

Swiss APF Co-Chair to the 10th meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF), Tokyo, Japan, 7 – 8 April 2008

1st session: Environmental Issues and Climate Change; introductory presentation

You all will have studied the extensive and informative documentation that was made available to us all. Therefore, I only intend to launch the discussion in this forum.

What I would like to do first is to remind us of a few facts that are specific to Africa:

- Africa is the continent least responsible for climate change. However, it is acutely vulnerable to its adverse effects:
 - Northern and Southern Africa are already warming faster than the global average.
 - Increased rainfall variability, more extreme precipitations and growing water stress are likely to occur. By 2020, up to 250 million people could face increased water stress.
 - The sea-level will rise, forcing population movements.
 - More intense and unpredictable weather events – floods, droughts and cyclones – are likely.
 - Average per capita emissions in Africa are 13 times less than in North America. Africa accounts for less than 4% of total global emissions.
- Adverse effects of climate change constitute **an additional burden** on African socio-economic and ecological systems that have been for several reasons already under heavy stress during the past decades. Climate change jeopardises economic growth and poverty reduction; it further reduces the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.
- In other words, climate change makes it even more difficult for Africa to cope and progress on its own. And it is **the poorest and most vulnerable Africans who will suffer most**.

So, what to do? Obviously, we must try and counterbalance a trend that is not only profoundly unjust and inequitable, but which also poses a global threat, in terms of security, migrations, social unrest.

I think, the answers are known, even if they may not all be easy and implementable at once:

- We are faced with new risks and new needs. Therefore, we – the development partners - must **provide significant additional support** towards enhancing Africa's coping capacities.
- Climate change is a global problem; we need more joint and coordinated efforts at the global and regional level. This calls for a **strengthened African voice** in future international negotiations.
- Africa must receive more support for **clean energy development** and for **avoiding deforestation**.
- Africa should have access to the most appropriate technologies and get a chance to make the best use of them.
- Clean Development must be made attractive for the private sector, so as to make it an engine of growth.

The matter is complex and calls for a range of possible responses. I mentioned only a few of them, which I believe to be of prime relevance.

Complexity is no excuse for inaction.

Thus, my call to you is that we must find a consensus on concrete, actionable measures during the forthcoming deliberations.

The outcome of our discussions can constitute – I believe – an important contribution to the advancement of the ongoing climate change negotiations within the relevant UN fora.