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Towards global partnerships

Swiss Statement

presented by
Mr. Pio Wennubst
Counsellor

Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations

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Mr. Chair,

Global Partnerships have become widespread and are widely acknowledged as a very effective method for advancing United Nations principles and values, internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as commitments by the international community. Today's complex and pressing problems require comprehensive approaches involving all stakeholders simultaneously.

In its 10 years of existence the UN Global Compact has become the most successful and strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with core UN principles and values. This ever-increasing understanding is reflected in the Global Compact's rapid growth. With over 8700 corporate participants and other stakeholders from over 130 countries, it is today the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world. Overall, the Global Compact pursues two complementary objectives: firstly to mainstream the 10 principles in business activities around the world and secondly to catalyze actions in support of broader UN goals, including the MDGs.

Switzerland expects that the UN Global Compact, as the platform between the United Nations and the private sector, will both deepen and widen its engagement with the 4 following goals:

1. The UN Global Compact's unique role in successfully mobilizing the private sector in support of major UN conferences is crucial and needs to be reinforced. After its successful role in organizing the private sector track at the 4th UN conference for LDCs in Istanbul, Switzerland expects the Global Compact to play an important role in the mobilization of the private sector for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. Without strong engagement of the private sector, a green economy is not going to take off. Corporate sustainable development must be part of the agenda in Rio.
2. Switzerland expects the UN Global Compact to continue taking the leadership for new and emerging themes. The UN Women's Empowerment principles, launched in 2010, are an important example. More innovative results should emerge from the Global Compact LEAD platform, also touching on challenging themes, such as anti-corruption and the role of investment in high risk areas.
3. Membership growth is important, but it has to go hand in hand with maintaining integrity and accountability. Switzerland supports the enhanced integrity measures of the UN Global Compact membership through the mandatory communication of progress. The UN Global Compact can only become part of a true stakeholder dialogue if companies report and disclose their implementation efforts. We support the UN Global Compact Office's continued efforts to ensure compliance with the mandatory reporting and its work towards global reporting standards.

4. Although the UN Global Compact is today's largest CSR initiative, much needs to be done in order to assure the necessary outreach and its effective role with regards to the 70,000 internationally relevant international businesses. Growth can only happen if the initiative takes root and engages in national contexts, especially in rapidly growing emerging economies. Therefore, the strengthening of local UN Global Compact networks is a logical and important step. They will play an important role in contextualizing and promoting Corporate Social Responsibility in the national context.

Switzerland is aware that the UN System, through its funds and programmes, is challenged to engage more deeply with the private sector in the years to come. We therefore call upon the UN Global Compact Office to further support the UN private sector focal points and play an important role in facilitating learning and coherence across the UN System, in order to foster cooperation with the private sector while maintaining the UN's integrity and independence.

Finally, governments have an important role to play. We call upon the member states to acknowledge Corporate Sustainability as an important means for Sustainable Development. A continued support of governments through voluntary contributions can assure the growth, innovation, effectiveness and independence of the UN Global Compact initiative and its office.

Thank you.