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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 June 2010

**In response to the statement by the United Nations High Representative for
the Alliance of Civilizations, President Jorge Sampaio**

Mr. Chairperson,

Switzerland joins in warmly welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to this forum, and thanks him for his interesting comments. We have supported this worldwide venture from the beginning, and we should like to take the opportunity today to express our gratitude for President Sampaio's tireless commitment to the Alliance.

Switzerland is convinced that the daily challenge presented by the coexistence of different cultures and religions can be mastered, above all, through practical and concrete co-operation. In order to develop confidence, co-operation must begin with specific projects. This "bottom-up approach" favoured by us creates common, positive experience at the grass-roots level on which dialogue and intensified co-operation can build.

In this spirit, we support the launching of thematic platforms within the Alliance of Civilizations decided on recently at the Third Global Forum of the Alliance in Rio de Janeiro. These platforms are established on an interregional and interreligious basis and deal with themes that are essential to meeting the goals of the Alliance, such as the promotion of media competence or improved co-operation between humanitarian and development organizations with varying world views. The platform members endeavour to avoid the "trench warfare" that often characterizes such discussions at the multilateral level. We are convinced that, with concrete project work, substantial progress in the direction of a better understanding between different cultures and religions can be achieved.

Switzerland also welcomes and supports the good co-operation between the Alliance and the OSCE. President Sampaio's visit here in Vienna is a sign of such co-operation, as was the participation of Secretary General de Brichambaut at the Alliance Forum in Rio.

Mr. Chairperson, I wish President Sampaio much continued success with the Alliance of Civilizations, and should like to thank you for your attention.