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Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga
President of the Swiss Confederation
Federal Palace West Wing
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Madam President,

We recently had the occasion to read the speech you delivered at the Expo Milano 2015, and we would first like to say it is always a pleasure to realize the global role Switzerland takes in improving the lives of people everywhere. It is such genuine concern for others that makes us proud to be Swiss.

However, we were shocked to read that the speech implied that greater transparency in the commodity industry would combat hunger and poverty. Not only are our commercial activities in no way the cause of these complex issues, but as a community we take steps to solve them.

Our members engage in capacity building on their own behalf and on behalf of their clients every day. We teach good agricultural practices, encourage intercropping for food security when aligned with local laws, and we grow and distribute planting material, agricultural inputs, and tools. We sponsor schools and health clinics, help develop business plans, and support financial inclusion. We work with recognized voluntary sustainable standards like Rain Forest Alliance, Fair Trade, 4C, UTZ, and C.A.F.E. Practices to improve farmer net income and promote climate smart agriculture.

Excessive urban migration in developing nations is an escalating threat for our industry, and the only way to combat it is to ensure our grower partners and their families make a sustainable living from their activity, so the future generation will not be growers by default but by passion. We invest human and financial capital at our own expense, but we do it willingly because it's the smart thing to do both morally and from a business standpoint. For example, this is why the World Bank invited us to speak on the topic of Public-Private Partnerships and capacity building in East Africa during their Global Landscapes Forum at the Royal Society, in London, this past June.

We could be doing more, but what we need is support, not increased regulation. We therefore ask that the administration continue to work with us to combat global hunger and poverty, not propose restrictions that would be counterproductive to our shared goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Community of Interest (CI) Coffee Switzerland

Lambert Koers
Manager