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**Commission for Social Development  
"Priority theme: Poverty eradication"**

Swiss Statement

presented by  
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Mr. President,

The eradication of poverty must become a reality for all, in line with the deadlines of the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving this is a challenge of strategic importance which will require a sustained effort from every region of the world.

Our Commission must ensure that its work advances the debate by focusing on themes that fall within its remit. For this reason, my statement will centre on the links between poverty eradication and the other two key commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration, namely social integration, productive employment and decent work for all.

Economic growth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for alleviating poverty. One of the main goals of Swiss development cooperation is the integration of developing countries in the global economy and the promotion of – socially, economically and environmentally – sustainable growth.

Poverty can only be reduced if as many people as possible are able to reap the benefits of such growth. When the gains are limited to only one part of the population, the result is inequalities and ultimately social tensions. The OECD observed growing inequalities across the world, even in countries that had been largely spared from such problems. It therefore should come as no surprise that social justice and good governance are two of the key demands made by citizens in a great number of countries. This will require that the democratic and political dialogue leads to robust and effective social policies that also bolster growth. Social dialogue must reconcile individual interests to ensure that social protection is effective, based on a broad consensus, as well as extending to minorities.

Although poverty reduction efforts in developing countries rightly dominate our discussions, we should not forget that poverty is a global problem which affects industrialized countries too. Poverty and social exclusion hit certain parts of the population particularly hard, such as large and single-parent families, young adults, the working poor and the long-term unemployed.

The causal relationship between growth and poverty alleviation is a complex one. Improving working conditions and productivity is one of the main challenges, but a sufficient number of decent and sustainable jobs must also be created. This will require greater policy coherence, which itself could be achieved by stepping up prevention efforts targeted specifically at getting more young people into training, thereby boosting their chances of finding work. Another way in which we could strengthen coherence is by continuing to support individuals returning to the job market through the recognition of informally acquired skills.

General economic conditions coupled with an active labour market policy should boost productivity, increase job market integration and facilitate the search for new solutions that are geared towards a green economy. This type of coherent approach should offer new job opportunities and sources of income for all parts of society and for all social groups. Consequently, the centerpiece of economic policies must be the creation of productive and decent jobs. These policies should, however, also improve the access of the poor to productive resources. Switzerland is committed to the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organization and to greater policy coherence, both nationally and internationally.

As our Commission noted in 2011, social protection is an integral part of any coherent approach. Switzerland supports the efforts undertaken by the international community to develop a basic social protection floor. My delegation calls on all States and social partners to join forces so that the International Labour Organization will be in a position to set a standard on this issue next June. Applying this standard in practice will require an effort on the part of every country according to its specific needs.

The poverty eradication priorities and commitments of Swiss cooperation efforts seek to harmonize and improve the effectiveness of development work. In doing so, the cooperation ensures that there is broad-based democratic support among the population, as well as the greater involvement of parliaments, civil society and the private sector. It also allows the voices of the most disadvantaged to be heard during discussions on the development process.

Switzerland has adopted and implemented a national poverty reduction strategy, which seeks to improve the lives of those affected by addressing issues that are specific to each stage in life.

All of our societies, regardless of their level of economic, social and demographic development, must rise to the challenges of coherence and solidarity. But they should do so in their own particular way. Switzerland favours an integrated approach built upon the three key commitments of the 1995 Social Summit. If poverty is to be eradicated once and for all, social inclusion and particularly labour market integration must extend to all members of society.

To be credible and operational, we must act swiftly and appropriately. As the Commission on Social Development it is incumbent upon us to foster a broad-based consensus built on:

- respect for democracy and promotion of basic human rights;
- the fulfillment of the three key commitments of the Copenhagen Summit and, thus
- social integration through decent work, and
- the provision of effective social protection.

Consequently, our Commission will be equipped to promote strong social leadership as regards the attainment of the first and most important Millennium Goal: poverty eradication. However, I think it is important that we do not work in isolation. Instead we should take inspiration from civil society and its wealth of experience when formulating our recommendations.