



**Statement by Didier Burkhalter
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***Roundtable 1:
Political Leadership to Prevent and End
Conflicts***

**“Switzerland is committed to more conflict
prevention and mediation,
and to addressing the causes of conflict
and fragility comprehensively”**

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The prevention and peaceful resolution of violent conflicts has been a longstanding priority of Switzerland's foreign policy. We must first and foremost succeed in making and sustaining peace if we are to meet the enormous humanitarian challenges. This requires persistent political leadership. Switzerland is ready to play its part.

Let me make four points:

First, we must redouble our efforts to shift from constant crisis management to conflict prevention. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that the international community moves from words to deeds. Switzerland seeks to strengthen conflict prevention by making the protection and promotion of human rights an integral part of these activities: human rights violations are often an early warning sign of instability and the potential escalation of violence. This is why we, together with other countries, will launch a political appeal in June to strengthen cooperation between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council.

Switzerland will also increase its support to the Joint Conflict Prevention Programme of the UN Department of Political Affairs and the UN Development Programme. I will sign this agreement later today.

Second, we need to strengthen our capacities to help *resolve* violent conflicts. Facilitation and mediation are part of Switzerland's good offices. We are currently involved in more than 20 mediation contexts, including regarding Syria and the Ukraine crisis.

Switzerland commits to further expanding its own mediation capacities as well as to continue to offer specific support and training for mediators. We will also continue to work closely with the mediation support unit of the UN.

Third, we must ensure much more cooperation across instruments and actors. The Swiss government has defined for the first time a common strategic framework for its peace promotion, human rights, development, and humanitarian instruments. This will enable us to address the causes of violent conflict, fragility, extremism and forced displacement comprehensively. Transcending silos will also be vital at the international level, not least within the UN system. You can count on Switzerland to be a strong supporter of any such efforts.

Fourth and final point: we must make it a genuine priority to address the challenges of states in fragile situations. My government wants to increase the fragility-specific share of the budget for bilateral development cooperation to 50%. We are committed to implementing the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States that were reconfirmed in Stockholm last month (*in your presence, Deputy Secretary-General*). This is to say that we commit to working with a long-term strategy for Peace- and Statebuilding based on a partnership between fragile states and development partners, including civil society. Political leadership from all sides – from all of us, ladies and gentlemen – will be necessary to make sure that no country is left behind.