solutions to eliminate the disastrous consequences of this weapon, taking into consideration the humanitarian needs, military necessities as well as global political acceptance.

Switzerland has never used cluster munitions in a situation of armed conflict. It stopped the production of cluster munitions in 2003. By associating with 24 other States parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons to the common political declaration on cluster munitions during the last Review Conference, Switzerland has reaffirmed its engagement that it will not use cluster munitions in areas with a concentration of civilians. In addition, my delegation expects that the Federal Council will accept, next week, a parliamentary motion asking for the prohibition of inaccurate and/or unreliable cluster munitions.

The CCW has been the unique intergovernmental platform which had the necessary legitimacy to deal with the issue of cluster munitions. My country notes positively that the last Review Conference of the States parties to the CCW has seen a general recognition of how much suffering is caused to the civilian population in affected areas by the use of cluster munitions. No consent could be reached on the start of a negotiations process, what we deeply regret. Nevertheless a significant number of States, including Switzerland, expressed their will in a common political declaration to work towards a new treaty on cluster munitions, because we know that the humanitarian consequences will only get worse if we do not promptly universally stop the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of inaccurate and/or unreliable cluster munitions.

Mr Chair,

As you Minister Store stated in his introduction Norway has convened this strategy conference to outline the objectives and develop a process leading to a new international instrument that addresses the unacceptable human costs resulting from the use of cluster munitions. You have remitted us a draft action plan and my delegation looks forward to work on it with you and all delegations present.

Mr Chair,

Aware of its responsibility as depositary State of the Geneva Conventions and following its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland is ready and willing to actively engage in the negotiations leading to a new international instrument on cluster munitions. My country is also concerned that the countries which are the principal producers and users of cluster munitions should, to the best extent possible and even more at this early stage, be integrated in the process. Indeed, effective international law, I mean law which will make a difference on the field for the affected population, is a reflection of an international consensus towards which we shall aim.

I thank you Mr Chair.