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***Press release
of the Embassy of Switzerland in Beijing***

60th anniversary of the official recognition of the People's Republic of China by Switzerland

Switzerland was one of the first Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China on 17th January 1950. Sixty years ago, in the context of the Cold War, this decision was bold and even visionary. Formal diplomatic relations were established on 14th September of the same year. Since then, and especially since the beginning of the reform and opening policy in China, bilateral relations between the two countries have intensified and diversified. In 2010, many events will contribute to mark this important anniversary.

Sixty years ago, on 17th January 1950, the Swiss Federal Council decided to recognize the People's Republic of China as one of the first Western countries to do so. On that day, Swiss President Max Petitpierre sent a telegram to the President of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Mao Zedong to announce the decision of the Swiss government (original copy and courtesy translation enclosed). It paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations on 14th September of the same year. In the context of the Cold War, this decision was bold and even visionary. It laid the foundation for the excellent relations Switzerland maintains with the People's Republic of China to this day. During many years, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Berne was one of the most important Chinese diplomatic missions in Europe. It is also in Switzerland that the People's Republic of China made its first important appearance on the international stage with the participation of Chinese Premier H.E. Mr. Zhou Enlai at the Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954.

Since the beginning of the reform and opening policy in China, bilateral relations have intensified and diversified. Beyond politics, they now include fields ranging from economy, trade and investments to culture, media and tourism, from migration and defence to science and education, from environment protection to human rights and rule of law. To formalize this wide-ranging cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding on the reinforcement of cooperation was signed in 2007, giving new impetus to bilateral relations.

Celebrating 60 years of Switzerland - China diplomatic relations: 1950-2010

庆祝瑞中建交 60 周年 1950 – 2010

Beyond its Embassy in Beijing, Switzerland maintains three Consulates-General in China (Shanghai, Hong-Kong and Guangzhou) as well as a Swiss Business Hub and a Swissnex (Switzerland's outpost for science, technology and innovation). In Switzerland, beyond its Embassy in Berne, China maintains a Consulate-General in Zurich and three diplomatic missions to the United Nations, the Disarmament Conference and the World Trade Organization in Geneva.

In 2010, many high ranking official visit will take place, either from Switzerland to China or from China to Switzerland. Many cultural events will also mark this important anniversary. In China, Switzerland will present itself with the Swiss pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo 2010 and develop a cultural programme in Beijing and other Chinese cities. In Switzerland, China will be the focus of the Culturescapes festival later this year.

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