



India-Switzerland Joint Statement during the State Visit of the President of the Swiss Confederation to India (August 30-September 02, 2017)

September 01, 2017

1. The President of the Swiss Confederation, Her Excellency Mrs. Doris Leuthard, is currently on a state visit to India from 30 August-02 September 2017. President Leuthard is accompanied by the State Secretary for Economic Affairs Mrs. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, State Secretary for International Financial Matters, Mr. Jörg Gasser and other officials. A high level business delegation from Switzerland is also accompanying the President.
2. During the visit, President Leuthard was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. President Leuthard also laid a wreath at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian Nation. The President of India Mr. Ram Nath Kovind held a meeting with President Leuthard and also hosted a banquet in the honor of President Leuthard. The Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi held a one-to-one meeting and delegation-level talks with President Leuthard. The Vice President of India Mr. Venkaiah Naidu called on President Leuthard. External Affairs Minister Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley, Railway Minister Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines Mr. Piyush Goyal and Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce & Industry Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman also separately called on President Leuthard.

On August 31, Prime Minister Modi along with President Leuthard addressed the business leaders of both countries and held a fruitful exchange with them. During the meeting with Prime Minister Modi, CEOs of Swiss companies expressed strong support for India's economic reforms and highlighted their interest in contributing to India's Flagship Programmes like Make in India, Smart Cities, Digital India, Swachh Bharat, Startup India, Skill India and other initiatives.

3. India and Switzerland - A Longstanding Dynamic Partnership

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Leuthard agreed that India's policy of non-alignment and Switzerland's traditional policy of neutrality had helped to develop a close understanding and solid grounds for constructive cooperation between the two nations on international and bilateral issues.

In light of the upcoming 70th Anniversary of the Swiss-Indian Friendship Treaty, Prime Minister Modi and President Leuthard resolved to strengthen the two country's close, broad and longstanding friendship. They reiterated their commitment to democracy, rule of law, free trade, respect of human rights, pluralism and rule-based international order and agreed that the Swiss-Indian Friendship Treaty has strengthened bilateral relations by further enhancing trust and mutual respect.

Both leaders acknowledged the need for deepening and expanding bilateral ties through exchanges at various levels. They further agreed to continue with regular political consultations at official level between the two Foreign Ministries for exchanging views on major bilateral, global and regional issues of mutual interest.

4. Trade & Investment Cooperation

Both leaders appreciated the strong bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi reiterated that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is an important component to realize India's growth target and that India especially welcomed Swiss investors. In this context, both leaders agreed on the need for continuing negotiations on a new Bilateral Investment Treaty. President Leuthard commended the economic reforms introduced by India and consequent progress made by the country.

India-EFTA TEPA

The two leaders welcomed the resumption of the negotiations on the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the EFTA countries and underlined their commitment to a satisfactory conclusion of the EFTA-India Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement.

5. Cooperation in Finance and Tax matters

Both leaders emphasized their willingness to further enhance cooperation in the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion. They acknowledged the importance of a global level playing field for effective implementation of the international standards on tax transparency. They noted with satisfaction the signing of the Joint Declaration in November 2016 on the implementation of Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) and, in this context, President Leuthard briefed Prime Minister Modi about the ongoing parliamentary procedure in Switzerland. The two leaders look forward to

the first transmission of financial account information between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi welcomed the steps taken by the Swiss side to expedite the execution of tax information sharing request by India and hoped that the two sides resolve outstanding issues expeditiously through bilateral dialogue at competent authority level. He also expressed his expectation that Switzerland will implement the recommendations of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information in Tax Matters with the view to further improve mutual administrative assistance in tax matters. Both leaders agreed for enhanced engagement, closer convergence and stronger cooperation in tax and financial matters. Both sides also recognized the importance and potential benefits of cross-border investment and financial services and agreed to continue cooperation on these matters through regular dialogue.

6. Sectoral Cooperation

A. Clean Technology

The two leaders agreed that green solutions and clean technology can become one of the key areas of bilateral cooperation. President Leuthard briefed Prime Minister Modi about the involvement of Swiss cooperation and companies in these initiatives, particularly on enhancing energy efficiency in buildings, sustainable development of mountain regions, and capacity building in Smart Cities Missions. Prime Minister Modi expressed appreciation at these developments.

Skill Development and Capacity Building

Both leaders welcomed the deepening of cooperation on Skill Development and Capacity Building through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016 on Cooperation in the Fields of Skill Development as well as Vocational and Professional Education and Training (SDVPET). They also expressed satisfaction at the constructive discussions held in April 2017 during the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on SDVPET.

B. Scientific cooperation

Both leaders appreciated the positive developments between the two countries in the fields of research and innovation. Pursuant to the conclusion of the bilateral agreement on Science and Technology in 2003, four joint calls have been issued to identify and support bilateral R&D projects covering areas of mutual scientific and technological interest. This has helped in new knowledge creation through the intensification of networking between researchers and higher education institutions of both countries. A separate Working Group for cooperation has also been constituted for joint training and capacity building programmes in the field of Glaciology. The two leaders noted that in order to chart the future steps of cooperation the S&T Joint Committee will meet in New Delhi in November 2017.

