



## Answers to some important questions about development cooperation

August 2011

### 1. What is development cooperation? What are its guiding principles?

Development cooperation is an instrument of Swiss foreign policy to promote solidarity and human rights. The Federal Constitution stipulates that Switzerland “shall in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for democracy and human rights, the peaceful co-existence of peoples, as well as the conservation of natural resources”. (Const. Art. 54, para. 2).

International cooperation is implemented, on the one hand, in the form of bilateral aid and, on the other, by supporting multilateral organisations engaged in the struggle to alleviate poverty. By providing know-how and technology, as well as financial resources, Switzerland supports developing countries in solving their problems effectively on their own initiative.

In an interconnected world, cooperation with countries beyond the OECD is vital for solving global problems such as food security, climate change and the stability of the world financial system. These problems seriously affect the chances and prospects of poor countries.

### 2. In which countries is SDC active?

To find SDC's areas and countries of deployment visit

<http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Countries>

### 3. Why is Switzerland involved in development cooperation? What advantages does the country derive from it?

Cooperation is a response to the duty of solidarity with the world's poorest peoples. It should also be seen as a contribution to a highly globalised world. The truth is that globalisation does not afford all countries the same opportunities: prosperous countries like Switzerland benefit from wider business opportunities, while other economies remain marginalised. Given Switzerland's heavy reliance on foreign trade, our country's interests and the objectives of development policy go hand in hand. Switzerland will be more prosperous if the world is a fairer place.

### 4. How is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation organised?

SDC is organised in four operational areas:

Regional Cooperation steers SDC's bilateral cooperation with countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. In reducing the number of its priority countries from the previous 17 to 12, and the number of its special programmes from 7 to 6, SDC continues its geographic concentration of activities. SDC's programmes in India, Bhutan, Pakistan, Peru and North Korea will, by 2012, either be terminated or given a new focus. The regional development banks are also key partners in the domain of regional development.

Global Cooperation is primarily active in the multilateral domain, cooperating with the organisations of the UN system and with the World Bank. By fostering global programmes in the domain of climate change, food security and migration, Switzerland makes a contribution to tackling global challenges.

Humanitarian Aid aims to save lives and alleviate suffering. This takes the form of direct aid for the victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts, and of manpower and financial resources to help humanitarian partner organisations. Its interventions focus on prevention, emergency aid and survival assistance, reconstruction, and advocacy for the causes of forgotten humanitarian crises. Switzerland provides humanitarian aid in six regions.

Swiss cooperation with Eastern Europe provides support for political and economic reforms in the Western Balkans and the former Soviet Union. The main focus of this transition assistance is the building of democratic institutions, the reform of health and social services, and the improvement of the environment. Since 2008, Switzerland has been making a so-called enlargement contribution aimed at reducing the social and economic disparities within the enlarged European Union.

For information on the four operational areas of SDC please visit <http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities>

SDC organisational chart  
[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About\\_SDC/Organisation](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About_SDC/Organisation)

## **5. Which Swiss institutions are responsible for implementing development cooperation policy?**

SDC is responsible for technical cooperation, SECO for implementing economic and trade policy measures – in accordance with the mandate they receive from Parliament. To fulfil their obligations, they also require the knowledge and commitment of civil society institutions: private individuals and enterprises, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the cantons and municipalities. Many of these institutions carry out small or medium-scale development projects on their own initiative. They in turn need state support to deliver their services. The state and civil society play complementary roles and are interdependent in terms of providing development aid.

## **6. Which are the priority countries in Swiss development cooperation?**

Swiss development cooperation focuses on individual partner countries, so-called priority countries. In these selected partner countries, SDC concentrates on two or three thematic priorities (for example water, vocational training, SME promotion, health, etc.). The cooperation office is responsible for implementing the programme in a priority country. It conducts the dialogue with the partner countries and other donors. The Federal Parliament specifies the priority countries in the announcement on global credit. Criteria are need (poverty, crisis potential), aspects of good governance, added value of the Swiss contribution and a cooperation's prospects of success. The current priority countries include many poor mountainous and land-locked countries with natural conditions and landscape characteristics similar to those of Switzerland.

