



**Remarks by State Secretary
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***Partnerships as key tool for
prevention, sustaining peace and
sustainable development***

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Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me extend my thanks to the host Myanmar for their truly kind hospitality and the excellent arrangements for this conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are facing numerous armed conflicts which are causing humanitarian catastrophes. The UN Secretary General Guterres has declared the **prevention** of conflicts not as *A* priority but as *THE* priority of priorities. Rightly so: Because we can no longer afford the rising costs of adding crisis to crisis. We cannot afford the economic set back caused by the destruction of whole communities, of entire countries. And we can certainly not afford the human costs and the disastrous damage done to humanity, to *OUR* humanity.

Therefore, preventing conflicts lies at the very heart of the concepts of **sustaining peace** and **sustainable development** - it lies at the very heart of the vision of the **Agenda 2030**: "*Leave no one behind.*"

Like the African proverb says: "*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*"

Sustaining Peace and *Sustainable Development* are definitively longterm endeavors. In order to succeed, we

will have to pursue these goals **together**. A key tool in this aim is the establishment and use of **partnerships** – partnerships among us governments, also partnerships in form of regional and multilateral organisations. But it should not stop there: In order to implement the ambitious goals of the *Agenda 2030* we have to think bigger, we have to include civil society, the private sector, the academia etc...

Ladies and gentlemen,

Switzerland has made excellent experience with such partnerships. Let me highlight two **examples**:

- The first is called “**Pathfinders** for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies”. It is a group of UN member states and other stakeholders. This September this group launched a Roadmap aiming at accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Switzerland truly believes that this group deserves the support – and action – by all ASEM Member States.
- The second example is the ASEAN-Swiss **Sectoral Dialogue Partnership** which we launched in July 2016. Together with ASEAN we have defined areas of practical cooperation, such as promoting peace with the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). For sustainable economic development, we aim to support entrepreneurs and Small and Medium

Enterprises through the ASEAN Public Private
Partnership development agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“If you want to go far, go together.” This also applies to Asia and Europe. Switzerland is convinced that the strong partnership between **Asia and Europe** and within ASEM in particular can make a difference. But this partnership also means: In times of a humanitarian catastrophes unfolding at a speed which the world has rarely seen before, let us walk the talk: Let us not look away but offer help; not blame but speak up frankly as it is done among partners and friends. Let us **together** look for solutions that put the lives of ordinary women and men **first**. And let us make sure that we leave no one behind.

Thank you.