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Item 3

**Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on
Population and Development**

Statement by

Mr. Markus Schwyn, Head of Delegation

New York, March 30th 2009

Madame Chairperson,

Let me first thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports prepared for today's discussion on the Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Before addressing some specific aspects of these reports allow me to touch upon the achievement the agreed recommendations and commitments of Cairo represent in themselves.

The Cairo Conference fifteen years ago marked a turning point in the debate on population and development. With its emphasis on rights and principles the ICPD Programme of Action placed individuals centre stage, without neglecting the community. We stressed that individuals are no longer to be seen as objects or demographic numbers, but are to be recognised as active subjects in development, with rights, and in command of their own destinies. The right for every person to determine the number and spacing of their children, the right to attain high standards of sexual and reproductive health and the right of full and equal participation of women are crucial elements for the attainment of population goals as well as for the achievement of sustainable development in general. But moreover, and that is why the ICPD can be seen as a milestone, the Programme of Action laid out a path which leads to development based on human dignity and the comprehensive personal fulfilment of each human being.

The ICPD also stands for the valuation of women, as individuals and as essential protagonists in development. It touched upon issues which affect women in the first place and it is a plea for the advancement and the empowerment of women as well as the achievement of gender equality and shared responsibilities between women and men, girls and boys. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health are not only of utmost importance in their own right, but also central for overall progress, poverty reduction and development.

Madame Chairperson,

The implementation of the Programme of Action is of critical importance for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Fifteen years after the ICPD and nine years after the Millennium Summit it appears very likely that in many countries the internationally agreed development goals, including the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action and particularly MDG5 related to maternal health, won't be met within

intended timeframes. Therefore, we all need to vigorously pursue the path laid out in Cairo and make additional efforts in the implementation of these goals.

As the reports under this item demonstrate, there are close linkages between all the main areas of the Programme of Action. These interrelations, and the mentioned links between ICPD and the broader development agenda, entail the necessity of applying a comprehensive approach. Therefore it is important to integrate population, sexual and reproductive health as well as gender issues into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

With regard to health, we consider the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to be of special importance. The integration of sexual and reproductive health, including prevention of and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, as well as family planning into primary health services is key.

Concerning the promotion of rights, specifically the advancement of gender equality, the sharing of responsibilities by both men and women remains of utmost importance. It is only through the involvement of men and boys in all areas of family responsibility as well as in sexual and reproductive life that an improvement in those same areas is possible. Not only rights need to be equally distributed but also responsibilities.

Madame Chairperson,

We take note with concern of the serious shortcomings regarding the financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Programme of Action, as illustrated by the revised estimates. Additional efforts need to be undertaken by all actors. Bilateral, multilateral assistance and domestic budget allocations need to be increased. Switzerland remains fully committed to the ICPD Programme of Action and will make all possible efforts to contribute to its implementation.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.

