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Concluding Meeting of the 25th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
“Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships
for Security in the OSCE Region”
Prague, 6-8 September 2016
Session I “The Way to Vienna”

Statement by Switzerland

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Austrian chair for providing us with two “food for thought” papers. They form a good basis for the reflection of existing achievements in the OSCE and for our further discussion.

With regard to the first paper “Promoting Economic Participation in the OSCE Area”, it is clear to us that there is a link between economic participation and peaceful societies. When people can live a meaningful life by earning a living from their daily work, they have lesser reasons to engage in protest or become violent. And on the other hand, societies that use the full potential of their population will be more prosperous. In this context, the economic empowerment of women takes a special role: Women's enhanced participation in the labor market, as well as access to, and ownership of economic resources contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, prosperity, competitiveness, and the well-being of societies.

In the Swiss experience, good governance and a set of complementary, mutually reinforcing institutions are the keys for economic participation. Good governance and prevention of corruption, inter alia by a strong, independent and upright judiciary, are crucial for establishing a level, barrier-free playing field in which the private sector can develop. A strong private sector, in turn, is key for establishing and maintaining

the institutions needed for vocational training of its employees, and for job provision. We are convinced that effective and transparent state institutions protect against injustice, marginalization and ultimately radicalization. We would therefore welcome a draft decision that focuses on good governance and the strengthening of an independent judiciary in particular, as well as on cooperation with the private sector in establishing the necessary institutions. Special attention should also be paid to the economic empowerment of women. In all of these issues, the OSCE's field missions could take important roles.

With regard to the second paper on "Greening our Economies and Fostering Environmental Co-operation in the OSCE Area", we believe that it contains many avenues to further cooperation. Reducing environmental risks is a topic of increasing relevance, also with a view to climate change. With its strong presence on the ground the OSCE is well-placed to address this challenge, and this has already been reflected in Ministerial Decision 6/14. But there have been new developments, such as the Sendai Framework or the Sustainable Development Goals. A new draft decision could reflect these developments. It could also strengthen the role of the Aarhus centres in implementation. As we stressed in our opening statement, we would also be supportive of a stronger link of the OSCE's work to the Sustainable Development Goals, which could be reflected in such a decision.

We also welcome the focus put on fostering good environmental governance. Indeed, the OSCE has a strong impact with regard to stakeholder participation and transparency via its Aarhus centers, which should be further strengthened. With regard to promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, we believe that the OSCE can play a specific role in promoting the regional integration of electricity networks and markets, which acts as a buffer for electricity peaks that go along with the phasing-in of new renewables. The protection of energy networks from natural hazards could also be a topic of relevance to foster regional cooperation. With regard to promoting new renewable energies we see a clear role for multilateral investment banks.

Thank you.