

Press Release

Shanghai, 13th September 2010

Swiss pavilion in Shanghai under the banner of future cities

Shanghai/Zurich, 13 September **VIP visit to the Swiss pavilion at the world exhibition in Shanghai: the Swiss Minister of the Environment, Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger, and the Chinese Minister of Water Resources, Chen Lei, opened an exhibition on the new Monte Rosa Hut and the “Future Cities” conference. The events are part of the celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China.**

Making cities environmentally friendly and worth living in is one of the biggest challenges of the modern world. For the first time ever, over half the world population will be living in cities this century; in China, it could even be a third of the population by 2030. “Better City, Better Life” is the theme of this year’s world exhibition in Shanghai. ETH Zurich, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and swissnex China are now on board and conducting a joint conference on three main topics related to “Future Cities”: “Water Management”, “Sustainable Building” and “Mobility and Air Quality”. They are also staging an exhibition in the Swiss pavilion on the new Monte Rosa Hut, a building in the Swiss Alps, 3,000 metres above sea level. Thanks to a sophisticated control system, the hut is largely self-sufficient in terms of its energy and water supply, and thus serves as a model for the sustainable use of resources – even for buildings in booming megacities like Shanghai.

Megacities challenge theory and practice

The exhibition and the conference were officially opened on Monday 13 September. Leuenberger and Lei welcomed the fact that two of the world’s leading institutions for science and technology from their countries are taking the subject to heart. Together with swissnex China, they invited top scientists, business representatives, politicians and officials from both countries to the conference.

Jacques Herzog, a professor of architecture at ETH Zurich and joint proprietor of the architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, whose portfolio includes the Peking “Bird’s Nest” – the stadium for the 2008 Olympic Games – gave a speech at the opening. He pointed out that a city

is always based upon different ideas and models, thus giving it a specific character. They are also a crucial factor in how a city faces fresh challenges. He identified planning and power structures and landscape features that ultimately also determine a city's resources as essential determinants for a city's adaptability.

Global task

Sustainable urban development is a global and interdisciplinary task. Consequently, ETH Zurich is involved in innovative research initiatives in Addis Ababa and mainly Singapore which bring together academic partners from the four corners of the globe. ETH-Zurich President Ralph Eichler said: "The knowledge obtained internationally will not just be part of our students' basic education in a few years time; it also enables measures to be drawn up that make it possible for us to live together on this planet respectfully and with dignity."

In order to tackle the problems cities currently face, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) is also focusing on collaborating with international institutions. According to the vice-president of the CAS's Shanghai branch, Zhu Zhi Yuan, Switzerland has many years of experience in this field. "In recent years there has been extensive cooperation between the CAS and Swiss research institutions. I hope the symposium in Shanghai on future cities will provide a decent platform for a scientific exchange."

The series of events on the future of cities is thus an important part of the festivities to mark 60 years of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China, as Flavia Schlegel, the head of swissnex China, noted. They should strengthen the good relations between Switzerland and China, especially in the field of research.

Further information

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Exhibition and Conference

The Swiss pavilion at the 2010 World Exhibition in Shanghai

The biggest world exhibition ever is taking place from 1 May to 31 October in Shanghai under the central theme “Better City, Better Life”. Switzerland is showcasing itself on an area of 4000 m² with a pavilion on the EXPO sub-theme “rural-urban interaction”. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Presence Switzerland, is running the Swiss pavilion project.

Exhibition “New Monte Rosa Hut” (13 – 30 September in the Swiss pavilion)

Situated near Zermatt 2883 metres above sea level, not only is the new Monte Rosa Hut fascinating on account of its futuristic architecture; it is also a milestone for sustainable building. Thanks to a sophisticated control system, it is supposed to be up to 90 percent self-sufficient in terms of its energy and water supply (without considering the energy needed for cooking). Moreover, it is also to offer fresh insights that can be adapted for districts or even whole cities. The exhibition features the new Monte Rosa Hut in the form of a 1:10 scale model. Photographs by Toni Atuh Ambrosetti carry the visitors off to the Valais Alps and a short film documents the ambitious construction with helicopters instead of lorries and cranes.

“Future Cities” conference (15 – 17 September in the VIP room of the Swiss pavilion)

Relating to the subjects of water management, sustainable building, and mobility and air quality, leading scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, ETH Zurich and Eawag will be discussing approaches for a city worth living in with business leaders, politicians and officials on 15 – 17 September. Projects from Switzerland and China will be presented, knowledge and experiences exchanged, and new insights for the cities of tomorrow gained.

The Organizer

ETH Zurich

ETH Zurich has come to symbolise excellent education, groundbreaking basic research and applied results that are beneficial for society as a whole. Founded in 1855, ETH Zurich has more than 15,000 students from approximately 80 countries, 3,400 of whom are doctoral candidates. Today, it offers researchers an inspiring environment and students a comprehensive education as one of the world's leading universities for technology and the natural sciences. 21 Nobel Laureates have studied, taught or conducted research at ETH Zurich, underscoring the excellent reputation of the institute.

Chinese Academy of Sciences

CAS a leading academic institution and comprehensive research and development center in natural science, technological science and high-tech innovation in China. Today's CAS has 12 branch offices, 103 institutes with legal entity, more than 100 national key laboratories and national engineering research centers, and about 1,000 field stations throughout the country. Its staff even surpassed 50,000. The CAS aims to build itself into one with "first-class achievements, first-class benefits, first-class management and first-class talents" and into one that strives to reform and innovate for harmonious development, thus ensuring the CAS always in a state of being able to continuously make major fundamental, strategic and forward-looking contributions to China's economic construction, national security and social sustainable development.

swissnex China

promote. swissnex China's mission is to create and promote awareness of Swiss excellence in science, technology, innovation and culture in China and of Chinese opportunities in Switzerland.

connect. swissnex China's mission is to establish a solid, long-lasting network of cooperation between scholars of both countries serving as a base for bottom-up initiatives in the future.

facilitate. swissnex China's mission is to facilitate Sino-Swiss cooperation. We are on site and can organize any type of event or provide workspace at our office.

swissnex China – mandated by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research SER – is a promotion agency a networking networking platform and a coordination institution. But first of all, it is the gateway to excellence!