

(14<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR Working Group)  
29<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Madam President,

Pakistan welcomes the delegation of Switzerland to their UPR and wishes to congratulate ..... for presenting a national report. A comprehensive response on the recommendations made during the first cycle shows the seriousness Switzerland attaches to this universal mechanism.

We are encouraged to note that since the first review in 2008, Switzerland has made efforts to strengthen the normative and institutional frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Swiss society has been traditionally perceived an open and tolerant that cherished diversity. However, this perception was tarnished following the ban on the construction of new minarets that was aimed at restricting freedom of religion. The ban was in sharp contradiction to Switzerland's international human rights obligations concerning freedom of expression, conscience and religion. The High Commissioner, in her reaction to this development, said "politics based on xenophobia or intolerance is extremely disquieting, wherever it occurs". Similar concerns had been raised by the CERD in 2008 regarding the role played by some political associations and parties in the rise of racism and xenophobia in Switzerland. The Committee had also recommended Switzerland to enact legislation to prohibit any organization which promotes or incites racism and racial discrimination.

We take note of the administrative efforts made by the Swiss Government to minimize the social costs of the ban on the construction of minarets. However, we note with concern that no legal measures were taken to check activities of political parties that promote racism and intolerance.

In conclusion, Pakistan would like to recommend Switzerland to;

1. enact legislation that declares illegal and prohibits any organization which promotes or incites racism and racial discrimination (*in line with the recommendation made by the CERD in 2008*), and
2. adopt a national plan and legislation at all levels of Government against racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance (*in line with the recommendation made by the CERD in 2008*).
3. play an effective role to operationalize the right to development at the international level.

I thank you Madam President.