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## Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

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### Media Release

## Strengthening of Switzerland's Human Rights Policy

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**The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA is expanding the scope of its current policy on Human Rights. In the future, Human Rights issues are no longer to be the object of isolated discussions conducted according to strict guidelines with selected partners, but are rather to become an inherent part of all the political consultations Switzerland engages in, whether they be on bilateral or multilateral level.**

Based on its many years of experience and on various evaluations of the human rights dialogues conducted to date, the FDFA has decided to broaden and render more flexible the scope of its Human Rights policy. The new direction to be given to Human Rights policy was presented today to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council by Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA.

The instrument of Human Rights dialogue as implemented to date has indeed achieved results and can boast individual successes on a technical level in certain countries. At the same time, this model was too strongly targeted to a change in the normative standards in individual countries and, due to a limited number of criteria, was insufficient in taking into account both the particular relations prevailing in the given partner country and the unfolding developments. Furthermore, the model ran the risk of becoming marginalized as an isolated tool for the fostering of Human Rights.

In order to enhance its Human Rights policy and adapt it to today's global realities, Switzerland must consistently exploit all platforms provided by its bilateral and multilateral relations. For this reason, in the future, Human Rights issues are no longer to be the object of isolated discussions conducted according to strict guidelines with selected partners. The instrument of dialogue is to be vested with new thrust and endowed with an overarching scope. Henceforth, Human Rights issues are to be diversified and increasingly integrated into all domains of Swiss foreign policy.

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