C. Cyber Cooperation

Both leaders applauded the existing cooperation in the domain of Internet Governance and Digitalization, and reiterated the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in this regard. Switzerland invited India to actively participate at the 12th UN Internet Governance Forum, to be

held in Geneva in December 2017 and looks forward to India's participation. India hopes for a high level participation from Switzerland in the fifth edition of Global Conference on Cyber Space to be held in New Delhi in November 2017.

D. Air Services

Both leaders acknowledged the very long tradition of aviation relations between the two countries. Switzerland and India are convinced that the economy of both countries will equally benefit from a revision of the existing Air Services Agreement and commit to further negotiations on this matter.

E. Railways

Both Leaders welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on technical cooperation in the railway sector. The envisaged technical cooperation in the areas of railway safety and technology will promote efficiency and sustainability in the transport sector.

Both sides believe that India's ongoing railway modernization and expansion plans offer ample opportunities for the Swiss rail industry to engage with Indian railways and industry.

The two leaders also welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Konkan Railway Cooperation Limited (KRCL) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich (ETH Zürich).

F. Health, Wellness and Tourism Cooperation

Both leaders noted with satisfaction that a large number of Indians visit

Switzerland as foreign tourists each year. Underscoring the substantial potential for bilateral collaboration in the tourism and hospitality sector, the two leaders took note of the scope for such cooperation, particularly in mountainous regions. President Leuthard welcomed the initiative taken last year for fast-tracking Indian visa for Swiss nationals through e-Visa facility.

Underlining the importance of Ayurveda, Prime Minister Modi appreciated that Switzerland had recognized it. He further suggested more cooperation in this area for promoting health & wellness.

G. Cultural Relations & People to People cooperation

The two leaders expressed happiness that possibilities are being explored for Sister State Agreements between Indian States and Swiss Cantons and cities. They acknowledged the need for greater people-to-people contact at different levels, particularly in the field of academics, culture, cinema etc., to foster closer ties between the two countries.

7. Multilateral Cooperation

A. Climate Change & SDG

Both leaders expressed their strong commitment to delivering on the Paris Agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to cooperate in formulating the guidelines by 2018 for its robust operationalization, reflecting their common but differentiated

responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances. President Leuthard appreciated Indian leadership on the International Solar Alliance to address climate change concerns. Both leaders also reiterated their commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They recognized the 2030 Agenda as the universal and integrated framework for sustainable development and highlighted the importance of strengthening the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as a universal forum for the effective follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. President Leuthard expressed her appreciation for the Indian engagement at the HLPF 2017, where India presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR), and announced a first comprehensive status report from Switzerland for the HLPF 2018.

B. Synergy at the UN and other Multilateral Fora

- I. **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT):** Both leaders urged all countries to work towards disrupting terrorist networks and financing as well as preventing violent extremism. Both leaders emphasized that the global counter-terrorism legal framework should regularly be updated and strengthened to combat this scourge and in this context called for the early finalization of the CCIT. Both leaders also urged that all member countries should demonstrate a collective political will to take concrete actions against terrorism and to implement the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

- II. **United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Reform:** Both leaders reaffirmed the need for reform of the UN Security Council, including its expansion, to make it more representative, accountable, effective and responsive to the geo-political realities of the 21st century. PM Modi acknowledged the work done by Switzerland within the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group for improvement in working methods of the UN Security Council. PM Modi encouraged the support of Switzerland to make a decisive push towards actual “text-based” negotiations in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN), as the IGN process needs to be guided to its logical conclusion, culminating in a meaningful reform of the UNSC.

PM Modi appreciated the valuable support of Switzerland for India’s candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat in 2021-22 and expressed happiness that both countries could enter into a reciprocal support arrangement in this regard.

- III. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to intensify their cooperation in the United Nations and other multilateral fora such as WTO, IMF and ASEM, in order to address current global challenges such as climate change and to foster international peace and security, sustainable development as well as the respect for human rights.

C. Cooperation in Multilateral Export Control Regimes

8. Both leaders expressed their commitment to support and strengthen global

non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. Switzerland welcomed India's accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and welcomed India's intensified engagement with the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement, expressing its support for India's Accession to these regimes. PM Modi thanked President Leuthard for Switzerland's continued support to India's membership in the various multilateral export control regimes.

Agreements

The following Memoranda of Understanding were signed during the visit:

- A. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Railways of the Republic of India and the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications of the Swiss Confederation on technical cooperation in the rail sector
- B. Memorandum of Understanding between Konkan Railway Cooperation Limited (KRCL) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich (ETH Zürich)

9. Conclusion

- Both sides expressed satisfaction with regular high-level contacts between the two countries that further deepen bilateral ties between the two nations.
- President Leuthard thanked the President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind and the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi for the warm hospitality extended to her and her delegation.

- President Leuthard invited the President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind and the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi to visit Switzerland at mutually convenient dates.

New Delhi

September 01, 2017