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Kalbatono Nino, excellences, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure and great honour for me to welcome you to this EAPC PfP conference. I am convinced that Tbilisi offers a good foil to discuss the issue of DIB in a regional setting with a focus on the South Caucasus and Black Sea region. The setting shall inspire us in taking the first steps to implement the PAP-DIB. Ladies and gentlemen, Switzerland feels honoured to co-organize this conference and the subsequent training course together with our distinguished friends from Georgia, NATO IS and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). It is a special privilege for me to be part of the first official DIB event since the adoption of the PAP at last year's Istanbul Summit.

Switzerland has a long-standing and deep interest in the area of security sector reform, and especially in the democratic control of armed forces and border security. My country has been active in this field for several years. We are convinced that security sector reform is an important, if not the most important, step in the overall process of democratic transformation. The armed forces and the defence sector are of central importance to this process and remain the main targets to address. We believe that the security sector, as a whole, must be re-informed, including police forces, the intelligence services and border guard troops. All of those services must work together to render this process successful and to achieve our aim, to bring the security sector

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under efficient civilian control and to allow the countries implementing the DIB Plan to meet relevant international standards.

The improvement of civil military cooperation is thereby the key for success. For that reason, Switzerland has supported every effort in the framework of EAPC and PfP to strengthen the democratic reform of the security sector. As early as 2002, we have come forward with a proposal to establish a PAP on SSR. Although such a security reform plan has not come into existence, the ideas behind our proposal have not vanished. They were found again last year as EAPC Heads of States and governments adopted the DIB Plan in Istanbul. Needless to say, Switzerland strongly supported the adoption of this plan, even though we would have favoured an instrument with a broader approach. Nonetheless, we welcome the DIB Plan. It is an overall policy instrument, providing guidelines and fundamental objectives for the development of effective and democratically responsible defence and security institutions.

The democratic control of the defence activities, including appropriate legislation, legislative and judicial oversight of the defence sector, as well as civilian participation in drafting defence and security policy, are key provisions. Equally important is the effective and transparent management of security structures, interagency cooperation, as well as the establishment of export controls on military equipment and technology. At last, but not least, we attach particularly high value on the protection of civil rights and the promotion of international humanitarian law.

Ladies and gentlemen, after several years of discussion, time has now come to move on to the operational level. We are glad that here in Tbilisi the implementation of the Action Plan is about to begin. As the goals are ambitious, the implementation of the plan will be a stony path, but I can assure you that the international community is ready to provide assistance in the demanding task of security and defence sector reform. However, in the end, the political willingness to implement the provisions containing the plan will be each partner's own responsibility.

Ladies and gentlemen, the PAP-DIB could become a remarkable success story, but there is no success without hard work. I am convinced that this conference today and the training course, which will follow, are a good start and soon will bring rewards.