

Minutes
of the
1st Meeting of the Indo-Swiss Joint Committee on Science & Technology
Bern, Switzerland
(23 September 2011)

The 1st meeting of the Indo Swiss Joint Committee for scientific and technological cooperation, established within the framework of the Science and Technology Agreement of 10th November 2003 between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of India, was held in Bern on 23 September 2011. The Swiss delegation was led by Dr Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary, State Secretariat for Education and Research, and the Indian delegation by Dr Thirumalachari Ramasami, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Science and Technology. The adopted agenda along with a complete list of the Indian and Swiss delegation members at the meeting is enclosed as **Annex-I**. Specific presentations were made by Prof Dr Philippe Gillet (Leading House), Prof Dr Dominique Arlettaz (Associated Leading House) and Dr Jean-Luc Barras (Swiss National Science Foundation) on the Swiss side, and Dr Mukesh Kumar (Indian Council of Medical Research), Dr Purnima Rupal (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and Mr Raj Kumar Sharma (Department of Science and Technology) on the Indian side.

The main objectives of the meeting were to assess the ongoing S&T cooperation between India and Switzerland under the Indo Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP) since its inception after conclusion of the Executive POC for the period 2006-2012, and to exchange respective views on the future cooperation and its modalities.

Dr **Mauro Dell'Ambrogio** opened the meeting by welcoming the Indian and Swiss delegates and mentioning that he was very satisfied with the cooperation activities that take place in the framework of the Indo Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP). He welcomed the opportunity to look back on the last phase of cooperation and to discuss the future collaboration. Given its success, he pointed out Switzerland's wish to continue supporting bilateral S&T cooperation as a priority in the years to come, thereby creating a research tradition between the two countries.

Dr **Thirumalachari Ramasami** thanked his hosts for their warm hospitality and expressed his happiness at participating in the first meeting of the Indo-Swiss Joint Committee on Science & Technology. Dr Ramasami further mentioned that the GDP of India is growing at an annual rate of 8 to 9 percent. This provides availability of resources for investments into the S&T sector with an annual growth of 20-25 percent. Dr Ramasami further indicated that India enjoys demographic dividends. In view of this, the Government of India is investing one fifth of its budget into the education sector. Dr Ramasami then highlighted the salient features of India's current growth policy, integrated energy policy, national missions on climate change, S&T innovation policy, as well as India's long term goals for investment in international mega science projects such as FAIR, Germany, ITER, KER Japan and the large telescope etc. He expressed high levels of enthusiasm in deepening Indo-Swiss S&T cooperation.

The Joint Committee conducted its meeting as per the adopted agenda (**Annex-II**).

Following the Executive Programme of Cooperation for the period 2006-2010, completed by its Addendum of 13 November 2007 and the Revised Addendum of 4 October 2010 (extension to the year 2012), the Joint Committee agrees as follows:

a) ISJRP

- i. based on the scientific evaluations undertaken in Switzerland and in India, the Joint Committee agrees to finance up to 11 top ranking joint research projects received against the last joint call. These projects are shortlisted among projects ranked A and/or B+ on either side. The final approval of these projects will be given by the Joint Committee through an exchange of letters at the earliest possible date, once all the legal requirements are met and formal procedures are completed on both sides. The projects will officially start from 1st January 2012. Financial commitments on the Swiss side are subject to the budgetary approval by Parliament.
- ii. to consider replacing the existing Exchange Grants (Research Fellowship and Joint Utilization of Advanced Facilities) by a new exchange instrument: Personnel Exchange Projects (PEP).
- iii. that joint workshops will be organized under ISJRP during 2011-2012. Topics may be mutually decided on by the Leading Houses, i.e. EPFL and DST.
- iv. to continue on the same level of commitment for ISJRP until the end of this cooperation phase in December 2012, and to bring this phase to a successful conclusion.
- v. to ensure an appropriate working level dialogue between the two sides in the period between the Joint Committee Meetings.

b) Further scientific collaboration

- vi. to strongly encourage the use of all funding instruments that exist in addition to the one under the ISJRP, notably the ones of the national funding institutions of both countries, as well as all possible programmes for Research and Development for which researcher and research institutions from Switzerland and India are eligible, especially within the European multilateral framework.

c) Development cooperation (research and education related)

Specific talks were held between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC and the Department of Science and Technology DST. As a result, SDC and DST agreed to constitute a Joint Working Group (JWG) on scientific cooperation in Glaciology and related areas, comprising 4-5 members from each side, with SDC and DST as nodal agencies. Both sides exchanged the list of proposed members of the JWG during the meeting. The JWG will work out further modalities and mechanisms, areas and modes of cooperation focusing on training and

capacity building in Glaciology and related issues with the aim of developing a long-term partnership between two countries.

The next Joint Committee Meeting will take place in India in the second half of 2012. On this occasion, the parties will review the achievements of the first phase of cooperation (2006-2012) and define the modalities of cooperation for the next period, starting in 2013.

The discussions were conducted in a most friendly and cordial atmosphere.

Signed in Bern on 23 September 2011, in two copies in English.

For the State Secretariat for
Education and Research



Dr Mauro Dell'Ambrogio
State Secretary

For the Department of Science &
Technology (Govt. of India)



Dr Thirumalachari Ramasami
Secretary