

Peace and human rights in Switzerland's foreign policy

**2006 report on measures relating to
conflict transformation and the promotion
of human rights, approved by the
Swiss Federal Council on 15 June 2007**



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Abstract

2006 was a successful year for Switzerland's peace and human rights policies. Swiss diplomats and experts were able to contribute towards conflict transformation in a variety of countries throughout the world, for example in Nepal, where a peace agreement was signed on 21 November 2006, thus ending an armed conflict that had lasted for ten years. But Switzerland also contributed towards peace processes in other conflict regions, including the Middle East, southern Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Indonesia, Kosovo, Mexico and Guatemala.

In the year under review, Switzerland succeeded in integrating in its own expertise and experience into international policy formulation. At a conference of ministers held in Geneva on 6 June 2006 at Switzerland's initiative, 42 states adopted the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*. These states thus entered into commitments to help reduce the disastrous effects of the use of armed violence on socio-economic and human development. At the high-level dialogue on international migration that took place in New York in September 2006, Switzerland successfully campaigned for the recognition of partnerships between countries of origin and countries of destination as an essential element of a global migration policy.

The resolution of the UN General Assembly that was adopted on 15 March 2006 and called for the creation of a Human Rights Council in Geneva was the successful conclusion to a diplomatic initiative launched by Switzerland several years ago. The new Council experienced a number of difficulties in its early days, but it is too early to attempt to draw any meaningful conclusions. Together with like-minded countries, Switzerland is playing its part in ensuring that the Human Rights Council can become an effective institution for the protection of human rights.

Over the past two years, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has been gradually focusing its commitments in the areas of peace and human rights. By withdrawing from certain regional commitments (including Mozambique, Angola, Myanmar, Mexico and Guatemala), it can bundle its resources: by the end of 2007, the FDFA plans to focus 80 percent of its bilateral peacebuilding activities on 7 priority regions (Nepal, Sri Lanka, Southeast Europe, the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Colombia, the Middle East and Sudan). In this way it can more effectively utilise the various foreign policy instruments of the federal government (development co-operation, humanitarian aid, human rights policy, civilian and military peacebuilding). 20 percent of its resources will then be available for pilot projects and political opportunities.

At the same time, the FDFA has been systematically increasing its internal capacities and building up its expertise. Activities here include the creation of internal mediation capacities and the systematic evaluation of findings from the provision in the past of good offices, mediation and facilitation services in armed conflicts, in close collaboration with Swisspeace and the Center for Security Studies at the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich.

A comparative study conducted by the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, on civilian conflict transformation in five countries confirmed that Switzerland is essentially on the right path with its strategy of focusing and intensification. The study also contains valuable recommendations concerning the further development of this area of policy, which the authors regard as a key element of Switzerland's foreign policy.¹

Finally, pleasing news for Switzerland: a study carried out by the renowned Department of Peace and Conflict Research, University of Uppsala (Sweden) set out to identify those countries and organisations that are most frequently active in the area of conflict prevention. In its table of mediators in minor and medium-sized armed conflicts, Switzerland is placed third behind the UN and the USA.²

¹ Andreas Wenger et al.: Zivile Friedensförderung als Tätigkeitsfeld der Aussenpolitik: Eine vergleichende Studie anhand von fünf Ländern. Center for Security Studies, Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, 2006. www.css.ethz.ch/publications/workingpapers.

² Frida Möller, Isak Svensson: Who prevents civil wars? Mediation selection in minor armed conflicts. Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Uppsala 2007.

1. Focusing and intensification

1.1 Geographic focus

In a comprehensive planning process, at the end of 2005 the FDFA systematically reviewed the existing measures in the areas of civilian conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights, and evaluated them from the point of view of their effectiveness and their relevance with respect to Switzerland's foreign policy interests.

For this purpose, the criteria were applied that were cited in the Bill to Parliament relating to the Credit Facility:

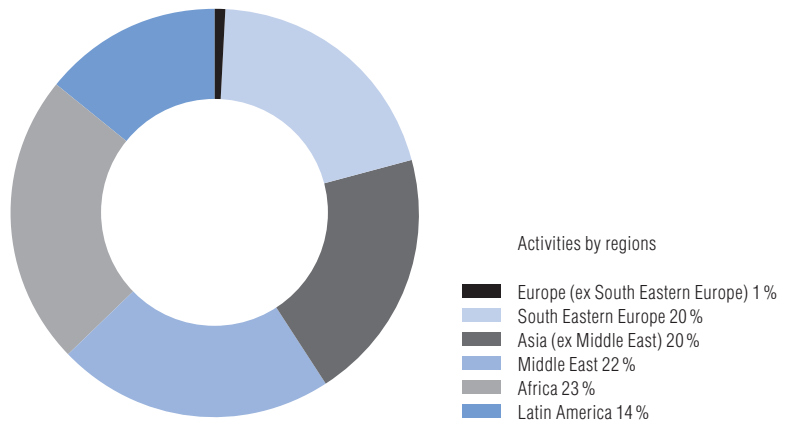
- Does a given conflict have impacts on Switzerland in terms of the country's security, economic, migration, development, humanitarian or environmental policies?
- Is a peacebuilding commitment desirable? Can a contribution by Switzerland be integrated in a useful manner into the efforts on the part of the international community?
- Do any historical, political or economic relationships exist between a given conflict region and Switzerland that could serve as the starting point for co-operation?
- Do any synergies exist with other activities of the federal government, e.g. in the areas of development co-operation or military peacebuilding? Can any bilateral and multilateral commitments complement one another?
- Does a reasonable balance exist between the political risk associated with a commitment on the part of Switzerland and the anticipated yield in terms of peacebuilding?

