



SWISS NATIONAL DAY

A special feature by the Embassy of Switzerland, Yangon. August 1, 2015



Biography

Peter Tschumi (* 1957) has been mainly working in development cooperation for more than 25 years including 15 years in Honduras/Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Bolivia and Myanmar.

He took over the position of Deputy Head of Mission/ Head of Cooperation in Yangon in October 2012. Prior to this, he led the policy work and knowledge management of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the thematic areas of private sector development, financial sector and vocational skills development. Previous assignments included heading SDC's technical division on employment and income, and responsibility for the official Swiss development cooperation as Country Director in Bolivia from 2002 to 2005. With a master degree in natural sciences, a post graduate degree in development studies and further studies in economics, he joined SDC in 1986.

Interview with Chargé d'affaires a.i. Peter Tschumi

Why are we celebrating today?

It's Swiss National Day! On 1 August every year, we commemorate the founding of the Swiss Confederation in 1291. Back then, representatives from three Alpine cantons gathered in what is today central Switzerland to swear an oath to stand by and protect each other. This act later came to be regarded as the founding of Switzerland. Like Myanmar, Switzerland is a country that consists of different linguistic, ethnic, and cultural groups. Over time, the regional and federal authorities managed to integrate this diversity into a federal state that turned diversity into an opportunity and a strength for the whole country. In this way, diversity favoured nation-building through dialogue, respect of minorities and a political system of checks and balances.

What are the main activities of the Swiss Embassy in Myanmar?

As the official representation of Switzerland, the Embassy covers all official matters concerning the relations between the two countries and is at the service of our citizens in Myanmar. We want to be a transparent and constructive partner to the Myanmar Government, civil society and private sector as well as to the Parliament and all political parties. We promote fair and inclusive economic relations, peace, democratisation and human rights, and we support the people of Myanmar in its efforts to reduce poverty, with humanitarian aid, in vocational skills, agriculture and food security as well as health and local governance. Core values for us include accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, rule of law, democracy and solidarity.

Which has been one of the most significant events for Switzerland in Myanmar in the last twelve months?

One of the most impressive events was surely the landing of the Solar Impulse 2 in Mandalay! This solar airplane flies day and night without fuel or polluting emissions. It is a history-making project on clean and renewable energies and proof of Swiss innovation spirit. President U Thein Sein came to visit the plane during his official visit to Switzerland last September. He was quite impressed and kindly granted Solar Impulse the landing in Mandalay this March on its undertaking around the world.

Solar Impulse shows to the people in Myanmar that with courage, innovation and pioneering

spirit one can overcome huge challenges and make a vision come true. In a country where around 70% of the people do not have access to electricity the landing of Solar Impulse has also been a strong promotion for the better use of solar energy, and last but not least it was a great international platform for enhancing Myanmar's image in the world.

Does Switzerland support Myanmar's forthcoming elections?

Yes, Switzerland considers these elections as a very important step in the road to democracy. We aim with our support to bring

more credibility, transparency and inclusion to the process. Through different partners we provide technical assistance to the Union Election Commission (UEC) on international good electoral practices, we support civil society organisations to deliver voter education and the media to improve its reporting. We support local and international election observation missions and women's leadership training to improve their participation and hold regular talks with many stakeholders on those issues. At the request of the parties and the UEC, Switzerland also facilitated the negotiations on the Code of Conduct for

