



**Seventh Meeting of States Parties
to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Statement

Victim Assistance

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***Septième Assemblée des Etats Parties
à la Convention sur les armes à sous-munitions***

Déclaration

Assistance aux victimes

Genève, le 5.9.2017

Mister President

Switzerland seizes the opportunity to thank Chile and Italy for the preparation of today's discussion. In the course of its Mine Action activities, Switzerland has identified three crucial good practices in the field of victim assistance:

First, Switzerland advocates in favour of an integral approach to victim assistance. A victim has manifold needs, among them physical, medical, emotional, social, educational and economic ones. Only when all these dimensions are addressed in a gender- and culturally sensitive way, comprehensive rehabilitation is feasible. The integral approach to victim assistance also includes the family or caretakers of the victim as well as the local community. The aim is to reduce the vulnerability of the victim in a sustainable way by full social inclusion.

Second, Switzerland strongly recommends working with selected partner organizations which have well-established contacts in neglected regions. There, partner organizations play a vital role as bridges between victims, local communities and state institutions. On the basis of the Human Rights Based Approach, the partner organization offers legal advisory to victims in order to demand services from the national system of victim assistance. On the other side, the partner organization trains local organizations on how to proceed after the end of its intervention. By this, the sustainability of the intervention is likely. The aim is always not to substitute state services, but to complement them on a temporary basis and to build capacity on the side of victims and communities, as well as on the side of the state.

Third, Switzerland urges to cooperate with partners who adopt a pronounced conflict-sensitive approach to their interventions. There are situations in which local communities and indigenous peoples oppose de-mining operations out of fear of the consequences, like exploitation of their lands by outside actors. In these cases, innovative approaches are necessary to enable the State Party to meet its clearance obligations. In these instances, partners should try to make comprehensive non-technical surveys in close cooperation with local communities. Thereby, it is possible to build trust and find viable solutions, which could include legal assistance in the aftermath of technical clearance. In this context, projects which do *solely* technical clearance should be re-thought as of their impact. An integral and conflict-sensitive approach may produce better results in the long run.

I thank you.