List of priority countries:  
[http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource\\_en\\_198081.pdf](http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_198081.pdf)

Information on SDC's areas of deployment:  
<http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Countries>

## **7. What are the special programmes?**

In some partner countries SDC runs special programmes. These are usually of shorter duration and more closely focused on a specific theme than Switzerland's activities in priority countries. Some special programmes are regionally oriented, such as the special programme for Southern Africa, which prioritises the theme of health and AIDS prevention. SDC also runs special programmes in the Great Lakes region, in Cuba, Afghanistan, the West Bank and Gaza, Mongolia, North Korea, Moldova and Macedonia.

For information about the activities of the individual special programmes please visit

<http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Countries>

## **8. What would the world be like without development cooperation?**

In emerging countries, development cooperation often accounts for less than 1% of gross national product (GNP). These countries would certainly suffer less from the withdrawal of cooperation than poorer developing countries, where it accounts for 20% or more of GNP. The withdrawal of all development cooperation would further destabilise so-called "fragile" countries, and would most likely give rise to famines, epidemics, conflicts and massive migration. As a result, the need for humanitarian aid to enable the inhabitants of these countries simply to survive would greatly increase. Prevention is better than cure: this saying also applies to development cooperation.

## **9. What does Switzerland's official development assistance consist of and what resources does it have at its disposal?**

In 2010, official development assistance (ODA) including federal, cantonal and municipal contributions totalled CHF 2393 million. This includes expenditures on development by **SDC** (development cooperation, humanitarian aid and cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS), the **State Secretariat for Economic Affairs** (development cooperation, cooperation with Eastern Europe and debt relief), the **Federal Office for Migration** (assistance for asylum seekers in Switzerland and return assistance), **FDFA** (in particular civilian peace building and human rights), **DDPS** (in particular activities for the promotion of peace and security), the **Federal Office for the Environment** (contributions to international organisations), other federal offices and the **cantons and municipalities**.

In 2010, SDC's expenditures totalled CHF 1497 million (CHF 980 million for bilateral and CHF 517 million for multilateral cooperation). In 2010, SECO spent CHF 248 million on ODA.

For a more detailed breakdown of Switzerland's official development assistance please visit [http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About\\_SDC/Facts\\_and\\_figures/ODA](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About_SDC/Facts_and_figures/ODA)

## **10. The Swiss parliament has decided to raise official development assistance to 0.5% of gross national income. What will the additional funding be used for?**

The Swiss parliament has decided to raise official development assistance linearly from 0.41% to 0.5% of gross national income (GNI). As a first step, on 28 February 2011 parliament voted to increase its ODA by CHF 640 million in 2011 and 2012. The contribution for 2013 to 2015 will be dealt with in parliament during the debate on the 2013-2016 announcement. In 2010, Switzerland's contribution of 0.41% of GNI was slightly below the average level of OECD member states (0.49%).

The increase will have a tangible impact on SDC and SECO's poverty-reduction projects. The additional funding will, on the one hand, enable Switzerland to fulfil its multilateral obligations and, on the other, enable it to provide additional assistance for projects in the areas of water and climate – two sectors in which it is a recognised leader.

**Water-related projects:** Universal access to clean water is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. Millions of people do not have drinking water, not because there is too little water, but because of poverty, inequality and the lack of political will. The provision

of water for drinking and for food production is one of the main focuses of SDC's activities. In this context, priority is also given to protecting water resources and their associated ecosystems.

For information on the water-related projects please visit

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development\\_policy/The\\_increase\\_in\\_development\\_aid/Water\\_related\\_projects](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development_policy/The_increase_in_development_aid/Water_related_projects)

**Climate-related projects:** Developing countries bear the brunt of climate change, i.e. the countries and populations that are least responsible for it. They bear the consequences, such as drought, storms, lack of water, rising sea levels and smaller harvests.

Switzerland plays an active role at various levels: it supports developing countries to slow the growth in their carbon emissions, to adapt agricultural practices and conditions to climatic changes, to reduce deforestation, to promote decentralised power supply systems that use low-carbon technologies, etc.

