



15th Economic & Environmental Forum (2007/I Vienna)

Statement by Switzerland

Switzerland would like to thank the Government of Spain for organizing this conference and addressing the important complex of environment within the OSCE. We would like also to express our sincere thanks to the highly qualified intervenants, who stressed the urgency of soil preservation and the drastic damages of desertification.

My country is convinced, that any process creating duplication should be avoided within the international environment system. The current analysis and debate within the UN system, aiming at bringing more coherence between the environmental, humanitarian and development pillars go to this direction.

The Rio Summit created the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification, a powerful instrument gathering not less than 191 member countries. All of the OSCE participating states are parties to this treaty.

We would recommend that those OSCE countries affected by desertification take the opportunity to work with this Convention and ask its Secretariat for capacity-building measures in order to preserve their land and soil. Capacity-building means: training experts of their respective governments in order to acquire methodologies, good practices and to take advantage of past experiences made by other countries. In this area, we are convinced that the Secretariat of the Convention can help OSCE countries in the highly challenging question of soil management. Other OSCE countries could fund this specific programme which would fit perfectly into the environmental system of the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention.