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**STATEMENT BY  
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VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL AND HEAD OF THE  
FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF  
SWITZERLAND, AT THE 2010 OSCE SUMMIT**

Astana, 1 December 2010

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE remains to this day the only security organization in our region capable of bringing together around the same table all the States, whether large or small and regardless of whether they are members of an alliance or not. Its concept of multidimensional security is today more relevant than ever. Switzerland has contributed to this effort since the beginning of the CSCE process, and it remains committed to this Organization, which, as we see it, still possesses incontestable utility for the security of our continent.

Switzerland is most concerned with security issues in Europe. Our neutrality does not hinder our capacity for commitment, quite the contrary. Not being a member of any alliance, we are in a position to contribute to the peaceful resolution of disagreements in Europe and beyond. We believe that relations between States should be governed by law and not by force. And while we still place human security at the centre of our concerns, we are convinced that politico-military issues continue to play an essential role in the security of our continent.

Arms control and disarmament are an integral part of our security policy at the international level. Switzerland champions a pragmatic policy and aims at the lowest possible level of national and international armament. Military activities must become even more transparent and more predictable. International co-operation in the security sphere must be intensified and mutual trust strengthened.

Any arms control regime must be non-discriminatory, verifiable and, if possible, legally binding.

In this regard, Switzerland welcomes the prospect of negotiating a new instrument on conventional forces in Europe. My country is ready to participate in such negotiations within the OSCE, which constitutes an ideal platform equipped with the necessary experience and expertise. A treaty of this kind would strengthen European security.

For the last 20 years, the Vienna Document has given us a unique instrument for promoting confidence and security. This document needs to be updated so that it can continue to contribute to our common security.

This Summit comes at an opportune time. The States recognize today more than ever the need for multilateral solutions. Russia has initiated a debate on the European security architecture. NATO has just adopted its new concept of security. In both cases, one can see a renewed willingness to tackle these questions together. Switzerland welcomes the common willingness of the NATO member countries and Russia to renew their relations and strengthen their co-operation.

While we therefore see these developments and prospects as encouraging, we also note that our record in terms of conflict prevention and management is mixed.

Crises and conflicts are to this day unresolved and remain a source of constant concern for us all, including the most recent one in the Caucasus, with the very negative consequences for this region, which is greatly affected by the resulting political instability and humanitarian problems. And yet, the OSCE has potential that is today largely unused.

I see several reasons for this. First, the importance of respecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy for long-term stability on our continent does not seem to be recognized by everyone. Second, we note that the willingness to compromise has diminished. Third, the existing mechanisms do not allow the OSCE to face the current challenges because of a lack of trust among the participating States of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Summit provides us with a valuable opportunity to overcome the deadlock of the last few years. The Corfu Process has given rise to several new ideas. Let us put them into practice. We need a plan of action based on a specific negotiated mandate with clear objectives and timetables. Above all, we must strengthen the operational capacities of the OSCE in its primary mission – conflict prevention and resolution.

I am convinced that our common security interests will prevail over the differences that continue to exist among us. Let us therefore begin with the areas in which we have a good chance of quickly reaching a consensus. I mentioned strengthening conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. The same applies to the fight against transnational threats. That having been said, it is essential for us to reaffirm all of our commitments, including the commitment to respect fundamental principles as regards human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Kazakhstan for the generosity it has shown in hosting our meeting. The choice of Astana underscores the growing importance of Central Asia in the eyes of the OSCE. We hope to see Kazakhstan continue to play an important role in the OSCE.

Thank you.