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General Debate

Statement by the State Secretary for Economic Affairs of Switzerland

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Speaker: Mr. Raymund Furrer

*Not checked against delivery**

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UNCTAD XIV (Nairobi, Kenya) – General Debate

Opening Statement by State Secretary Raymund Furrer

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

Switzerland

Date & Time: 20 June 2016 9h10 sharp (7 minute maximum)

Place: Kenyatta International Convention Center (KICC), room Shimba

- F I N A L -

Madam President (Mr./Madam Vice-President),
Excellencies, Honorable delegates,

I would like to begin by expressing Switzerland's profound gratitude to President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Kenyan people for their generous invitation to the global community – youth, civil society, private sector, and governments – to gather here in Nairobi. As host to a number of United Nations Agencies, including UNCTAD, Switzerland, like Kenya, is a keen proponent of the multilateral system.

The membership of UNCTAD is tasked this week with discussing pressing issues on the international agenda and to forge a work program, through which UNCTAD can make a meaningful and lasting contribution in formulating global policy responses. Our common responsibility is towards our populations – to foster solidarity among them and, through our cooperation, to reduce their exposure to global risks, to reduce poverty, and to renew their confidence in the future.

In recent months, the international community has taken ambitious commitments for global action through the conclusion of significant multilateral processes:

- (i) The Agenda 2030 contributing to global development, promoting human welfare and protecting the environment with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- (ii) The UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris which expressed its determination to address climate change with urgency to slow global warming significantly through ambitious reduction targets for Green House Gas emissions.

- (iii) The Addis Ababa Financing for development Conference which provides a new framework to finance sustainable development, and achieve the SDGs.
- (iv) The Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference where here in Nairobi last December, WTO-Ministers reiterated the need to strengthen the multilateral trading system to ensure prosperity and welfare for all Members, including developing country Members, and in particular the least-developed countries.

Switzerland is committed to work diligently towards contributing to the implementation of these commitments that promote peace and freedom, eliminate poverty and hunger and foster sustainable economic production and consumption patterns.

Against the achievement of this framework, we must not, however, rest on our laurels. This UNCTAD Conference is charged with moving “from decision to actions” and to bring to life the commitments that correspond to UNCTAD’s mandate and core competence where it truly can make a difference. The trade and development domain is a complex nexus of international movement of goods, services and capital; government policies to promote innovation, technology, competition and skills-development; and regulatory rules to achieve public policy objectives or implement international climate commitments, as well as to improve governance systems at all levels.

While this nexus is broad, it is imperative that UNCTAD targets areas where it has a proven track record of adding value. In these areas, UNCTAD’s contribution is complementary and can be augmented through collective action and collaboration with other multilateral institutions within the UN-system and beyond (e.g. WTO, World Bank, OECD) as well as with bilateral and non-state actors.

In this spirit, our work during this week should lead to tangible results: A program of analytical work, of processes to reach consensus-based policy recommendations and guidelines, and of capacity building which bears in mind local needs and global imperatives. In other words, we must remain focused and prag-matic to achieve a mandate that tackles concrete economic, social and ecological problems and remains sufficiently strategic to respond to changes and seize opportunities in an evolving development context. This effort is necessary to ensure that overall coherence between the different activities at the policy and operational levels is maintained.

In order to discharge its mandate in the most effective way possible, UNCTAD as an institution must continue strengthen-ing its internal structures, especially towards enhancing the collaboration and coherence of its divisions’ work. We note the initial steps towards improving results orientation, including the results

measurement and management system, and encourage continued efforts in this regard.

Turning to technical assistance, Switzerland is participating in a number of Roundtables and Side Events at the Conference. We seek to highlight how UNCTAD, through Switzerland's assistance, is implementing biotrade schemes that promote the protection of biodiversity while contributing to alleviating poverty for local communities; or how sustainable productive capacities can be reinforced in LDCs; or how proactive green economic policies can bolster competitiveness, help SMEs integrate international value chains, and create decent jobs.

Indeed, Switzerland and UNCTAD have a long tradition as partners in delivering technical assistance. This, not simply because Switzerland is host to UNCTAD in Geneva, but more profoundly because we believe in the fundamental contribution UNCTAD makes to development. In this respect, let me commend Secretary-General Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi on his leadership and energy to gear UNCTAD to respond to the challenges the membership collectively faces.

We congratulate him particularly for having introduced Results-Based Monitoring for UNCTAD's technical assistance work. As donor countries, it is of critical importance that the outcome and impact of our development cooperation assistance contributes to the development plans of the partner countries. It is also our duty to demonstrate the impact of Switzerland's development cooperation assistance to our national constituencies. Moreover we are convinced that this contributes also to increase efficiency more generally.

Madam President (Mr./Madam Vice-President),
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The challenges before us and path forward concern us all. As we assemble this week in Nairobi, in Kenya, in *Africa* we are directly reminded of the challenges and our responsibility to support UNCTAD's work. Africa has tremendous, largely untapped wealth – not the least of which includes innovation, cultures and human factors – which reminds us of the considerable potential that sustainable trade can unlock for a better future for all, especially the youth of developing countries. Switzerland is confident that this week, the Membership will collectively and confidently take an important step in our endeavor towards our common goals.

I thank you for your attention.