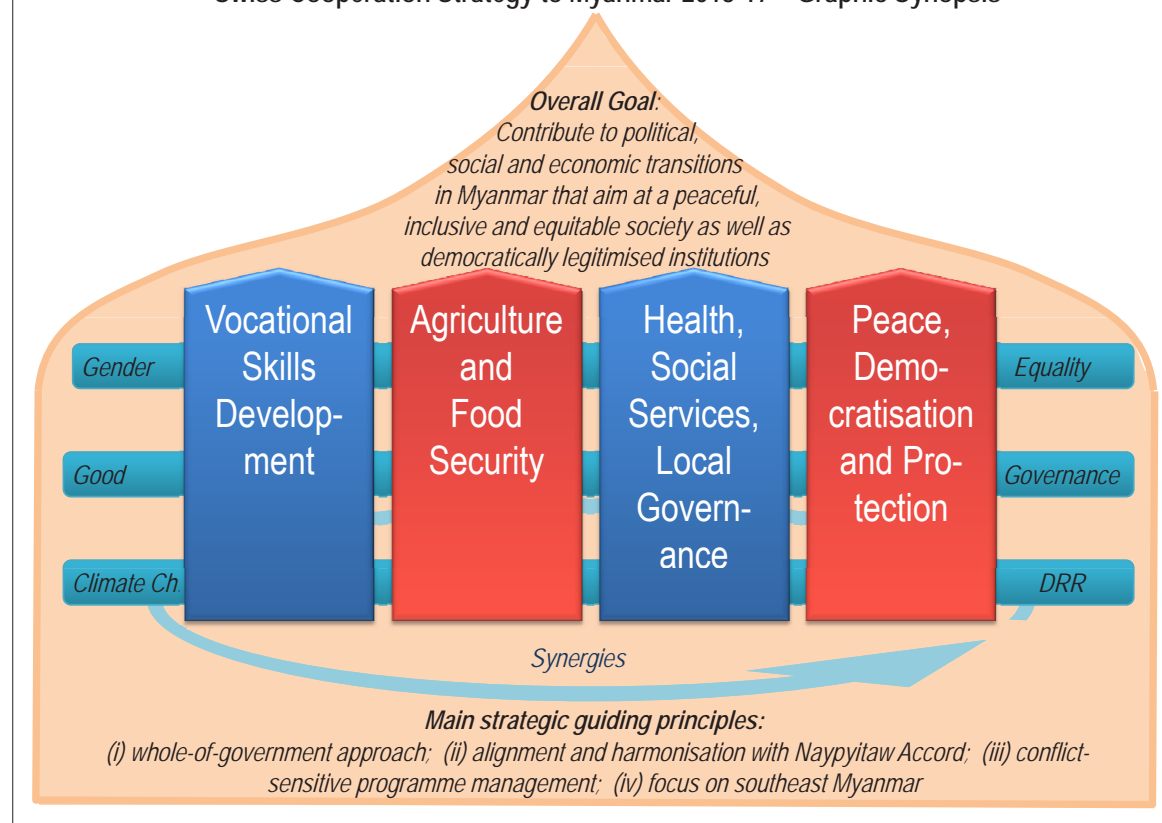
Political Parties and Candidates that was signed on 26 June 2015 in Yangon. This agreement is a historic step towards peaceful and fair elections. Switzerland will continue its support for the Code's implementation.

Given the strong engagement from all parts in the preparations of the elections so far, we expect them to be a milestone in the long process of political, economic and social transition.

What have been your most rewarding experiences so far in Myanmar?

First and foremost it is the friendliness and helpfulness of the people my wife and I can enjoy every day, at all levels of our daily life; be it in the streets, in our office with our staff or in contact with official persons and with our partners from civil society and the private sector. This is refreshing and does good for the overall feeling and motivation for us as foreigners in the demanding surroundings of the country. Workwise it's the respect and constructiveness both the Myanmar authorities and civil society partners have shown to us Swiss. This has enabled us very quickly to enhance and deepen our relationship, establish memorandums of understanding for political and economic dialogues, and a framework agreement for development cooperation. It has built up mutual trust and allowed us to start well targeted and – as we think – relevant support actions in many fields of our competence in a short time: in peace promotion, in vocational skills, in food security, in community infrastructure and health. It is very rewarding to see newly trained young professionals who easily find a decent job, or to meet poor people in rural areas who are likely to benefit concretely from our support – and I am proud that we now have a couple of solid Swiss firms doing decent business here.

