

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the launch of the Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

I would like to express my gratitude to [*Minister X – Speaker TBC*] from **Brazil** and [*Minister Y – Speaker TBC*] from **Sierra Leone** for convening this event together with Switzerland. My thanks also go to the group known as the “Pathfinders”, as well as to our colleagues from the Center on International Cooperation, who have put tremendous efforts into this initiative.

In September 2015, the international community adopted a highly ambitious project for humanity. With the 2030 Agenda, we recognize that there can be no sustainable development without sustainable peace, and vice-versa. This powerful declaration was reinforced by the Resolution on Sustaining Peace adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The 2030 Agenda, with its SDG16 and the 24 other targets that pertain to peaceful, just and inclusive societies, is unprecedented in its scope and ambition. Reaching our common objective by 2030 will be like climbing the peak of a high mountain. And – coming from alpine Switzerland – I know what I am speaking about! Two

years ago we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the first ascent of the Matterhorn, one of Switzerland's most famous peaks. Those that ascended the summit for the first time in 1865 were brave pathfinders who believed they could achieve what no one had achieved before them. Just like them, our ambitious endeavour will require teamwork, good preparation, patience and endurance. Pathfinders will take the lead and explore new trails. A base camp and milestones will have to be set up. There will be days when we make good progress and others when we will feel stuck and threatened by bad weather. But I promise you that the view from the top will be breathtaking and worth the effort.

The task at hand is daunting. This is why we need a roadmap to serve as a guide. The Roadmap we are launching today is based on extensive research, and on promising practices already under way. It will continue to evolve. And it will become more concrete as we continue to increase our efforts to turn abstract concepts into meaningful action at the global, national, and local levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peaceful Societies; Just Societies; Inclusive Societies; these are not just abstract words. All our societies struggle with these challenges in some form or another. In Switzerland, we are addressing these three aspects in our own ways.

We strongly believe that **conflicts should be resolved peacefully**. This is why Switzerland has developed its mediation capacities over the years and regularly offers a neutral platform for discussions, either formal or informal, between conflicting parties.

In striving to **build more just societies**, Switzerland has resolutely tackled the issue of illicit financial flows. Over the past years we have made significant efforts regarding the recovery of stolen assets. Of the 5 billion US dollars that have been returned to developing countries in recent years, more than 2 billion have been returned by Switzerland alone.

With regard to **inclusive societies**, direct democracy at the federal, state, and local level has proven to be a successful model for Switzerland. It enables us to address grievances early and at the lowest possible level, before they escalate into bigger conflicts. It is not always easy: it requires time and patience; and the willingness to compromise must be renewed and tended to constantly.

Of course, I am aware, as you all are, that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to these difficult issues. Nevertheless, best practices should be shared because we can learn from each other. This is why my government is eager to hear about other good practices and to learn from other countries.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recognizing our responsibility to move from commitments to action, what are the **next steps**?

First, we **encourage other countries to join the movement and become Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies**. Please share with your governments that new members and new experiences are welcome.

Second, **we must join hands with other initiatives and platforms related to SDG16**. The Pathfinders initiative can bring together knowledge, experience, and information.

Finally, we will be reaching the first basecamp in our ascent towards the summit very soon: the High Level Political Forum in 2019. By then, we need to ensure that concrete steps have been taken, and that progress has been made on our path towards achieving SDG16.

Switzerland is committed to working with all of you so that together we can reach the summit by 2030!

Thank you.