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## **International Afghanistan Conference on 5 December**

### **Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Ambassador Beat Nobs  
Assistant State Secretary for Asia-Pacific  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs**

**Bonn, 5 December 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the successful organisation of the Bonn Conference and thanking the Government of Federal Republic of Germany for the support extended to all participants on this very important occasion.

We have gathered in Bonn to examine our future engagement with a post transition Afghanistan. Switzerland has been a long standing partner of Afghanistan and we began providing aid in the early seventies. As an active member of the international community, my country supports the transition process as a whole and will remain committed to contribute to the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan – until 2014 and beyond.

Switzerland welcomes the Afghan led national reconciliation and integration process as an important step towards a stable and independent state. In addition, a constructive and inclusive involvement of neighbouring countries is critical. In this respect Switzerland welcomes the results of the Istanbul Conference of November 2<sup>nd</sup> and encourages the regional actors to build up operational mechanisms aimed at fostering regional cooperation. We are all aware of the tremendous investment and economic opportunities in the Heart of Asia and are convinced that the region as a whole will benefit from a successful transition, politically, in terms of security, but most of all economically. At this juncture, where tensions easily flare up, the region has a particular responsibility and forward looking actions are required.

Mr. Chairman,

We support a coordinated and coherent 3-D approach (diplomacy, development, defence) but are convinced that a clear distinction between development cooperation and military operations has to be maintained. Our activities are civilian in nature and aim at enhancing the long term resilience and human security of the Afghan people. Our assistance program focuses on governance and livelihood enhancement. While providing poor rural communities with much needed support to improve their living conditions, Switzerland is, for instance, also a long term supporter of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and will continue its commitment towards the protection of Human Rights in Afghanistan. My country is also supporting local administrations in increasing their capacity for a timely delivery of quality goods and services to the public as well as supporting the enrolment of female police officers in the Afghan National Police Force. Delivery of goods and services in a transparent and accountable way is a key element for a successful transition and will ultimately increase citizens' trust in the Afghan institutions.

The ability to finance the national budget is a concern to all of us and we reckon that Afghanistan will need further assistance in the future. However, a successful transition can only work if measures are adopted to foster Afghanistan's economic potential. Market access for Afghan products is one thing, investment climate in the country is another and we welcome the nine points of the Euromines Forum held in Brussels on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Switzerland supports the idea of upgrading trade routes between Central and South Asia and believes that regional actors should play a leading role in such an initiative.

My government welcomes the presence of civil society representatives at this Conference. We understand the concerns of Afghans, in particular of Afghan women, about the transition process. Indeed, while security is essential, it is only one element of a successful transition. We support the

idea of a special forum for dialogue, confidence building and exchange of information in order to strengthen the link between the Government of Afghanistan, the international community and the civil society. Building a national consensus for transition from war to peace in Afghanistan should be a participatory process; the exclusion of essential partners, such as the various sectors of civil society, would be a recipe for failure. The transition must not undermine the progress that has been achieved during the past 10 years in terms of human rights and governance. A whole generation of Afghans benefited from the emergence of a new Afghanistan and is aspiring to permanently cast off the wars which have affected their fathers and forefathers for far too long. They deserve not to be disappointed.

Thank you for your attention.