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**Mission permanente de la Suisse
auprès des Nations Unies à New York**

**Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United
Nations in New York**

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Commission de la population et du développement
Quarante-sixième session

Point 4 de l'ordre du jour
Débat général consacré à l'expérience des pays dans le domaine de la
population:
Nouvelles tendances en matière de migration : aspects démographiques

Déclaration de la délégation suisse

New York, le 23 avril 2013

Check against delivery

Commission on Population and Development
Forty-sixth session

Item 4
General debate on national experience in population matters:
New trends in migration – demographic aspects

Statement by the Swiss Delegation

New York, April 23th 2013

Mr. President,

The Swiss delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General and the UN entities involved for the very informative reports for this session. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) pioneered the global recognition of migration as a development force rather than a development failure. However, the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action (PoA) remains to be completed. In particular, in addition to the migration issues to be intensively debated in this session, big challenges remain to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and advance progress toward gender equality. Switzerland reaffirms its commitment to achieve the goals of the ICPD PoA and the key actions for its further implementation.

With the greatest number of people ever living outside their country or region of origin, we recognize that migration can have a great impact on individual's lives, the wellbeing of families, communities and the economic, social and cultural development of entire nations. Migration can be a net positive, such as in the case of the many millions of international migrants that support family members back home through remittances to the Global South, which are estimated to be 3-4 times higher than the overseas development assistance (ODA). However, as much as migration entails benefits, it also involves trade-offs and costs to migrants, their families and societies. Xenophobia, discrimination and exploitation, including through human trafficking, in particular of women and girls are some of them.

International migration is important for Switzerland. 26.4 % of the population is foreign born. Migrants have contributed very substantially to the economic growth and welfare of Switzerland.

The entry into force of the new Foreigners Act in 2008, brought some concrete improvements for migrants in Switzerland, for instance regarding their place of residence and family reunification, and it underlined the importance of integration.

The Swiss Foreign Migration Policy is based on three principles:

- 1) a comprehensive approach to migration that considers the economic, social and cultural opportunities offered by migration without losing sight of its challenges (e.g. irregular migration, return, human trafficking);
- 2) close partnerships between Switzerland and countries of origin, transit and destination combined with a balanced consideration of the interests of all stakeholders, and
- 3) close inter-ministerial cooperation by means of a whole of government approach to ensure that Swiss migration policy remains coherent.

In 2008, in order to meet the challenges caused by the changes in international migration and the increase of the complexity of migratory movements, Switzerland created the innovative instrument of migration partnerships. Their objective is to approach migration comprehensively and achieve an equitable balance between the interests of Switzerland, its partner countries and the migrants themselves, develop a mutual understanding of the challenges, find constructive solutions, promote opportunities as well as create synergies between the different players involved. Projects and programs are supported, such as in relation to migration and development, integration, promotion of voluntary return, the fight against human trafficking and the strengthening of state structures in countries of origin. So far, Switzerland has established migration partnerships with Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, as well as Nigeria and recently Tunisia.

In 2007, Switzerland developed the concept of “Protection in the region”, designed to strengthen the protection of refugees, vulnerable migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their region of origin. National authorities are strengthened to establish fair and efficient asylum procedures. At the same time, civil society actors and international organizations are supported in their efforts to ensure protection and to improve the living conditions of the people concerned.

In order to ensure the strategic implementation of the protocols to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), Switzerland has launched in October 2012 a National Action Plan to fight Human Trafficking developed with all relevant Ministries and some specialized NGOs. Trafficking is tackled in the context of our migration partnerships and “protection in the region” programs through partner agencies in close cooperation with local authorities as part of a comprehensive migration policy approach. In our multilateral efforts we are dedicated to contributing to the development of standards and norms to fight trafficking, including through an initiative aiming at clarifying the definition of “trafficking” in the UNTOC protocol.

Switzerland recognizes the serious implications climate change has and will continue to have for displacement in the future. While many find refuge within their own country, large numbers cross international borders in their search for protection. For the latter, responses are currently insufficient. In order to address this gap, Switzerland and Norway have recently launched the so-called Nansen Initiative, a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of natural disasters.

In the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics, led by Switzerland and Bangladesh, it was underlined that comprehensive and coherent policies are needed to address the implications of population dynamics, including migration. Development frameworks that recognize and incorporate the reality and effects of migration are the necessary foundation for migrants, their communities and governments in countries of origin, transit and destination to harness the development benefits of migration. The development potential that migration offers can be used to a greater extent if migration issues are more systematically mainstreamed in sectoral policies or, more generally, in regional, national or local development strategies.

This year marks a crucial year for the phenomenon of migration at the United Nations. Not only does the ongoing Commission on Population and Development address the multifaceted implications of migration for migrants and society, and strives to advance the implementation of migration related objectives of the ICPD Program of Action. This October, the second UN High-level Dialogue (UNHLD) on International Migration and Development will provide a landmark occasion for the international community to take stock of the progress made and to further advance the global agenda on international migration and development. Switzerland will actively engage in the High-level Dialogue at ministerial level. We intend to contribute to the discussions in a pragmatic and constructive manner that adds substantive value to the debate by shaping the migration and development agenda, including the new sustainable development framework beyond 2015, through our concrete policy approaches and experiences. Switzerland is convinced that the High-level Dialogue will serve to highlight the added-value of international cooperation and coherent approaches to migration at all levels, including the UN as a universal platform for political debate.

Thank you