



0. Honorable chairperson, dear Director General, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends and colleagues
  
1. Speaking for the Swiss government, let me first congratulate and thank IOM for organizing this highly important conference. It comes at a timely moment, when we all prepare for the 2nd UN High Level Dialogue on 'Migration and Development' this October and for the Post 2015 development framework, integrating the diasporas' contribution to development in their home countries.
  
2. Home countries? Plural not singular! Yes, indeed, I said this deliberately. Switzerland acknowledges the diasporas' potential to contribute to development in Switzerland as well as in their country of origin. Without the contribution of migrants, the Swiss economy would quickly start to suffer. The diasporas' contribution is highly valued to the development in their countries of origin. With their steadfast integration into our society, it increases all our potential and capacity to engage in international cooperation. Thus, I consider the diaspora to have their home in Switzerland and also in their country of origin. We are convinced: The diaspora has two hearts and is willing to assume responsibilities here and there.

Let me also say, that the diaspora matters very much as a partner to Switzerland's endeavors to engage multilaterally and bilaterally with countries around the globe when applying the instrument

called 'Development and Cooperation'. By living in, what experts call a transnational globalized world, the diaspora complements our efforts in the role of "bridge-builders" with essential knowledge and guidance in building lasting relationships. "Doesn't that bring Switzerland, or any other country, closer to its partner countries?"

3. Here in Switzerland, the authorities at national and at cantonal levels have begun to acknowledge increasingly the diasporas' role in development and cooperation. And so we have a genuine understanding for our partner countries' needs and preparedness to benefit from the talents and the manifold resources of the diaspora, stretching far beyond personal remittances without which many a family in the country of origin would suffer from far greater poverty.
4. You may quickly understand what I want to point out, considering the fact that out of a total population of 7.9 million over 22% of Switzerland's' residents and every fourth employee has no Swiss passport.

Over 34 % of people over 15 years of age who live in Switzerland have a migration background. They contribute to our gross domestic product, contribute to tax income, to Swiss expertise in specific professional domains and– contribute to the national social insurance scheme.

5. According to the World Bank Switzerland was the third largest source of remittances in 2009. Just behind the US and Saudi Arabia. Approximately 19.6 billion US dollars were sent abroad. The Swiss Official Development Aid for 2012 was approximately

2.8 billion dollars, seven times less than send through remittances in 2009.

6. Therefore, the sheer extent of diaspora capacities in financial terms calls for the introduction of policies and action plans on how the diaspora may specifically be targeted as a development actor.
7. I think, today in our forum, we have to focus on the exchange of best practices, which are conducive to the diasporas' engagement in development, an engagement which is expected to match Switzerland's own capacities and its declared interests in development abroad.
8. We, meaning the Swiss government, therefore pay attention to issues like skills transfers and skills circulation, business and entrepreneurial capacities, innovative remittance schemes, the capability to conclude partnerships with public authorities and other key stakeholders, be they from the civil society and/or from the private sector, here and also in the country of origin.
9. And that is exactly, where our forum should indeed take a relevant step forward, to dedicate our time to the exchange of expert views in order to strengthen our positions towards upcoming international important momentum, the High Level Dialogue and the Post 2015 debate. We do that together today and tomorrow!
10. Speaking for Switzerland, we particularly appreciate that in many partner countries the authorities start to seriously consider the potential of the diaspora. Understanding how much their country and the receiving societies can benefit from this, if

sufficient attention is given to diasporas and migrants in general in national development strategies and relevant sector policies.

Some have established especially appointed institutions or ministries with a responsibility for a diaspora engagement. Others have already created diaspora and development programs to facilitate the active involvement of the diaspora in development priorities at home. So my hope is, that our conference will benefit from the sharing of information and knowledge, offered by the experts here present in order to identify best practices in managing and capture the diasporas' potentials for home countries and receiving countries.

11. Switzerland is ready to listen and wants to learn from you!
12. Please permit me to elaborate on Switzerland and its link between migration and development

In the past ten years the migration and development nexus has become progressively included in Switzerland's foreign policy framework to the point, that it is now firmly anchored as one of the strategic objectives of our development policy and it has become an integral part of our external migration policy.

This focus on migration and development and the commitment of selected units within the Swiss administration on this topic, guarantee that our migration policy is coherent and comprehensive and that our development initiatives are more effective. But nowadays migration is a complex and manifold global phenomenon with challenges and opportunities.

