



PERMANENT MISSION OF SWITZERLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS

65-06/714.1-11.1 Rat

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions of all Member States to the United Nations and has the honour to inform that Switzerland has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council, at the elections to be held during the 60th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 May 2006.

Switzerland strongly welcomes the establishment of the new Human Rights Council and is committed to do its utmost for the Council to become a strong and effective body capable of promoting and protecting all human rights, everywhere. As frequently mentioned, Switzerland will make offices available for states which are not represented in Geneva but wish to participate in the Council's work.

Respect for human rights is deeply rooted in Swiss tradition and in the Swiss Federal Constitution. Switzerland is committed to upholding the highest standards in the protection and promotion of human rights and continues to pursue an active human rights policy at the national, regional and universal level in compliance with international law and a "rights based approach".

Switzerland has ratified the following relevant international instruments:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1992);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1992) and its 2nd Optional Protocol (1994);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1994) (including Article 14);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1997);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1997) and its 1st Optional Protocol (2002);
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1986);
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (2000);
- Four Geneva Conventions (1950), the two Additional Protocols (1982).
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2001).

Permanent Missions of all Member States
to the United Nations


New York

Switzerland is committed to comply with its international human rights obligations, including those set out in the above-mentioned instruments.

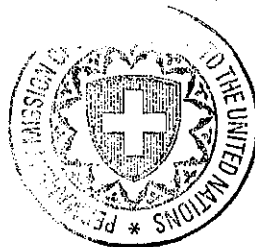
Switzerland has never had the opportunity to serve on the Commission on Human Rights, but continuously contributed to its work as an observer. Switzerland was actively and constructively engaged in the negotiations leading up to the adoption of Resolution A/RES/60/251.

Switzerland's pledges and commitments requested by Resolution A/RES/60/251 of 15 March 2006 are attached to this note.

The Government of Switzerland would therefore highly appreciate the valuable support of United Nations Member States for the candidature of Switzerland to the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions of all Member States to the United Nations the assurance of its highest consideration. 

New York, 28 March 2006



Switzerland and the Human Rights Council

Voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with Resolution A/RES/60/251

The Swiss Government undertakes to :

- 1. Fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council in order to make it a strong, efficient and fair UN Human Rights body**
 - By actively participating in the work of the Council in a spirit of cooperation, inclusiveness and genuine dialogue and readiness to be submitted to the universal periodic review;
 - By ensuring effective responses to human rights violations wherever they occur and by contributing to the standard-setting work of the Council;
 - By engaging in a constructive reflection on the modalities and mandates of the Council as foreseen in Resolution A/RES/60/251, including the strengthening of the system of Special Procedures and other expert mechanisms of the Council;
 - By a strong commitment to the realisation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, on an equal footing;
 - By seeking dialogue with non-members of the Council, regional organizations and civil society as well as improving the engagement of NGOs with the Council.

- 2. Reaffirm its support to the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and other relevant UN Funds, Programmes and bodies**
 - By continuing its close collaboration and dialogue with OHCHR and by maintaining at the moment the current level of financial support;
 - By promoting a human rights based approach to development in its support to UN operational activities and its engagement in the governing bodies of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNIFEM as well as WHO and FAO.
 - By working towards the better integration of human rights, transitional justice and rule of law activities in the work of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and by organizing in 2006 a workshop about a study on "human rights and peace agreements".

- By contributing to the ongoing reform of the treaty body system and in particular by evaluating the usefulness of an expanded common core document complemented by specific reports to each of the treaty bodies;
- By developing and supporting the updating of a country-by-country "Human Rights Index", which is based on UN official documents and will be accessible to everybody as a useful reference and information tool.

3. Advance human rights on an international level

- By encouraging States who have not yet done so to ratify the core international human rights instruments;
- By supporting States in their implementation of human rights obligations through human rights dialogues, exchange of experts, technical cooperation and advice;
- By contributing through the Swiss development cooperation to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and good governance in the majority of its partner countries;
- By contributing to the process of identifying and clarifying standards for corporate responsibility and accountability with regard to human rights and business.

4. Advance human rights on a national level

- By cooperating fully with the Special Procedures of the Council, including by upholding the standing invitation to all Special Procedures issued in April 2002 and facilitating all the necessary arrangements for their visits.
- By continuing to effectively implement its human rights obligations at federal and cantonal level, and to make every actor of society, i.e. the government, the private sector and civil society, aware of the need to respect human rights through information, training and awareness-raising.
- By examining the withdrawal of its reservations made to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- By ratifying in the near future the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP2), which Switzerland signed in 2000;
- By considering the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, which Switzerland signed June 2004;
- By considering signing the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention;

- By ratifying in the near future the Additional Protocol III to the Four Geneva Conventions;
- By cooperating fully with the treaty monitoring bodies, including by submitting periodic reports on time, and acting promptly and in good faith on their concluding observations and recommendations.

Internet links to relevant Swiss official websites

- Priorities of Swiss Human Rights Policy :
<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/e/home/foreign/humsec/humrig.html>
- Human Rights report of the Swiss government 2000 :
<http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/ff/2000/2460.pdf>
- Human Rights and Development Cooperation :
<http://www.sdc.admin.ch>
- Switzerland and the United Nations :
http://www.eda.admin.ch/sub_uno/e/uno.html