For information about climate-related projects please visit

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development\\_policy/The\\_increase\\_in\\_public\\_development\\_aid/Climate\\_related-projects](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development_policy/The_increase_in_public_development_aid/Climate_related-projects)

**Strengthening multilateral cooperation:** Increasing official development assistance to 0.5% of GNI will enable Switzerland to fulfil its obligations to various international institutions. The additional funding will be applied to three areas:

1. **Replenishment of the African Development Fund** (African Development Fund AfDF), which supports economic and social development in 38 African countries. This money is invested in infrastructure projects (road, water and electricity supply networks) and governance and regional development projects.
2. **Switzerland's contribution to the United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP), a pillar of multilateral cooperation.
3. **Debt relief for the poorest countries** (Multilateral Debt Reduction Initiative; MDRI). In 2005 Switzerland committed itself to the process of reducing the debts of the poorest countries in the world. For budgetary reasons, it has not been able to fully honour its commitments in this area.

For information on strengthening multilateral cooperation please visit

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development\\_policy/The\\_increase\\_in\\_public\\_development\\_aid/Fulfil\\_multilateral\\_commitments](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development_policy/The_increase_in_public_development_aid/Fulfil_multilateral_commitments)

## **11. What are the responsibilities of the Economic Cooperation and Development Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs?**

SECO is responsible for the planning and implementation of economic and trade policy measures with developing countries, the states of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the new member states of the European Union (EU). In addition, SECO is responsible for coordinating Switzerland's relations with the World Bank Group, the regional development banks and the economic organisations of the United Nations. The Economic Cooperation and Development Division is responsible for SECO's economic cooperation and development activities.

Website of SECO's Economic Cooperation and Development Division

<http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/laender/index.html?lang=en>

## **12. What criteria does Switzerland apply in choosing its partners? Why is it active in so many countries?**

The following criteria are applied in deciding which countries should benefit from our involvement:

- **Need:** SDC works in some of the world's poorest countries and regions, and those which are most vulnerable to political, social and environmental crises.
- **Good fundamentals and potential:** SDC works with countries offering favourable general conditions and which adhere to the principles of good governance (rule of law, democracy, human rights).
- **Comparative advantages:** SDC is active in those countries and themes in which, thanks to its many years of experience, it can achieve genuine added value in the fight against poverty. This includes, amongst others, the areas of education and health, the water sector, microfinance, protection of minorities and strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law.
- **Switzerland's political interests:** geographical priorities are also determined by long-term political interests and their acceptance at national level, and preference is given to ongoing cooperation with promising long-term prospects.

SDC cooperates with a good third of the world's poorest countries, thus achieving a good balance between Switzerland's interests in building good relations with all countries (principle of universality) and the need for a minimum critical mass to ensure that cooperation is effective (principle of concentration).

### **13. Why does Switzerland cooperate in the development of countries with unstable structures, so-called "fragile states"?**

The instability of fragile states may have direct or indirect consequences regionally and globally. Development cooperation can help to strengthen countries with fragile structures. Switzerland enjoys considerable credibility abroad, and this lends legitimacy to its involvement in conflict resolution. As a result, it can achieve significant results by strengthening public institutions and civil society in countries where there are decent economic prospects and the political will for change.

### **14. Through what channels does SDC work?**

SDC is responsible for coordinating the Confederation's development cooperation and humanitarian aid. It works in various ways to achieve this end:

- Multilateral cooperation
- Bilateral cooperation
- Humanitarian Aid and the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA)
- Cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS

Taken as a whole, development cooperation is a bundle of complementary tasks undertaken in response to a wide range of challenges. Cooperation with Eastern Europe began as a reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The former communist countries needed help to convert their centralised systems to democratic market economies. Humanitarian aid concentrates on measures to preserve human life in emergency situations, and on reconstruction following catastrophes and conflicts.

The priority areas are: conflict resolution, social development (education and health), good governance, job creation and the conservation of natural resources. The aim of these efforts is to help achieve the three objectives defined in the development policy approved by Parliament in December 2008: to alleviate poverty, to reduce systemic risks (security) and to contribute to a fair kind of globalisation.

### **15. What is bilateral aid? And multilateral aid?**

Bilateral aid is development cooperation based on projects and programmes, aid to partner countries, often provided in situ. Bilateral aid procedures have changed considerably over the last decade, with new forms of cooperation emerging, such as coordinated efforts

involving various donors or direct contributions to a country's national budget in favour of a particular sector (e.g. health).

For information on bilateral cooperation please visit

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Aktivitaeten/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit\\_im\\_Sueden](http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Aktivitaeten/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit_im_Sueden)

Multilateral aid is concerned with Switzerland's involvement in institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, regional development banks and global networks.

