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REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Editorial



Schon wieder ist ein Jahr zu Ende, und 2011 hatte es in sich, sowohl fuer die Welt als auch fuer Suedafrika. Nur zu deutlich haben wir die globalen wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten und die Unsicherheit der Eurozone zu spueren bekommen. Der Ausblick auf 2012 ist dieses Jahr besonders unberechenbar: Niemand weiss mit Sicherheit, was sich naechstes Jahr alles veraendern wird. Aber wir haben das Gefuehl, dass es einiges sein kann. Und es wuerde mich nicht wundern, wenn es bei den Menschen eine Neuausrichtung Ihrer Wertvorstellungen gibt.

Suedafrika hat als Drittweltland sicher einige Schwaechen. Ich finde jedoch, dass gerade Suedafrika fuer eine schwierige Zukunft gut gewappnet sein kann. Suedafrikaner wissen, was es bedeutet, zu ueberleben, sich immer wieder an eine neue Situation anzupassen und das Beste daraus zu machen. Dabei hilft ihnen ihr enorm grosser Unternehmergeist und dass sie mit beiden Beinen auf dem Boden stehen. Und nicht zuletzt eine nicht zu unterschaeztende Zutat: der starke afrikanische Spirit.

In diesem Sinne wuensche ich allen ein gutes 2012 mit neuen Chancen und Herausforderungen, die mit Optimismus angepackt werden.

GISELA PIERCEY

Switzerland at COP 17

Switzerland has sent a 31 person strong delegation to the 17th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 17) which took place from 28 November to 11 December 2011 in Durban.

The delegation was made up of members of the Swiss administration from different departments, as well as from business, civil society and science. It was led by Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, Bruno Oberle, director of the Federal Office for the Environment, and Franz Perrez, Ambassador and Chief Negotiator.

In her speech, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard emphasized the Swiss position. Switzerland is not

only ready to contribute to urgent action to combat climate change – it is already leading by example, e.g. through the introduction of a CO₂-tax on fossil fuels. In order to make a difference, however, all major emitters need to be included into a joint effort. This was the case when the current regime, the Kyoto Protocol, was designed: In those days, it was first and foremost the developed world that emitted, and hence most of the developed countries entered into commitments to reduce their emissions. Seven years later, the world has changed, and growth and pollution patterns have changed significantly: Developed countries only contribute 45% to global emissions today. Some of the major emitters are located in the developing world. Change can only occur, if all major

emitters enter into a comprehensive regime that is legally binding, and that is based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities”. This means that a regime has to take into account the level of development and possibilities of the different countries. In order to make this happen, Switzerland supports the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, which shall help countries with fewer capabilities to put the necessary national systems in place.

Both aims have been achieved: It has been decided at the eleventh hour in Durban that an international comprehensive regime with legal force will be negotiated by 2015 and put in place in 2020. Also, the Green Climate Fund will come into existence. It will hopefully soon be able to help poorer countries to mitigate the effects of climate change, and to adapt to rising average temperatures.

Two further elements must not be overlooked: Business has begun to realize that green growth has enormous potential, and that saving energy (and hence polluting less) also is worth it in economic terms.

Furthermore, countries such as South Africa have realized this, and are putting efforts into coordinating respective policies to spur economic growth, to create jobs and to combat climate change. The recently released National Climate Change Response White Paper puts South Africa's pledge at the COP 15 2009 into practice, and shows ways and means of how the government is going to address the challenges. Neighbouring countries are about to do the same.

The activities of business, governments and the international conferences on climate change are intrinsically interlinked: If people are more aware, if business sees this as a right

way to go, and if national governments make it a priority, it is easier for heads of delegations at international conferences to commit to joint international action.

Although progress seems to be slow, the way points into the right direction. Moreover, progress can be sped up if the reduction of emissions is taken into account by each and every individual – through using energy efficient light bulbs, driving energy efficient cars, using energy efficient electric apparels, and – unfortunately – thinking twice about a flight to Switzerland, as avoiding it may help to combat climate change ...

MARKUS SCHRADER,
COUNSELLOR HEAD, SWISS
ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (SECO)

TOPtoTOP Global Climate Expedition

The Swiss team under the patronage of United Nations Environment Program and Switzerland arrived in Richards Bay, South Africa on the 4th of November 2011 and was attending the World Climate Conference in Durban.

The expedition is achieving a world record, by being the first to travel all climate zones - over the seven seas to the seven summits - using only human force and nature's power! This to set an example what can be done to live in harmony with our climate.

TOPtoTOP is sharing the collected climate solutions to students along the way and motivate them to participate in the “TOPtoTOP Climate Solution Award”. The winner in each continent is rewarded to become a TOPtoTOP ambassador and invited to study the best practice examples in Switzerland in 2013.

The Swiss family Schwörer are the core expedition team members. The 4 children were born on the expedition.

Alegra the youngest crew on board is only 5 months old. Already volunteers from 42 nations were joining the family. They are engaged in educational activities with schools and universities, inspiring the use of "Swiss innovations for a green planet".



Christiana Figueres on Pachamama



Already more than 800 students visited Durban

The family sailed into Richards bay from Reunion Island with 3 Swiss volunteers on board and organized together with the office of KZE Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development, an awareness walk to start the 10 days count down towards the COP 17 climate conference in Durban.

In the first week of the conference we had a hand over of 2'710'340 green footprints from 201'146 kids to the "highest UN climate

protector", **Christiana Figueres**, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I would like to thank the Swiss Embassy in South Africa and especially Honorary Consul Hanspeter Graber in Durban for his great

organizational skills:

On Tuesday he organized a dinner for the discussion group of countries where Switzerland is part of it. Members from the delegation of Lichtenstein, South Korea, Monaco and Mexico and Switzerland visited Pachamama and enjoyed a presentation about the expedition at the Royal Natal Yacht Club.

