**2017 Human Rights Council Social Forum**

**Panel 7: Translating principles into action: International cooperation for global responses and national implementation**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Valentin Zellweger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland**

Thank you very much. Thank you also to the organisers for inviting me to contribute to this panel, and I am excited to tell you how a country, how a government can contribute to implementing this approach, as you just mentioned, to try to break the silos an also to introduce or implement the policy on a different level. You said that global is someone else’s local. What exactly does this mean for a government that is trying to contribute to the fight against HIV? I’d like to give you some very concrete examples of how we translate this into our practice. For Switzerland’s international cooperation, it is important to actively engage at both levels: global and local, and because exactly, as you said, the two are interlinked. Because we believe that understanding local realities is crucial to formulate relevant global policies. And vice-versa, to be effective implementation needs to be based on global principles and evidence.

If we look at how we, Switzerland, are trying to contribute to a global response, we have for many years supported the fight against HIV and other communicable diseases. And more specifically, have tried to promote a human rights approach to this work.

We were, for example, proud to co-facilitate, to gather with Zambia, the political declaration on HIV/AIDS last year in New York, in the General Assembly. Amongst other aspects, this declaration contains an important target with regards to human rights, namely to expand community-led service delivery to cover at least 30 per cent of all service delivery by 2030. In the same year, last year, we were chairing the UNAIDS Board here in Geneva. And on the more personal level, perhaps, I would like to stress that I was very impressed by the inclusiveness of the UNAIDS governance structure. You sit there at a table, you have the countries, you have the cosponsors, the international organisations, and you also have civil society that is present at the Board table. And in my experience this makes a big difference if you speak directly to the concerned communities, because you understand exactly what the implication of your work is about. We strongly support the human rights, the community involvement and the gender equality aspects of both UNAIDS and the Global Fund strategies. And again, just coming back to this experience in the PCB, the Board of UNAIDS, if you speak to the concerned communities, it’s very clear that you have to have a holistic approach to try to cope with the immensity of the challenges posed by HIV.

For us, it means that not only should UNAIDS and the Global Fund programs address human rights issues, but they should also be inclusive, participatory and transparent in the way in which grants are decided upon the country level. The country coordinating mechanisms set up by the Global Fund are a good example for this effort, and we think that it should be further strengthened. Evidence on HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases is another field that we believe is crucial to invest in, to see what are the most effective ways to improve well-being. And global evidence shows that human rights approaches to programming are more effective, and I think UNAIDS is the best illustration of this, that with an integrated approach, including human rights, you are really in a position to make great progress. And this has also been shown that dealing with drugs, for example, from health and human rights perspective rather than by shear repression, you really get better results and this was recently shown also by the Lancet Commission that just published its report.

Now, how does that translate to bilateral cooperation? What are the experiences at the global level and how can we translate them in our bilateral cooperation when we work together with other country? We have supported for many years HIV/AIDS programs in Southern Africa, and our development agency has just decided to continue its support for the next five years. Over time and in close collaboration with a number of local actors, with governments, NGOs, and the United Nations different entities, we have adapted program so as to ensure that it is aligned with local, regional and global policies, and also informed by the latest evidence. For example, the program is clearly focused on young people; it supports comprehensive information and services delivery in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights including HIV/AIDS. It supports national and regional policy development in this area also.

The results obtained, what are they so far in this program that Switzerland has supported? In 2015, for example, 800,000 young people in Southern Africa have received services, and over 4.500,000 young people have received at least one prevention message. And just recently, the SADC has adopted model law against child marriage which is expected to be taken up by its member states.

And if you allow me just perhaps the last few remarks, what are the six points that we considered to be absolutely crucial in the HIV/AIDS response? We think:

1. A balanced approach between prevention and treatment is important.
2. Ensuring that human rights and gender equality are at the centre of any action.
3. An evidence-based approach in order to focus on location and population where the needs are highest, while ensuring that no one is left behind.
4. The need to take AIDS out of isolation, whereby the AIDS response pro-actively contributes to strengthen health systems and to achieve universal health coverage. This means that also to strategically link funding for HIV/AIDS with brother health systems issues.
5. The importance to address determinants of HIV/AIDS within and beyond the health sector.
6. A multi-stakeholder approach, as you have already mentioned, which includes the UN, civil society, academia, the private sector and other important partners at the global level, but very importantly, also within countries.

Thank you very much.