

**Welcome Speech Delivered By the Rt. Hon. Mr. Subash Chandra Nembang, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Nepal
On the occasion of an Interaction of the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Pascale Bruderer Wyss, Speaker of the Swiss National Council with the Members of the Constituent Assembly, Nepal
November 1st, 2010, Kathmandu**

**Honorable Speaker of the Swiss National Council
Mrs. Pascale Bruderer Wyss,
Honorable Members of the Constituent Assembly,
His Excellency the Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Members of the Constituent Assembly and on my own behalf, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to Your Excellency to the Constituent Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nepal. Your distinguished presence here, and the interactions with the Honorable Members of the Constituent Assembly, I believe, stand testimony to our common commitment to the values of democracy, peace, justice, human rights and development. This also signifies the fact that Nepal attaches great importance to its relationship with Switzerland.

Madam Speaker

Nepal has been passing through a series of momentous changes in the last few years. The decade-long conflict that had swept the entire country until about three years ago has given way to a nationally-driven peace process; a peaceful historic people's movement has culminated in the transformation of Nepal into a Federal Democratic Republic; 240-year old monarchy has been cast aside by the free choice of the Nepalese people; the Constituent Assembly has been elected in a free and fair manner on the basis of adult franchise; and most important of all, the current composition of our Constituent Assembly remains one of the most representative legislative bodies in the world. By adopting an election system of mixed proportional representation and allocating seats for both the first-past-the-post and the proportional categories through national political consensus, we have made it possible for the current Constituent Assembly to be a most inclusive national body of the sovereign Nepalese people. With almost 33 percent women members in our Constituent Assembly, even by global standards we are well above

many other countries in this respect. Likewise, it includes representatives from almost all ethnic communities, marginalized groups, dalits and so on.

As you are fully aware, Nepal's current peace process is making a significant headway within a relatively short period of time. We have the national resolve to bring the peace process to its logical conclusion and we are working hard at all levels towards that end. We deeply appreciate the supportive role played by Switzerland in facilitating our nationally-driven peace process in various ways. On behalf of the people of Nepal, we would like to express our gratefulness to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Switzerland for their continued support to Nepal during this period.

Our first and foremost priority is to write a new constitution for a new Nepal through this Constituent Assembly. Our vision of a new Nepal consists in rebuilding our country along a federal political set up where all the Nepalese people – all ethnic communities and social groups – will have a stronger sense of common bond and belongingness and ownership. A modern, just and prosperous society based on multiparty competition, rule of law, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, social inclusion, peace and development will be the hallmarks of the New Nepal that we are striving to build.

This august Assembly has representatives from over 25 political parties. They are guided by different political ideologies, visions and motivations as their organizing principles. We take it as a living expression of our faith in the fundamentals of the multiparty political competition and we encourage such plurality of view and opinions in our Assembly. At the same time, it is also a clear example of both inclusiveness as well as an emerging culture of political tolerance and partnership. We want to build our political future on these solid foundations of multiparty competitive politics, inclusiveness, political tolerance and partnership.

Madam Speaker

I fondly recall our courtesy meeting with you during our visit to Switzerland last year. A national delegation, comprised of the Constituent Assembly Members, are regularly visiting Switzerland in order to participate in the Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. After the Constituent Assembly came into being, a significant number of Members representing different political parties have also visited Switzerland for learning political system and federalism of your country.

The rich experiences of the Swiss federalism have also been useful for us in the process of constitution making in Nepal. Ever since we established our diplomatic relationship Switzerland has been one of the strong partner in Nepal's development effort. The bilateral relationship took a great stride after Switzerland established its Embassy in Nepal in 2009, as the areas of Swiss supports to Nepal and avenues for the bilateral co-operations have been widened further. I appreciate the Swiss Agencies for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for launching various development and welfare activities in Nepal. A number of development projects have already been completed and other number of projects are ongoing on the Swiss assistance in Nepal. In addition to that Swiss government has been providing a number of scholarships and trainings to Nepalese students and professionals every year. It is also noteworthy that the trade relations between two countries have also been increasing over the years. A significant number of Swiss nationals visit Nepal every year which has contributed to our tourism industry. I hope that the generous support of Switzerland to Nepal would be continued in the years to come.

I thank you Madam Speaker for taking some time to visit Nepal and also meeting with us here in the Constituent Assembly. I think, this visit would open up many areas of bilateral co-operations between the two countries. May your visit help us widen our relationship on the Parliamentarians level as well.

I wish you a very pleasant and memorable stay in Nepal.

Thank you