Swiss Cooperation Strategy to Myanmar 2013-17 – Graphic Synopsis





Innovation as a key factor for Swiss economy

WITH a per capita gross domestic product of around US\$ 80,000, an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent and a government debt ratio of 35 percent, the Swiss economy is currently very robust. Pioneering spirit, entrepreneurship and innovation are major forces moving Switzerland forward. Switzerland's economic success derives mainly from investments in research and education, since the small country doesn't have substantial natural resources to rely on. The number of innovative projects and the level of competitiveness are featuring amongst the top nations globally.

Competitiveness through innovation

According to the WEF Global Competitiveness Index 2014-2015 Switzerland is economically the most competitive country in the world. This top ranking indicates that Switzerland's research and development policy and the division of responsibilities between private and public stakeholders work well. The contribution of the private sector in the economic development is significantly higher than in most other European countries. Many of the internationally leading companies have their headquarters in Switzerland. Some of them, like Nestlé, Novartis, Roche, ABB, Schindler, and Sika are also active in Myanmar.

Solar Impulse – an idea born in Switzerland

Innovative projects in Switzerland often bring together the technical know-how of companies and the research capacities of universities. A significant and recent example is the Solar Impulse airplane, where the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) was involved from the beginning. Solar Impulse currently conducts a record-breaking round-the-world flight with an airplane running solely on solar energy. In March 2015, the circumnavigation of the globe began, departing from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. On the plane's 35,000 kilometre route, the two pilots Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg have been taking turns in the cockpit as the aircraft made its way eastward from Abu Dhabi,



Photo © www.schindler.com

stopping in cities including Muscat, Oman; Ahmedabad and Varanasi in India; Mandalay in Myanmar; Chongqing and Nanjing in China; Nagoya in Japan; and now Hawaii. It will continue its route in April 2016 to Phoenix and New York in the United States, before crossing the Atlantic on its way back to Abu Dhabi.

Swiss top firms are partners of Solar Impulse contributing their innovative capacities to this historic project.

In 2014, ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, and Solar Impulse formed an innovation and technology alliance to advance and share their vision of reducing resource consumption and increasing the use of renewable energy. ABB worked on an improved high-voltage power product that develops a DC-DC charging solution, a device akin to a high-tech alternator on a car. It keeps the airplane's batteries topped off and includes an alarm system capable of detecting failure, ensuring that the crew can react quickly and remedy sudden challenges so the journey continues as planned.

Similarly, Schindler and Solar Impulse have joined forces to raise the public's awareness of the issue of clean energy. "It is one of the most important and inspiring clean-tech

projects today, because it is not only about saving energy but also about conquering new technological ground" Alfred N. Schindler said in an interview with the Swiss Magazine *Schweizer Monat*. He also said that Schindler is contributing to a unique scientific collaboration. The insights gained from developing lighter, more robust materials and improved propulsion efficiency will be applied to Schindler's own future technologies. As demands on mobility grow and fuel resources dwindle and become more expensive, mankind's future lies in using clean, sustainable energy from renewable sources. Schindler's pioneering product developments such as the destination controller, machine-room-less elevator, and steel-rope-less traction became industry benchmarks and trendsetters. The company's latest development is an elevator that can be powered exclusively by solar energy.

Technology is not the only requirement for the realisation of the Solar Impulse project. It is equally important to ensure the health of the pilots steering the solar-powered airplane around the world. Food supply is vital during their long journey of 12 flights and 500 hours in the air in total. It might sound ordinary to prepare dishes for pilots. But scientists and food experts at the



Photo © www.nestle.com

Nestlé Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, spent the last four years working with the two pilots André Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard to develop meals and snacks for the Solar Impulse flight. While flying, the pilots eat 11 meals per day, all researched, developed and supplied by Nestlé – ranging from mushroom risotto and potato gratin to yogurts and breakfast cereals. The food is designed to supply the pilots with optimal energy and protein during the various legs of the journey, and to help them cope with large variations in temperature and altitude. Customised packaging ensures that the food stays fresh for up to three months, without artificial preservatives. After Solar Impulse completes its journey, Nestlé will consider applying the knowledge it has gained from this project to other areas. One idea is to develop nutritional programmes for high-altitude sports and expeditions.