For information about multilateral cooperation please visit

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Aktivitaeten/Multilaterale\\_Zusammenarbeit](http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Aktivitaeten/Multilaterale_Zusammenarbeit)

#### **16. Should we be concerned that multilateral aid is assuming greater importance at the present time?**

Cooperation extends beyond particular projects and must adapt to a changing world. It also needs to contribute to a fairer redistribution of the incomes generated by the opening up of global markets. Another factor to take into account is the growing importance of global challenges which cannot be tackled at national level. It is therefore logical that multilateral contributions are assuming ever greater importance.

International organisations are owned by their member states, and therefore also by Switzerland. It is therefore important that Switzerland take parts in the work of these organisations and, as a member, contributes to their political and strategic direction by seeking to influence decisions. For instance, Switzerland has a permanent seat on the World Bank's executive council, where it leads a voting group.

#### **17. Where does Switzerland stand compared with other countries in terms of quality and volume?**

In terms of volume: in 2010, Switzerland allocated 2,393 million francs in public development aid (PDA). Its PDA/GDI ratio decreased from 0.45% in 2009 to 0.41% in 2010. Switzerland holds a middle-ranking position among donor countries (it is twelfth-placed among the twenty-four members of the Development Aid Committee (DAC)). Switzerland will not be able to maintain its present position if the first fifteen members of the EU honour their pledges and increase their ratio to 0.7% by 2015. In February 2011, the Swiss Parliament decided to increase the country's development aid budget to 0.5% of GNP by 2015.

Swiss development cooperation was closely scrutinised by the DAC (the Development Aid Committee of the OECD) in 2009, and by a parliamentary management committee in December 2006. Both bodies confirmed the high quality of Swiss aid.

The DAC nevertheless found the volume of Swiss aid to be insufficient.

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About\\_SDC/Facts\\_and\\_figures/Switzerland\\_s\\_performance\\_compared\\_with\\_other\\_countries](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/About_SDC/Facts_and_figures/Switzerland_s_performance_compared_with_other_countries)

#### **18. What proportion of the financial flows between Switzerland and its partner countries is accounted for by development cooperation?**

With the exception of India, Pakistan and Vietnam, development cooperation accounts for the greater part of the financial flows from Switzerland to its partners. Where Africa is concerned, almost 45% of Switzerland's bilateral and multilateral aid goes to African countries. Only 1% of the country's trade (imports and exports) is with Africa. Since 2002, the returns on private capital invested in Africa have been greater than Switzerland's aid to the continent. In fact, the net financial flows between developing countries and Switzerland are mostly in Switzerland's favour.

Another important financial flow between industrialised countries and the developing world consists in migrants' remittances to their countries of origin. In 2010, the sum involved was reckoned to be between 200 and 300 billion dollars, i.e. at least three times the amount the international community devotes to public development aid for developing countries. In fact, almost nine billion francs leave Switzerland each year in the form of migrants' remittances.

## **19. What can be done about the problem of corruption?**

In its partner countries, SDC works with both state and non-state agencies which act among themselves as external control mechanisms. Multilaterally, Switzerland supports anti-corruption programmes and takes steps to tackle the problem of corruption in its own programmes and in the activities of Swiss institutions working in partner countries. In 1998, SDC adopted some directives to combat corruption:

- Global approach based on detailed analysis of individual situations
- Anti-corruption measures to be included in SDC's sector-related programmes and projects
- Risk management and selection of appropriate players
- Transmitting a picture of the local situation to other aid donors

SDC's commitment to combating corruption:

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Rule\\_of\\_Law\\_Democracy/Combating\\_corruption](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Rule_of_Law_Democracy/Combating_corruption)

## **20. How effective is development cooperation and why is it difficult to evaluate its impact?**

Development cooperation seeks to combat not only the effects of poverty, but also, in particular, its causes. For this reason it also focuses on structural changes and seeks, for example, to improve the democratic processes and the rule of law in individual countries. It is difficult to quantify progress at this higher level. Measuring the impact at the level of local projects that produce quantifiable goods and services is less difficult. But here too, development cooperation does not take place under laboratory conditions, but in a dynamic environment in which many social, political and economic variables affect the result.