On Saturday the local Swiss Club was invited for a presentation and visit of the boat at the Point Yacht Club.

Even Santa from the North Pole showed up! Bravo Hanspeter!"; says Dario.

For further information and live updates on the expedition's progress, please visit the TOPTOTOP website: www.toptotop.org ...and their blog: www.expedition.toptotop.org

To arrange free school visits and public presentations or for film material, pictures and interviews with the team, kindly contact: DARIO SCHWÖRER, Email: dario@toptotop.org, mobile: +27 (0)71 3484 971

The Election of 23 October 2011 and Auslandschweizer Performance

The general election in Switzerland took place on 23rd October, and some 135'000 Auslandschweizer world-wide were registered to vote.

The overall result showed a weakening of the main established political parties such as the SVP, the FDP on the right, the CVP in the middle, and the SP and the GREENS on the left of the political spectrum. These losses were off-set, by gains in the new middle parties, namely the BDP and the GREEN LIBERALS.

75 Auslandschweizer world-wide stood for election. They did this in 6 individual candidatures on inland political party lists, and 69 candidates on 14 separate political party Auslandschweizer-lists in a total of 10 cantons. Regrettably none of these 75 Auslandschweizer managed to achieve election. This is not surprising, as with the present system, where Auslandschweizer votes are

spread across 26 possible cantons from which these Auslandschweizer come and, where they are registered. It is practically impossible for any Auslandschweizer candidate to garner enough votes to make any meaningful showing against inland candidates who are usually well known in their canton of election.

Your delegates have been saying this at Auslandschweizer meetings ever since the Auslandschweizer were eligible to vote and to stand as candidates in 1992. If one gives the Auslandschweizer the vote, then it must be a vote that has a realistic chance of also being elected should one consent to being a candidate.

Auslandschweizer are not merely to be regarded as party political list fillers, where the only significant benefit accrues to the party whose list is inserted into the ballot envelope.

Of the 75 Auslandschweizer candidates, 4 were from South Africa, all having been nominated by the International Division of the SVP, whose President is our own ASR Dekegate Rolf Schudel. Rolf has stood as a candidate at every general election during the past decade in a number of different cantons without success, and no-one knows better than he, what a hopelessly unfortunate "losing situation" faces a prospective Auslandschweizer candidate.

The 4 South African candidates and their results were:

Rolf Schudel 232 votes in Canton Basel- Stadt



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Mari Valli 448 votes in Canton Schwyz

Josef Züger 536 votes in Canton Schwyz

Walter Müller 1022 votes in Canton Zürich

This contrasts with the lowest poll of 98 being for Erich Grübel from Lettland standing for the CVP in Canton Aargau, and the highest of 38'042 for Helen Freiemuth for the FDP in Canton Zürich.

For this reason your two delegates will be taking a strong stand in the next 2 years, as the ASR continues the dialogue with the parliamentary groups and the Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA) in Bern, regarding the proposed new Ausland-schweizergesetz, which is supposed to centralize, strengthen and suitably entrench rights and privileges, as well as obligations and duties for the Ausland-schweizer in the years ahead.

It is the considered opinion of your delegates, that it requires at least the formation of a 27th canton, called "Fünfte Schweiz" canton, where, as in all other cantons, there will be an election of 2 Ständeräte, and a number of Nationalräte based on the number of Swiss Abroad world-wide.

Only that way can the situation between the Inland - and Ausland-schweizer be described as fair and equitable.

We look forward to, and invite your feedback and opinions in this very important matter. Many thanks indeed!

PETER MÜLLER

Swiss Club Info

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We hope you all had a merry Christmas and "än guete Rutsch" into the New Year!

The traditional "Fernkegeln" against our "ex-pats" in Switzerland was held on the 19th November, and Team South Africa won – Congratulations! Our traditional Swiss Christmas Lunch for all Swiss Senior Citizens, Members and Friends was held on 4th December. The Boccia Club had their traditional Braai at the Club, playing Boccia on the grass for a change.

Our AGM is scheduled for end of March or beginning of April, the date has still to be confirmed.

Our Clubs of Society: Afro Guggie, Amicale Suisse Romande, Boccia, Skittling Club. Associated Groups: Swiss Choir, Swiss Rifle Club, Swiss Golf, G.S.N.A Senior Swiss Circle meets every 2nd Saturday of the month for Lunch

Swiss Ladies meet every 4th

Thursday of the month for lunch;

PRETORIA:

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Hanspeter Graber, T/F 031 568 2457, C 083 262 6107, hansg@saol.com; Philippe Lanz, Secretary, pl@swisscontact.co.za, C 082 4932673

JASS EVENINGS: Westville Country Club, Link Rd, Westville (first road on the left when travelling from the Pavilion exit towards Westville). As before the Jass evening takes place every second Friday evening of the month 18.00 for dinner.19.00 start Jassen: 10/2, 9/3,13/4, 11/5, 8/6, 13/7, 10/8, 14/9. TARGET SHOOTING: Dave

Nicol Shooting Range, Nottingham Road, KZN Midland starting at 9h00: 28/1, 25/2, 28/4, 26/5, 30/6, 28/7, 25/8,29/9.

OTHER EVENTS: Sunday 19/02 10h00 Ten Pin Bowling, Sunday 4/3 10h30 AGM Kearsney College Grounds.

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IMPRESSUM

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SwissCham Southern Africa – South Africa Chapter (SCSA-SAC)

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ein frohes Weihnachtsfest und
einen super Anfang im neuen Jahr**

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