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## Débat général

### **Quatrième Conférence des Nations Unies sur les pays les moins avancés**

### **Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

Istanbul, le 10 mai 2011

S.E. M. Martin Dahinden  
Secrétaire d'Etat

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*Unofficial translation*

Mr President,

The United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries gives us the opportunity to reflect on the larger global changes over the last decade. The last conference in Brussels 2001 took place in a time of great development optimism. Set immediately after the historic global consensus of the Millennium Declaration there was hope that particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) would benefit from the "development decade" and a new global partnership.

Progress has been made over the last decade. However, not to the extent expected when we came together in Brussels in 2001. LDCs continue to face considerable challenges and only two countries have graduated from their LDC status in the last ten years. In order to achieve better results in the coming ten years, we need to improve the resilience of LDCs against multiple crises and to develop and strengthen LDCs' trade and productive capacities for inclusive growth.

Switzerland is convinced that sticking to the old paradigm of the development partnership will prevent us from seizing development opportunities in the next decade. We have to address the new and fundamental changes in the global development landscape with an open and critical approach. Therefore we have to ask ourselves:

- Is our understanding of "development partnership" still adequate? All relevant partners and actors have to be given and have to assume their responsibility for development in the new decade.
- Have we really addressed all the fundamental challenges LDCs are facing? In particular, have we sufficiently acknowledged the specific development challenges in various LDCs affected by conflict and fragility?

Let me first address the much debated issue of development partnership.

Development requires a partnership based on *mutual accountability*. Donor countries have the responsibility to support the efforts of LDCs in a manner that is transparent, predictable and consistent with the national policies of the LDCs. For their part, the authorities of partner countries, such as the LDCs, have a responsibility to deliver policies that are effective, transparent, participative and democratic. Switzerland is deeply committed to this type of partnership between traditional donor countries and developing countries. However, we also have to acknowledge that in the last decade new types of partnerships have become prominent and significant.

Emerging economies and South Partners are playing an increasingly important role. They can contribute first hand with recent and successful development experiences. They are rapidly becoming important trading, investment and technology partners for LDCs. An impressive example is our host Turkey that has played a leadership role in facilitating a new partnership for LDCs and a commendable role in bringing about the new Istanbul Programme of Action.

The role of the private sector will be more important for development in future. The private sector plays a vital role in the development of LDCs by generating employment and investment, developing new technologies and enabling sustained and inclusive economic growth. Today, ten years after its launch, the UN Global Compact encompasses over 6000 businesses that have formed local networks and are engaged in a variety of thematic initiatives. The Global Compact has been able to mobilize business leaders to come to Istanbul to discuss terms of engagement and future partnership with governments in a more concrete and substantive way than what has been possible 10 years ago. Crucial issues, such as the role of business in securing human rights, responsible investment in agriculture, anti-corruption or climate change, have been taken on by concrete initiatives.

In addition, let me stress the important role civil society plays in a renewed development partnership. The important and dramatic events in North Africa and the Middle East are testimony to the transformative role civil society can carry out in bringing about change. Civil society can play a crucial part securing and improving good governance and thereby helping to implement national development policies.

Let me now turn to the second issue concerning conflict and fragility.

Analyses that were prepared for the High Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010 show that many countries and regions which are off-track on the achievement of the MDGs suffer from fragile State institutions, conflict or a high level of armed violence. According to World Bank standards, 19 LDCs are fragile and conflict-affected states whose populations are suffering from weak institutional capacity, poor governance and political instability. Many of these countries are affected by conflicts or other forms of armed violence and severe violations of fundamental rights.

In such contexts classical development cooperation approaches do not work. The recent World Bank World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development offers strong evidence on failing approaches and proposes very concrete recommendations for better practices. Development partners must support LDCs in implementing measures that are specifically adapted to these situations in order to ensure the provision of basic services, to combat the causes of conflict and violence as well as to ensure the re-establishment of lasting peace, the rule of law, and efficient national institutions.

The turnaround in a post-conflict situation to prevent relapse into violence and inequitable development is the biggest challenge to the poorest populations – affecting 1.5 billion people on earth. There-

fore Switzerland firmly believes that this challenge has to be given sufficient attention and an important and explicit place in the implementation of the new Programme of Action.

Mr President,

Switzerland is committed to support and implement the new Programme of Action. We do so in honouring our traditional commitments. But we also support new types of partnerships with emerging economies, private sector and civil society. Switzerland is also determined to continue to address the difficult challenges of LDCs. An enabling environment for development progress of LDCs has to prioritize peacebuilding, state building and prevention of armed conflict. Finally, Switzerland emphasizes that LDCs challenges must remain at the core of the attention of all of us.

Thank you for your attention.