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STATEMENT BY SWITZERLAND AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

16 September 2010

In response to the Secretary General's Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to begin by thanking the Secretary General, the Secretariat's Gender Section, the field presences and the three institutions for this detailed evaluation report, together with its recommendations and annexes. We also welcome the appointment of a Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Gender Equality, the innovative electronic newsletter *The Gender Monitor*, and the recently distributed CD toolkit, "Gender matters in the OSCE".

Equality is not limited to women's participation in politics and the economy. Only the legal and, above all, the institutional frameworks, as they are being discussed today thanks to the evaluation report on gender equality, can make such participation possible. The OSCE statistics for the past five years now show quite positive gender developments: women's share of OSCE higher management posts has reached a historic high of 30 per cent. Projects and programmes incorporating the gender perspective are growing steadily in all three dimensions. On the other hand, there is still barely one field mission under female leadership, and only for the second time in the OSCE's history has a woman been appointed as head of an OSCE institution, as Representative on Freedom of the Media. The basic problem remains that the gender issue often is not attended to at a sufficiently high level, or is handled by less experienced people and then on a short-term basis. This means that we have to work on the lack of authority, seniority and continuity.

An important set of issues within the national and international gender discussion concerns women, peace and security. In 2010, United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 marks its tenth year of existence. In that connection, a conference was held yesterday in Geneva, organized by the United Nations, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). This anniversary offers us all the opportunity to take a critical look at the worldwide results of implementation of this resolution and to discuss its future challenges and substantive limitations, together with the three follow-up resolutions (Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1889).

Switzerland is convinced that women can make a positive and innovative contribution to the peace process and should be encouraged in this respect. Therefore, we are taking this set of issues seriously, reviewing the 2007 national action plan for the anniversary year, and also taking the opportunity to assess the limits of implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Between now and the OSCE Summit in Astana, a short, intensive preparatory period lies before us. Until then, let us build upon the momentum generated by the anniversary of resolution 1325 and together look for ways to anchor the gender perspective in our Organization's multidimensional approaches to security. Switzerland thus welcomes the inclusion of information on women, peace and security in the questionnaire on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Today's evaluation report is not lacking in further proposals and recommendations. Moreover, the United Nations has launched a new entity for women's affairs (UN Women) and established posts for special representatives with a view to better protection of women and girls in armed conflict. Our regional Organization can draw inspiration from this too.