Despite the difficulties in measuring impact, a number of development trends are clear. In its interim report on the Millennium Development Goals, the UN documented significant progress in the fight against poverty and hunger. Child mortality is declining and the percentage of children in school continues to rise steadily. More and more people have access to drinking water and basic sanitary services. Development cooperation has played an important part in these successes. They are particularly significant in the light of continued rapid population growth in poor countries.

The effectiveness of assistance is a lasting concern of Swiss development cooperation. SDC and SECO regularly report on their results in the annual report and in the biennial reports on effectiveness on specific themes. The first two reports dealt with Swiss development cooperation in the water sector and in food security.

For information on effectiveness please visit

<http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Effectiveness>

## **21. What is the relationship between Swiss domestic policy and development cooperation?**

In the context of globalisation, the dividing line between domestic and foreign policy is becoming increasingly fuzzy. For example, 30 years ago Switzerland's agriculture or patent-protection policies went virtually unnoticed internationally, except in their own specialised spheres. Nowadays, coalitions of countries not having the same interests as Switzerland in

agriculture or the protection of intellectual property appeal against the potentially negative collateral effects of some of our national policies for developing countries. Industrialised countries are regularly under pressure from developing countries to bring their domestic policies into line with the objectives of development policy. In the Swiss political system, the Federal Council acts as arbiter in this area.

## **22. What influence can Switzerland exert in the international arena?**

Swiss development cooperation enjoys a remarkable reputation internationally. This is based on its exemplary approaches in such areas as health, education and decentralisation, and its close involvement on the ground. It also reflects Switzerland's long experience as a neutral country whose activities do not conceal commercial or geopolitical ambitions.

Switzerland is also a sought-after partner when it comes to coordinating development activities with other donors and gearing them to the policies of beneficiary countries. In most of the countries where it works, SDC is the lead agency in the donor community in such areas as health, decentralisation, water-resources management and education, even though our country's financial contribution is often relatively modest.

As a member of major international organisations (UN, OECD, World Bank, etc.), Switzerland is well placed to play an active part in formulating their policies and action plans. Switzerland seeks to play an active role in solving global challenges, where influence does not necessarily depend on the financial input.

## **23. How important is development cooperation for Switzerland's international relations?**

Development cooperation is an important factor in enhancing Switzerland's international image. It can therefore be seen as an investment for a country such as ours, half of whose income is generated abroad. The amount devoted to development cooperation is relatively modest: just 0.41% of gross national income (GNI). For the sake of comparison, in 2010 Switzerland allocated almost 0.7% of GNI to agricultural subsidies alone, and almost 0.9% to national defence. That amounts to almost eight billion francs: four times the sum spent on development cooperation.

## **24. Who really draws up Switzerland's development cooperation policy?**

Parliament laid the long-term foundations in passing the federal law on international development cooperation and humanitarian aid of 19 March 1976. This is the basis on which the Federal Council formulates its foreign policy objectives, which also apply to development cooperation policy. The Federal Council regularly publishes a foreign policy report.

At the same time, other agencies such as NGOs and universities are also involved in setting the guidelines for Swiss development cooperation policy. They play an important role in raising Swiss people's awareness of development cooperation issues.

## **25. How has Swiss development cooperation policy changed and developed?**

In 1961, the Federal Council appointed the country's first technical cooperation representative, effectively launching Switzerland's public development aid effort. Initially, Swiss involvement took the form of bridge-building, support for cheese-making and the development of mountain regions. Nowadays, its outstanding contributions are in the fields of health and education, microfinance and water resources management, and in promoting decentralisation and democratic governance.

Although the methods and areas of intervention have changed, Swiss cooperation has remained faithful to the idea that development needs to come from the grass roots. It has

therefore always stressed the importance of local participation in the formulation of its projects and programmes. Combined with the very Swiss virtues of accountability, professionalism and neutrality, this fundamental concern has ensured that Swiss development cooperation is internationally respected, especially since it is not conditioned by geopolitical interests. Switzerland is currently active in more than 40 countries and regions of the South and East. In 2009, it devoted 2.5 billion francs to alleviating poverty around the world, providing humanitarian aid and supporting reform in Eastern Europe.

