

Switzerland's Initial Steps of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (10 min. speech) – NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Mr. Vice-President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It is a great opportunity for Switzerland to share with you its initial steps in implementing the 2030 Agenda. I am encouraged to see such sizable participation in this first High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. It shows that, collectively, we have left the negotiation phase and are now ready to start implementation. It also shows our willingness to share experiences, identify challenges, and come up with solutions across regions and different contexts.

2. From the very beginning, Switzerland had taken an active role in the process leading to the 2030 Agenda. My country is particularly proud to be **among the early movers**, while at the same time acknowledging the **challenges** ahead of us. One of these challenges we all have in common: **“to leave no one behind”**.

3. Please allow me to highlight five elements of Switzerland's implementation efforts so far.

First (and, perhaps, most importantly): There is a commitment at the highest level of the Swiss Government. The concrete steps to be taken towards implementation of the Agenda 2030, both nationally and internationally, were decided by the full cabinet in December 2015. This kick-started an inclusive, whole-of-government **implementation process in Switzerland**.

Second: Partnerships are important. Close cooperation between government and non-governmental actors as well as with sub-national and local authorities have a long tradition in Switzerland. This is true in the area of domestic policies as well as international cooperation.

This is also reflected in our delegation to this Forum. It includes representatives from civil society, the private sector and academia. Given the crucial role Switzerland attributes to business, especially finance, in the implementation of the SDGs, I am pleased that, following my presentation, Ms. Sabine Döbeli, CEO of Swiss Sustainable Finance, will give a private sector perspective on Switzerland's initial implementation measures.

Third: A coherent strategy is essential, if we want to do justice to the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. We need to tackle economic, social, and environmental challenges all at once.

In Switzerland, we do not have to start from scratch. The **federal government has had multi-year Sustainable Development Strategies since 1997**.

The **most recent one**, adopted last January, comprises an **action plan** in nine policy fields for sustainable development. It lists a **long-term vision** as well as **concrete medium-term challenges for Switzerland, e.g. in the field of sustainable consumption and production**. The action plan makes a **direct link** to the Agenda 2030. **Further alignments with the 2030 Agenda in future strategies are envisaged**.

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Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development calls for a high level of policy coordination between all government entities concerned. Let's take public health: 50% of the factors that impact Swiss citizen's health are outside the realm of public health policy. The new Swiss Health Strategy 2020 recognizes that. It calls upon governmental and non-governmental actors in the area of public health to work closely together with those dealing with environmental, economic and social policy.

In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, it is equally important to achieve **coherence between the various sectors of foreign policy and between domestic and foreign policy**. The question is: how do we deal with conflicting policy interests, e.g. between trade and development, protection of the environment and economic growth, etc.? Again, in the area of health, Switzerland adopted the "Swiss Health Foreign Policy" based on a multi-sectoral, cross-ministerial approach. It also involves broad consultations with the sub-national level and non-state actors.

Fourth: Reliable data is crucial. Switzerland has had a comprehensive **sustainable development monitoring system**, called **MONET**, since 2003. This system holistically measures the quality of life of the present generation as well as the equality of distribution, both geographically and over time.

Among other things, the system **monitors energy dependence, remittances by migrants, greenhouse gas emissions**, but also **duty-free imports from developing countries**. It provides disaggregated data related to gender, age, or migratory status.

The most recent update of the national monitoring system incorporates gender-related indicators to track progress of SDG 5. It will be further expanded and also take into account indicators recommended by the UN Statistical Commission.

Fifth: **Future generations will measure us by our actions, not by our strategies**. This is particularly true for our international cooperation.

Given the importance of **domestic resource mobilization** as a key driver for development, Switzerland will **increase its support for the establishment of fair tax systems and efficient financial administrations** in developing countries.

We are also committed to a **coordinated international effort to eliminate the causes of illicit financial flows**, based on international standards set by recognised bodies. Furthermore, Switzerland has been at the forefront among developed countries to return stolen assets to their countries of origin, and we will continue to be.

Switzerland remains **committed to Official Development Assistance** and currently ranks eighth among the 29 member states of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. The largest part of Swiss ODA is deployed in the poorest countries, in conflict-affected contexts, and fragile states. But we also recognize the lingering challenges middle-income countries can face.

4. What will be Switzerland's next steps?

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After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, a **new and comprehensive consultation procedure and platform - the "2030 Dialogue on Sustainable Development"** - had been created. It will allow for even **broader stakeholder involvement** in the months and years to come.

Furthermore, an inter-ministerial process will:

- clarify processes and responsibilities in the Federal Administration;
- conduct a baseline study and gap analysis to define future areas of action;
- expand the Swiss system of sustainable development indicators;
- determine the modalities for stakeholder participation in consultations and in implementation partnerships for the 2030 Agenda;
- align the reporting with UN Guidelines in order to enhance comparability.
- Based on these steps we expect to be able to present a substantive report on our progress made as well as first implementation results at the High-Level Political Forum in 2018.**

Thank you.

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