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Media Release

Swiss tents for China

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The FDFA's Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) are sending more than 1,000 tents to the earthquake-struck region of China.

On 12 May 2008, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.9 rocked China's Sichuan Province, where the official death toll now exceeds 40,000. A further 250,000 people were injured, tens of thousands are still missing and several million were made homeless. The earthquake victims' priority need – besides water, medicines and food – is emergency accommodation, and the SDC and the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) are responding to a request from the People's Republic of China by sending 1,050 tents and four experts to the devastated area.

These tents measuring up to 20 m² will provide shelter against the elements for between 6,000 and 8,000 people. On their arrival in Chengdu on Tuesday, 27 May, they will be handed over to the Chinese Red Cross whose staff will be helped to erect them by SDC and SRC experts. In addition, the SDC is sending six 56 m² multi-purpose tents that can be used as temporary medical dispensaries, schools or storage space.

One SDC/SRC consignment of relief supplies has already been financed out of initial emergency funding, enabling the purchase of 20,000 water canisters, 6,000 tarpaulins and 20,000 blankets in China for delivery to the Chinese Red Cross in Sichuan on Friday, 23 May.

The FDFA has contacted the Chinese Embassy in Berne with the offer of seconding experts (geologists, environmental specialists and dam construction engineers) to mitigate secondary damage (breached dams, environmental disasters).

Contacts for further information:

Fabienne Wydler, SDC Humanitarian Aid spokeswoman, (tel. +41 79 828 45 30)

Karl Schuler, SRC spokesman (tel. +41 79 639 54 20)

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