History of Swiss development cooperation

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Dossiers/50\\_years\\_SDC/Geschichte\\_der\\_Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Chronology](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Dossiers/50_years_SDC/Geschichte_der_Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Chronology)

## **26. Does SDC also work with Swiss private companies?**

For the past ten years SDC has increasingly worked in direct partnership with companies, in particular Swiss firms. Many of these firms are globally active and have an interest in better integrating poor people into the market. To ensure that private sector partnerships can survive, the firms must create win-win situations. Thus, they have to simultaneously pursue development interests and long-term corporate interests. This is the case when projects are closely related to the private partner's *core business*, i.e. firms are offered incentives and support to redefine their business model to focus on the needs of the poor as producers, processors and consumers, or if companies initiate projects as an expression of *social and ecological responsibility*. In evaluating potential private partners for public-private partnerships, SDC emphasises in particular the need for these partners to respect human rights.

In the past ten years SDC has invested about CHF 32.5 million in joint ventures with private-sector partners, whereby the share of private funds in these projects was usually a multiple of SDC's contribution. Apart from this, in the period from 2006 to 2010 SDC awarded contracts and mandates worth CHF 95.5 million to the Swiss private sector related to SDC's activities as a whole.

## **27. What are the Millennium Development Goals?**

More than one billion people have to survive on less than USD 1.25 a day. The foremost aim of the UN's Millennium Development Goals is to halve extreme poverty globally by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals that all United Nations member states agreed on in 2000. Concrete numerical benchmarks were set for each goal and states called upon to take action: by 2015 reduce poverty and hunger by half compared with 1990, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality by two thirds and the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters, halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a Global Partnership for Development. There have been setbacks in achieving the goals because of the 2008-2009 financial and economic crisis, climate change and natural catastrophes, and armed conflicts.

On the Millennium Development Goals:

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development\\_policy/The\\_Millennium\\_Development\\_Goals](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Development_policy/The_Millennium_Development_Goals)

## **28. What is Switzerland's contribution to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals?**

The Millennium Development Goals provide a valuable frame of reference for Swiss development cooperation. As the OECD development committee attests, Switzerland focuses fully on reducing poverty and is not following any geostrategic goals. Take the example of the water sector: it is estimated that Swiss programmes enable an additional 370,000 people per year to enjoy improved access to drinking water and hygienic sanitation

facilities, and a further 30,000 to benefit from better irrigation systems. Switzerland remains committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Increasing public development assistance to 0.5% of gross national income will allow Switzerland to better respond to the urgent global challenges of food security, climate change, water and migration.

### **29. What happens after 2015?**

The Millennium Development Goals demonstrate how the impact and symptoms of poverty evolve in individual countries, individual regions and globally. In any future discussions on a new set of internationally agreed goals post-2015, Switzerland will endeavour to ensure that greater attention is given to addressing the causes of poverty. These causes include, among other things, conflicts, fragile statehood, social exclusion, economic underperformance, inadequate and poor governance and underinvestment in education and health.

### **30. What is the objective of Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation?**

Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation is a Department of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Its primary goal is to provide help in dealing with immediate dangers resulting from natural catastrophes or man-made emergencies. The Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation was activated for example after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2011 tsunami in Japan.

The Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation also provides long-term preventive work on site to avert potential dangers.

[http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Humanitarian\\_Aid](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Humanitarian_Aid)

### **31. How does the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) function?**

The Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation provides aid through the deployment of expert teams from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA). SHA is a militia corps with around 700 members who are divided up into specialist groups according to their knowledge and skills. Some of these experts (e.g. doctors, water and sanitation specialists, and logisticians) are specially trained and prepared for immediate deployment in emergency assignments. As a rule, a SHA emergency assignment team is led by employees of the SDC head office. Experts of the SHA may on request also be seconded to international organisations (e.g. Unicef, UNHCR, ICRC) and Swiss aid agencies.

Particularly in the case of earthquakes the Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Confederation can make use of its institutionalised partnership with dog rescue teams. The dog handlers are also organised as a militia corps, namely the Swiss Disaster Dog Association.

The emergency aid of the Swiss Confederation is ISO-certified; organisational and procedural structures also meet the highest international standards of quality.

Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit SHA:

[www.skh.ch](http://www.skh.ch)

Swiss Disaster Dog Association REDOG:

[www.redog.ch](http://www.redog.ch)