Thinking out of the box

Swiss leading companies never stop working on their innovative efforts. Not only in the areas of technology, pharmacy, or nutrition. They also continue striving for innovation by combining different areas: for example, a Novartis subcompany produces a mobile application for

smartphones and smart watches called ViaOpta. Its discreet, hands-free nature allows those with visual impairments to navigate daily life with even greater ease.

Another Swiss company that thinks out of the box is Sika. It is internationally known for its bonding technologies that are not only high-strength but also retain their elasticity. This allows the use of radical lightweight designs which cannot be achieved with traditional bonding technologies. For instance, one in four car windshields is adhesively bonded using Sika products, improving thereby crash resistance and the use of lightweight design.

Raising public awareness

Providing a business environment that allows and promotes innovation is crucial for Switzerland's social prosperity. The Solar Impulse project is one example of Swiss innovative spirit surrounding the globe. Looking at some of the latest Swiss innovative products and services, one may come to the conclusion that they not only benefit the economy and reputation of Switzerland, but through their international outreach they also benefit people all over the world.

References: solarimpulse.com, economiesuisse.ch, and websites of the companies cited herein.

Switzerland in brief

- Name: **Swiss Confederation**
- President (in 2015): **Mrs. Simonetta Sommaruga**
- Capital: **Bern**
- Population: **8.2 million**
- Size: **15,940 square miles**
- Currency: **Swiss Franc [CHF]. CHF 1 = 1,240 Kyats (July 2015)**
- GDP (2013): **CHF 635,331 Mio. (CHF 78,000 per capita)**
- Official Languages: **German, French, Italian and Romansh**
- Largest Cities: **Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Lausanne, Bern**
- Tourism Hotspots: **Lucerne, Interlaken, Jungfrauojoch, Zermatt/Matterhorn, Bern, Geneva, St. Moritz, Gstaad**



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Good Food, Good Life



BUILDING TRUST



Schindler



Top attractions in Switzerland



The wine grower's festival is held each year at the end of September. The vintner maidens (les Miss des vendanges) on a flower wagon. Photo © swiss-image.ch/Christof Sonderegger



Bikers at Val Mora in the Swiss National Park, Canton Graubunden. Photo © swiss-image.ch/Christof Sonderegger



Kramgasse with flags and lighting, Bern. Photo © swiss-image.ch/Jan Geerk



The Maennlichen (2343 m) in the Bernese Oberland. A festival of traditional costumes close to the Tschuggen. Eiger, Moench and Jungfrau can be seen in the background. Photo © swiss-image.ch/Christof Sonderegger



The Basel Carnival - fife and drum music put on by masked bands marching through the Old Town. Photo © swiss-image.ch/Christof Sonderegger

Community-led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama Project

Interview with Ms. Agnieszka Kroskowska from HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

What is special about the Gulf of Mottama?

The Gulf of Mottama is an invaluable resource, rich in natural, human and cultural diversity. The many unique varieties of indigenous and migrating species, fauna, and flora are of both national and international importance, critical in terms of reliance on the ecosystem. The Gulf offers food and biodiversity and hosts endangered species, like the most notably documented spoon-billed sandpiper. The positioning of the Gulf of Mottama is also noteworthy, with three key river tributaries on one side, and the Andaman Sea on the other. This in turn only enhances its relevance as a key waterway and ecosystem hub for all walks of life that rely on it for their everyday survival.

Why is it important to develop the Gulf of Mottama?

In particular food and income security of some 150,000-200,000 small and medium scale fishing and farming families depend on the coastal region. These ethnically diverse communities in turn supply fish and food for markets in the coastal area and beyond. The fertility of the area is however increasingly challenged. Coastal community livelihoods are challenged, but the potential for local economic development which values and optimises these resources is significant. However this can only be achieved through responsible investment in both human and natural capital, and of course through

sustainable integrated management.

