

Thematic session, Budva

First, we want to thank Montenegro for the excellent organisation of our Meeting here in the wonderful town of Budva.

We are glad to declare, that Switzerland supports the "Budva Declaration on Environmental Democracy for Our Sustainable Future" and thanks the Bureaux of the two Meetings of the Parties and the secretariat for their excellent work.

- *We especially welcome that the focus of the Budva Declaration is set on the effective contribution of the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.*

Switzerland places indeed great emphasis on the issue of sustainable development.

- *During the negotiations of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Switzerland was strongly committed and helped to determine its content.*
- *It was actively involved in drafting the SDGs and developing the mechanism for the follow up and the review progress.*

We view the Budva Declaration's commitment to promote environmental democracy and its key components, such as the access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice in the ECE-region and beyond, as essential precondition for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda and build a sustainable future.

Switzerland strongly believes that, in order to go forward, the inclusive and transparent involvement of civil society is essential.

Our efforts to achieve sustainable development and peace will not be successful if there is not a broad-based mobilization and cooperation between all levels of government and with partners from business, civil society and the scientific field.

- *When developing its new national Sustainable Development strategy, Switzerland therefore engages in a broad dialogue with these stakeholders, of whom many were already making significant contributions to sustainable development.*
- *In the future, cooperation on sustainable development is to be maintained as an ongoing process that will be influenced by the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in particular.*

As a relatively small country that is committed to the well-being of its population and the conservation of a healthy environment, Switzerland is interested in a strong international legal system and a more comprehensive, coherent, effective and efficient international environmental regime.

Finally, we want to point out, that to further strengthen the environmental dimension on the SDGs, we should focus on environment-related processes and products that already exist and then build upon them.

- *UNEP's Global Environment Outlook or the existing indicators of MEAs are examples of such products*
- *Thus, the process to strengthen the environmental dimension of sustainable development has a efficient base*