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**Joint debate: Report of the
Peacebuilding Commission
And Report of the Secretary-General on the
Peacebuilding Fund**

Swiss Statement

presented by
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to the United Nations

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Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for the organization of this debate on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission. I also thank the Secretary-General for presenting a very comprehensive and well-written report. I hope that this debate contributes to an exchange of our respective experiences in peacebuilding with the goal to make the PBC even more efficient.

I am speaking in my dual capacity of Permanent Representative of Switzerland and as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the PBC.

When I took office as Permanent Representative almost two years ago, I was elected Chairman of the Burundi configuration at the same time, a position held until then by my predecessor. At the time I was not a professional in peacebuilding at all and even though I've been gaining experience in the two years since, I still consider myself somewhat of an "amateur" in the matter. The term "amateur" derives from the Latin verb "amare" – to love - and I can attest, based on my own experience, that it is difficult to assume a Configuration chairmanship without love of the job and without a certain affection for the country and the population for which you work.

I am also aware that the PBC is a relatively new Commission, which remains under scrutiny within the UN system and by many member states. The PBC has yet to prove itself and demonstrate its added value. Indeed, since a certain reservation towards the PBC seems to exist at times, it is tempting to define quantitative or qualitative criteria in order to measure its success. We must however realize that peacebuilding is above all a political process that can hardly be measured scientifically. actors:

- 1) The strong commitment of the Government of the country under consideration
- 2) A good cooperation between the Configuration and the various actors of the UN system in New York as well as in the field; and
- 3) Clear and consistent messages from the PBC.

Under those conditions only can the PBC make a difference and create added value. The benefit created for the country on the agenda is that the PBC serves as its advocate with the international community and the UN system. As the smaller ones among the fragile countries run the risk of being forgotten or passed over in favor of more pressing economic or security matters, the PBC assumes an important role in maintaining international attention focused on them. Secondly, the PBC offers a unique platform for an institutionalized political and economic dialogue between a country emerging from conflict and stakeholders.

In my opinion, the PBC also provides relief within the United Nations, particularly to the Security Council. Knowing that the Commission closely follows the situation in a fragile country on its agenda, the Council can focus on other more pressing situations. This function of the PBC should not be underestimated, given that the Security Council deals with more than sixty situations under its consideration at any given time. Yet, I feel that the Security Council could do more to appreciate this potential of the PBC.

Mr. President,

1) The relationship between the PBC and the Security Council should be improved. Surely, relations between the two organs have intensified, mainly by the invitations to Configuration Chairs to inform the Council and by the references made in Council mandates to the work of the PBC.

However, the interaction between the Chair of a Configuration and the Security Council could still be deepened. To give an example, I benefitted a lot from the opportunity to inform the Council of my impressions of Burundi at an informal Council briefing which was facilitated by Brazil who held the presidency of the Security Council at the time. A standing invitation to Configuration Chairs to the informal Council meetings would on one hand be beneficial to the Council who could receive additional insight and analysis. And it would on the other hand be useful to a Configuration Chair because participation in informal Council discussions on the situation in the respective country would allow the Chair to accomplish his or her role better.

2) We must also consider how to better involve the ECOSOC and the General Assembly in the work of the PBC. The debate we have today is certainly very useful but for the rest of the year, the interaction between the General Assembly and the PBC is virtually nonexistent. The situation is somewhat better with the ECOSOC. These two principal organs are among the founding institutions of the PBC and almost half of its members are from the ECOSOC as well as the General Assembly. Yet another dimension of improved outreach and partnership concerns the Bretton Woods Institutions and regional IFIs. Their relationship with the PBC becomes more important the more peacebuilding in a fragile country moves into the realm of economic development. I am under the impression that the mutual understanding for the respective roles of each other, but also for the interdependence between the PBC and the international financial institutions has grown considerably over the last years. The World Development Report 2011 "Conflict, Security and Development" of the World Bank is a proof. We should now implement its conclusions in the field.

3) A final issue that preoccupies me is how to engage all members of the Configuration in order to share the tasks more evenly. For it is the collective weight and political support of the membership as a whole that essentially gives power and voice to a configuration. While enjoying the professional support of PBSO – whom I would like to thank on this occasion – I cannot help but feel a little lonely sometimes in my role as President.

In the Burundi Configuration, I actually created a "steering group" open to all members who wish to join in a more active and sustained way in our efforts to consolidate peace in Burundi. I want to thank the members of this group for their commitment and hope that others will follow their example.

Of course, there are many other points worth focusing on, like for example, the relationship between a Configuration Chair and the UN Office in the country under consideration. However, I prefer to seize the opportunity and exercise my role as an advocate for Burundi by making an appeal for the social and economic support to Burundi and the Burundians. The country is in a crucial phase of its development towards lasting peace. Burundi has made much progress but it still faces considerable political, economic and institutional challenges.

To overcome them, Burundi needs the support of the entire international community. Substantial financial support to the new poverty reduction strategy would be a clear signal that we, the UN member states, continue to accompany one of ours in its transition from a conflict-ridden past towards a politically stable future. This is the true meaning of the adage that the strength of a community is measured by the well-being of its weakest members.

Thank you for your attention.