



The Federal Authorities of the Swiss Confederation

Switzerland and China intensify cooperation in the area of water management

Bern, 27.05.2014 - Switzerland and China are particularly severely affected by the impacts of climate change on water management. For this reason, they are extending their cooperation in this area. Representatives of both countries have signed a corresponding agreement at a high-level meeting in Crans-Montana. Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard and the Chinese Vice Minister of Water Resources Hu Siyi highlighted the importance of this cooperation.

At the opening of the 6th Sino-Swiss High-level Dialogue on Water Management, Federal Councillor Leuthard expressed her satisfaction with the existing cooperation between China and Switzerland. She highlighted the existential importance of clean water and its efficient use. Switzerland has already achieved a lot in this regard, however, further efforts are needed, for example in the area of micropollutants.

Ms Leuthard also stressed that, in view of excessive water consumption throughout the world and the lack of access to drinking water for millions of people, sustainable water management is also important at global level. For this reason, she greatly welcomes the cooperation between Switzerland and China in this area. The countries shall continue to benefit from their mutual experience in the future.

Agreement signed

A technical agreement for more intensive cooperation was signed in Crans-Montana by Josef Hess, Vice Director of the Federal Agency for the Environment (FOEN), Pio Wennubst, Vice Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and, on the Chinese side, Mr Wu Hongwei, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Cooperation, Science & Technology (Ministry of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China) and Mr Chen Jin, Vice Head of Changjiang Water Resources Commission (CRSRI). The focus of the agreement is the Yangtze River and the optimum management of the associated water resources, in particular in the context of floods and periods of drought. Hence, Swiss and Chinese experts will jointly deal with questions concerning sustainable water management and hazard prevention, with a special focus on climate change, in the upper quarter of the Yangtze river region, the Jinsha River basin in West China.

Another project being carried out as part of the Sino-Swiss cooperation aims to improve groundwater use in the arid north of China. This region has faced a particularly harsh struggle with drought, falling groundwater levels and water shortages in recent years.

Memorandum of Understanding of 2009

Switzerland and China have been cooperating for over ten years in the areas of water management, flood protection and climate change. In 2009 they formalised the cooperation and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on water management and hazard prevention. As part of this MOU, various concrete projects are being carried out by the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Chinese authorities. These include an early-warning system and the monitoring of glaciers in association with climate change in the Province of Xinjiang, and flood forecasting in the Yangtze River regions and on the river Rhône (canton of Valais).

The cooperation with China provides Switzerland with an opportunity to improve its networking in the areas of science, business and politics and to gain access to information based on China's expansive experience in relation to the development of natural hazards, particularly as a consequence of climate change.

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Enclosure:

[Address given by Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard at the opening of the 6th Sino-Swiss High-Level Dialogue on Water Management in Crans-Montana \(pdf, 75kb\)](#)⁽⁴⁾ 

[In Chinese: Address given by Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard at the opening of the 6th Sino-Swiss High-Level Dialogue on Water Management in Crans-Montana \(pdf, 434kb\)](#)⁽⁵⁾ 


[Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard at the opening 6th Sino-Swiss High-Level Dialogue on Water Management \(jpg, 7902kb\)](#)⁽⁶⁾ 

[Signature of the Letter of Agreement between China and Switzerland on Water Management \(Mr. Chen Jin, Changjiang Water Resources Commission; Wu Hongwei, Chinese Ministry of Water Resources; Pio Wennubst, SDC; Josef Hess, FOEN\) \(jpg, 5600kb\)](#)⁽⁷⁾ 

Additional indications:

[FOEN: Topic Natural hazards](#)⁽⁸⁾ 

[FOEN: Integrated water management](#)⁽⁹⁾ 

[SDC: Climate change](#)⁽¹⁰⁾ 

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