13. Speaking for my government, our new comprehensive approach calls for migration to be brought to the forefront of development policies not only in Switzerland, but also in our partner countries. We have to consider the diaspora as a development actor here in their host country and in their countries of origin.
14. The rationale for this is, that migration should be considered to be supportive to the alleviation of poverty and consecutive development in home and host countries. It should therefore constitute an important part of Switzerland's migration policy. Namely to characterize the relationship between Switzerland and other countries as partnerships. Partnerships, where the vested interest of all stakeholders involved leads to a considered and mutual understanding and where solutions are decided accordingly.
15. I have mentioned before the capacity of the diaspora as bridge-builders. It is exactly in this context, where the capacity of the diaspora transcends into the quality, through which the development impact of migration is not limited to remittances, brain-drain or - gain, and investments only. It also includes important socio-political and cultural dimensions, balancing the Swiss interests with those of the countries of origin. The development perspectives apply to both, as we have seen.
16. I am referring to partnerships, and I do so with purpose!
17. Switzerland has specified the concept of Migration Partnership in its Federal Law on Foreigners (article 100 Letr).

A migration partnership may offer - based on mutual understanding - a space for projects in more innovative areas, integrating for instance the potential and the special capacities of the diaspora. Therefore, a migration partnership – can represent an ideal foundation for cooperation with the diaspora.

18. But, there remain many open policy questions about, how to encourage the diasporas to invest in a sustainable way, while safeguarding their hard- earned income. Also the question remains about the most appropriate diaspora-targeted strategies in investing in economic or/and social capital. At the same time we must be aware, that important factors of diaspora investment include:

- Emotion;
- sense of duty;
- social networks;
- visits to the country of origin;
- the level of financial access;
- financial education;
- and, remarkably, a fair degree of resilience to crisis, based on ongoing risk assessments

19. To devise comprehensive diaspora policies, policy makers in both the country of origin and the host country need to understand diasporas, their profiles and their needs and that their potential is – foremost – of private nature. The first stage of any successful and comprehensive diaspora policy must therefore, be a fully fledged assessment of who the diaspora is and what it is capable of.

20. So, to ensure that policy and action plan help create a conducive relationship for a diaspora involvement in development, the right environment must be created. That requires all actors to join in.

This opportunity for joining in is certainly given during this event. This forum should ideally conceive an over-arching general inventory, which contains the major policies, commonly accepted as a set of recommendations to the 2013 High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and to the post 2015 agenda.

21. In doing this, we should take into account the existing wealth of knowledge, principles and ideas collected in past years in various fora such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

We should also base our thinking on guiding documents such as the report of the Global Commission on International Migration or the Dhaka Declaration which came out of the global consultations on population dynamics lead by Bangladesh and Switzerland. The declaration underscores once more the extremely important role of the diaspora in achieving the future we want

22. For those reasons I perceive the following elements as important for such a general inventory:

- To anchor any action in a coherent and comprehensive migration policy and in an effective and inclusive development policy, which we may call migration mainstreaming;
- To acknowledge the diasporas' identity in the host country and in the country of origin;
- To acknowledge the private quality of its potential;

- To create trust and a basis for deeper understanding;
  - To acknowledge the importance of framework conditions for a possible cooperation in triangular constellation of host country, country of origin and the diaspora itself;
  - To create and establish special diaspora units and inter-institutional coherence at government level, in the host country and the country of origin;
23. To adhere to a comprehensive approach, encompassing partnership and a more global perspective. Linking diaspora potentials to national, regional and local development priorities is as important as creating supportive framework conditions for the diaspora both in the country of residence and of origin. It includes the establishment of information platforms that make the knowledge and the realities in both countries of residence and origin available to a broader audience.
24. In general, a 'diaspora investment climate' requires to be favourably built and have sustainable prospects. Investments need careful, transparent, responsible and permanent 'governance-maintenance' and a protected partnership-cooperation.
25. **I am convinced you agree that rule of law is an important criteria for** the building of such a favorable environment for a diaspora involvement. All kinds of barriers must be reduced and consumer-friendly conditions must be established. Thereby, opportunities and constraints require constant evaluation. And reporting about successes and failures must be cautiously maintained.
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26. **So, this is my message: There is as immense value to the process of consultation, as we are practicing today together in our forum, as there is to the outcomes we want to reach together.**
27. Excellencies, dear colleagues, I would like to thank all of you for engaging with me into finding the most relevant recipes for a diaspora involvement into development and cooperation. Again, on behalf of my government, I am grateful for this opportunity offered by IOM.
28. Let me close by wishing you all much success and a suitable environment and climate here in Geneva for a fruitful conference.
29. Thank you !

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