What challenges is HELVETAS facing in this project?

The project is just starting. So far now we have not had to face any significant challenges. However, the studies and assessments we have conducted reveal important declines in certain natural resource availability, in particular aquatic species. Thus sustainable regeneration and in turn conservation will require concerted and joint efforts from everyone. This means fishers and other community based groups, private and public sector, business actors and authorities will need to work together in ways that are perhaps unfamiliar but ultimately for the benefit of one and all. Achieving win/win results with all concerned is a priority moving forward together

with our Consortium partners Network Activities Group (NAG) a local NGO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and of course the communities and key stakeholders we are working with.

The Gulf of Mottama aims at becoming a site under the **Ramsar Convention**. The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) hosts the Ramsar Secretariat in its global headquarter in Gland, Switzerland.

Photo © HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation



What innovative solutions are envisaged to overcome those challenges?

It is usually the case that the challenges themselves hold the key to some of the most appropriate solutions. In this case, we are confident that the solutions lie in the hands of the concerned stakeholders. Hence the project, as the title indicates, is first and foremost supporting community-led approaches. We draw on our internationally and regionally gained experience, namely in Bangladesh where we co-implement with IUCN a similar project in the Tanguar Haor Ramsar site. Secondly, we will encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration and engagement. This is important because without the support and cooperation of the private and public sector as well as authorities and decision makers, achieving the overall goal of a conserved and sustainably developed biodiversity will not be realised.

Moreover, enhancing skills for income and employment in non-fishery on and off farm labour and business development will help offset current pressure on already declining fish resources, while increasing resilience and adaptation as well as employment opportunities. This is equally important for the coastal families and communities we are working with, as it is relevant for the broader socio-economic sustainable development of the Gulf of Mottama area, Myanmar and beyond. This holds especially true when we take

into account the increasing trade dynamics in the ASEAN region.

What is special about HELVETAS' contribution, as a Swiss NGO?

Until recently, the majority of assistance and cooperation in the Gulf of Mottama has focused on humanitarian support. HELVETAS has a long standing history and broad range of experiences in development cooperation, reconciling public, private and citizen interests with comprehensive and integrated approaches linking field level with policy level. We work in 33 countries and have expertise in five key working areas, namely rural economy, water and infrastructure, skills development and education, environment and climate change, and finally governance and peace. This affords us a lot of adaptability to be responsive to needs on the ground.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is a development organisation anchored in Switzerland. Its vision is a just world in which all men and women determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. The Community-led Coastal Management Project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

For more visit www.helvetas.org/myanmar; www.nagmyanmar.org; www.iucn.org

Sponsors





Solar Impulse 2 round-the-world flight 2015



Stopover in Mandalay, Myanmar 19 – 27 March 2015

Acknowledgement

The Solar Impulse team and the Embassy of Switzerland in Myanmar

WISH to acknowledge with sincere thanks to His Excellency U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Union Government, the Regional Government of Mandalay Region, the supportive team of the Department of Civil Aviation, the Airport Authorities in Mandalay, officials and citizens of Mandalay for their appreciated support and highest cooperation extended during the “Solar

Impulse 2 Round-the-World Tour 2015” stopover in Mandalay.

Solar Impulse and the Embassy of Switzerland are also grateful to ABB and Schindler, global and Main Partners of Solar Impulse. A special thankyou also goes to FMI/Yoma Strategic Holding for being a very supportive host partner, especially in so far as coordinating Solar Impulse’s presence in Myanmar.

The encounters of the Swiss Pilots with thousands of students were one of the highlight’s of Solar Impulse stop over, demonstrating an immense interest for renewable energy and pioneering spirit among the young generation of Myanmar.

Solar Impulse and the Embassy of Switzerland enjoyed sharing this unique and adventurous experience with you.

