

## **Statement by the Swiss APF Co-Chair to the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF), Tokyo, Japan, 7 – 8 April 2008**

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Distinguished Participants, dear Colleagues,

Let me recall the Africa Partnership Forum's mission, which is to strengthen partnership efforts in favour of Africa's development. We value the APF as a unique and precious opportunity for us, the development partners, to meet, debate and elaborate common agenda with Africa as a whole, in – precisely - close partnership.

This notion of partnership is particularly important to us. It means in our view that together, we want to address what is being done for Africa's development, and how it is being done, in a spirit of openness and realism. The APF is also about accountability, mutual accountability. In this context, as mentioned by H.E. Ambassador Newaye Gebreab, the progress of APRM is very important to us.

The APF's strength builds and relies on the continuity of our efforts, our willingness to carry on together, towards a common goal, whatever our differences may be along the way.

In previous years, the APF has been broadening its scope of work, in a spirit of working towards mutual accountability, by taking up significant matters related to economic development as well as governance. It is important for this forum to continue advancing on that same path.

But it is here in Tokyo that the APF will for the first time address the issue of climate change in such a prominent way.

We all remember of course that the Kyoto Protocol was adopted at the third Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, on 11 December 1997. 10 years later, the APF comes together, placing itself in the line of the process launched in Kyoto, once again in Japan. This is, I believe, a good omen.

And I can not but seize the opportunity in this context to express my heartfelt thanks to our Japanese Co-Chairs and colleagues for their outstanding hospitality and organisation.

In the APF, Switzerland is representing a group of countries – the non-G8 countries, as we often are called - that has traditionally shown a significant commitment for supporting Africa in its development effort. We approach the issue of climate change with an open mind. We are well aware that it is a global problem, a problem that we can only face together if we really want to make a difference and change the existing trend of global warming.

Moreover, global issues call for global responses. We believe that it is very important to continue dealing with global warming within the UNFCCC.

I look forward to our deliberations and our hopefully practical conclusions; I am confident that we shall experience two productive, intensive and useful days.

I am confident that the outcome of this meeting will also serve as an input for the forthcoming TICAD IV, which is going to be the next opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of our Japanese friends.

30 years ago, Switzerland pledged to follow the path of an economic development that would encompass an ecological perspective. We learnt and convinced ourselves meanwhile that economic growth not only is not contradictory to the pursuance of an environmental agenda. On the contrary, economy and ecology are synergetic; they are two essential parts of a greater whole, which influence - and are influenced – by human societies.

I think this clearly shows the direction we should take together in the next two days, towards a common understanding and concrete measures.