

7th Forum for the Future, Doha, Qatar, 11-13 January 2011

**Partnership Dialogue for political, economic and social reform**

**Statement of Mr Peter Maurer, State Secretary  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA),  
Switzerland**

[Check against delivery]

Chairpersons,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me thank Qatar and Canada for hosting and organizing this year's Forum for the Future in Doha. By the means of three well planned regional meetings and six national seminars in the run up of the conference, you managed to raise once again the level and the quality of dialogue and cooperation between governments, civil society and private sector. In particular, I would like to welcome the civil society's and the private sector's important contribution to this vivid exchange of ideas around peaceful resolution of conflict, the role of the youth or corporate social responsibility. This highly participative preparation is not without common points to my countries understanding of political decision-making. As you are aware, we are staunch advocates of "bottom up" processes. We value action-based dialogue as a key element to insure stability and cohesion in society, especially when it comes to peaceful co-existence between different worldviews.

Cooperation with civil society is also an important element within Switzerland's foreign policy. Let me just mention three examples relevant to the broad middle-east north African region (BMENA):

- Within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations, Switzerland supports the set-up of a network of a diverse and global community of young adults by using new media and communication technologies to promote understanding and empathy within and between their societies.
- A second example might be Switzerland's engagement for peace and stability in the BMENA region through the so called Geneva Initiative. The Geneva Initiative is the first major project drawing on Israeli and Palestinian

civil society, consisting in a negotiated model accord for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. Civil society members on both sides have not only drafted a model agreement, but have also elaborated detailed suggestions for implementation in a series of annexes. To date, the document remains the most comprehensive illustration of how peace could look like. On this basis, Switzerland continues to support the Initiative's outreach activities to sectors of the public who remain skeptical of the possibility to reach peace.

- Finally, Switzerland is engaged in a series of civil society activities concerning water security, promotion of human rights and regional security. We also support ongoing dialogues between politically engaged Islamic movements. Based on its expertise and specific know-how, civil society organization play an important part to implement such activities.

One of the first achievements of the Forum for the Future was the set-up of the Foundation for the Future in 2006. We commend the Board and the staff of the Foundation for the tremendous work over the past years. Given the proposal and ideas of new projects and institutions, such as the Gender Institute or a regional centre on conflict resolution and democratic transition, we would like to underline the importance of securing financial sustainability of such venture right from the start.

Switzerland is convinced that the Forum for the Future will remain a strategic platform of respectful exchange between governments, civil society and private sector, to promote peace and stability in the BMENA region through action-oriented dialogue, which supports inclusion, democratic participation and economic integration.

I thank you for your kind attention.