



**Speech of His Highness the Prime Minister at the lunch banquet
held by His Highness in honour of Her Excellency Mrs. Micheline
Calmy-Rey, Vice President of the Swiss Federal Council and
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

7 November 2010

**Her Excellency Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey
Vice President of the Swiss Federal Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs,**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with much pleasure that I welcome you and your accompanying delegation in Kuwait, a country similar in many aspects to the features that distinguish your country Switzerland, which proved as a small peaceful country, how to maintain neutrality in a troubled world, to serve peace and security, extending a helping hand to those in need around the world.

Kuwaiti-Swiss relations are solid and historical, and I wish to point here to the position taken by Switzerland during the brutal occupation of Kuwait by an evil dictator: the position was firmly in support of Kuwait, calling for the necessity to respect International law and end the aggression. Your government has reinforced the principle it has long believed in, that is, the love of peace and security for all nations. We shall never forget either, how Swiss schools opened their doors to the children of Kuwait during that difficult period.

We in Kuwait, cherish freedom and peace; we constantly emphasize the importance of dialogue and understanding in this day and age, as wars have become destructive and are no more limited to battlefronts, but have transcended much further to reach the depths of destruction without leaving a single foundation standing. Because we constitute a small population, we have often suffered from the injustice of wars, had we not found our solace in the support of the United Nations and other countries, the situation would have been far graver.

In Kuwait, we are resolved to achieving positive results in the field of developing our country politically and economically, in compliance with the will of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which aims at transforming this country into a financial and commercial hub. In this framework, the State of Kuwait has endorsed a development plan for the years 2010-2014, and has allocated a budget of 140 billion dollars to develop the infrastructure, ports construction, railways, establishment of new cities and continuing efforts to improve the standard of basic services provided for citizens and expatriates. In this context, Kuwait is proud to be in the lead on the Arab and international levels in terms of the quality of education, lifestyle, gender equality,



the economic situation and political freedom, this, according to classifications published by specialized international organizations and agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Your Excellency Vice President of the Swiss Federation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,

I still enjoy fond memories since arriving for the first time in your country from the United Kingdom on April 24th, 1959, where I completed my university studies in Geneva University, one of the most renowned universities in the world, in a country that is at the forefront of democracy and freedoms. I was the first diplomat in the history of the Kuwaiti-Swiss relations to be appointed Consul General for the State of Kuwait to the Swiss Federation, resident in Geneva, then as Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the European office of the United Nations in Geneva in 1966. I would also like to mention with pride and respect, Mr. Paul Gottret, the late father of the present ambassador of the Swiss Federation to the State of Kuwait, H.E Mr. Michel Gottret, who was a dear friend of mine when he was chief of Protocol for the Canton of Geneva, as he immensely facilitated the tasks of the diplomatic corps.

A few years later, I followed with interest, as Mrs. Calmy-Rey was elected President of the Geneva Cantonal Government in 2001, then to be elected a year later to become the fourth woman in the Federal Council for the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is a ministerial post she still occupies to this day. As she is Vice President of the Swiss Confederation for the second time running, we look forward to seeing Mrs. Calmy-Rey hold the presidency next January for the second time as well.

Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey is a member of “Council of Women World Leaders”, which is an international network consisting of women who occupy present or former posts of president or prime minister, its mission is to globally enroll women of the highest leadership level for collective action towards issues of great importance to women and fair development. In September 2010, Mrs. Calmy-Rey was invited to join the Secretary General’s high-level Panel, concerned with comprehensive and sustainable development.

We look forward to close cooperation with your country on all levels, especially in the political field, and since you head Swiss diplomacy, we are fully confident of your genuine efforts and your profound and noble objectives.

Once again, on behalf of the State of Kuwait, I wish to welcome you as a friend and a guest, in appreciation of your distinguished efforts in serving your country and humanity.

With sincere best wishes for success and progress.