This process resulted in the decision to develop a geographic focus on a step-by-step basis, and to implement it in the course of 2006 and 2007. The aim here is to bundle the available resources and thus make Switzerland's commitments more effective.

It was decided to reduce the number of priority regions from 13 to 7: Southeast Europe, the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sudan, the Great Lakes Region of Africa and Colombia. This means withdrawing from programmes in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Uzbekistan (2005), Angola, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan (2006), Mexico and Guatemala (2007). 80 percent of all geographically allocated resources are to be used in the 7 priority regions, while the remaining 20 percent will be used for pilot programmes and local interventions, and for permitting swift reactions to political opportunities.

Commitments by regions

In 2006, the distribution of activities was as follows:



(% of Credit Facility draw-downs: regional commitments)

Switzerland's regional commitments remained relatively constant between 2004 and 2006. An increase was recorded in Asia (from 14 % in 2004 to 20 % in 2006), and this was largely attributable to activities in Nepal and Indonesia (Aceh). By contrast, the increasing level of stabilisation in several countries of Southeast Europe resulted in a gradual reduction of measures on the part of Switzerland (from 27 % to 20 %), though its commitment in Kosovo remains considerable.

**Geographic focus
2005 to 2008**

- 01 Angola
- 02 Zimbabwe
- 03 Mosambique
- 04 Rwanda, Burundi, RD Congo
- 05 Somalia
- 06 Sudan
- 07 Egypt *
- 08 Sri Lanka
- 09 Myanmar
- 10 Indonesia
- 11 Vietnam *
- 12 Nepal
- 13 China *
- 14 Afghanistan
- 15 Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- 16 Iran *
- 17 North and South Caucasus
- 18 Turkey
- 19 Near East
- 20 South-East Europe
(Kosovo,
Mazedonia,
Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Serbia and Montenegro)
- 21 Mexico
- 22 Guatemala
- 23 Colombia

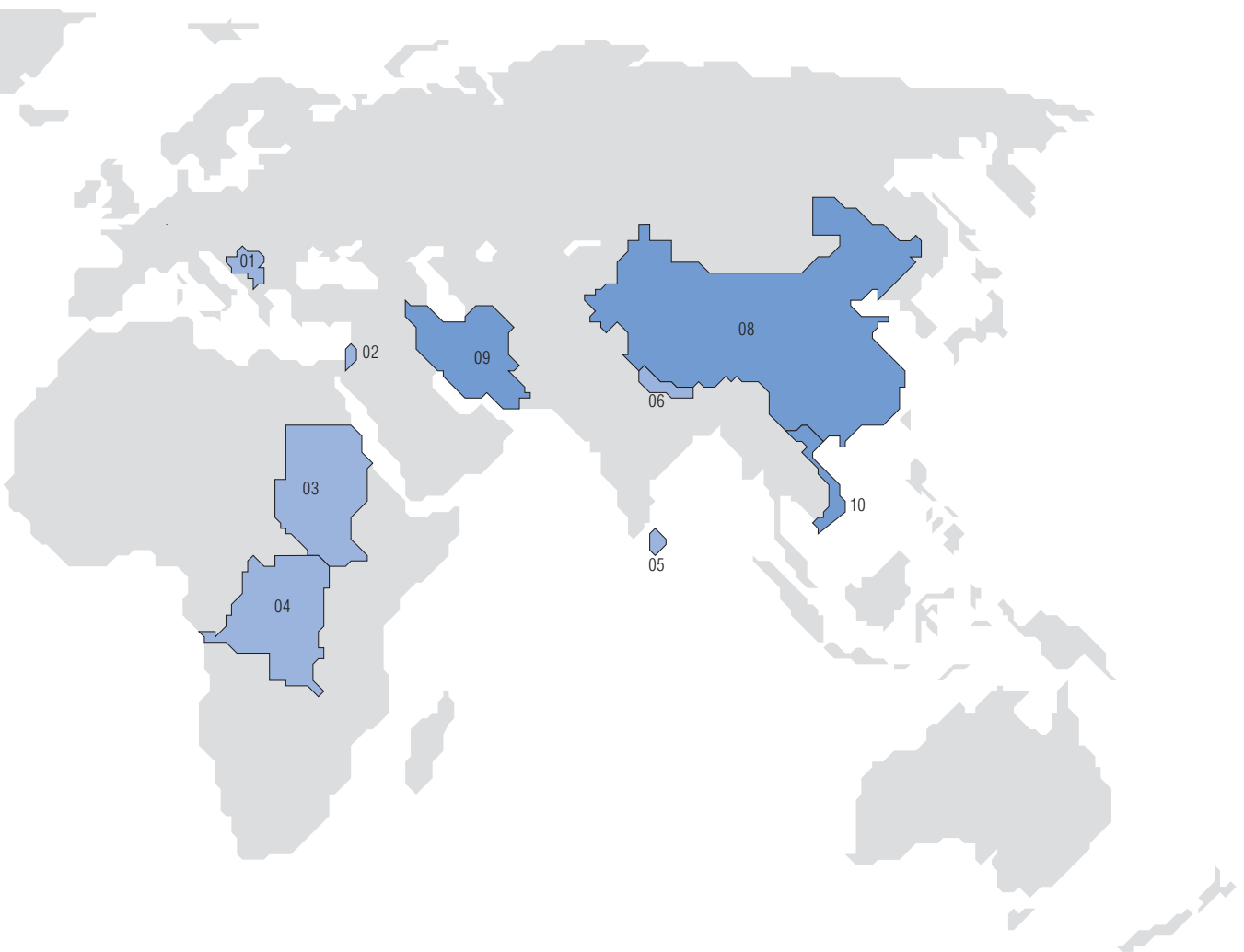
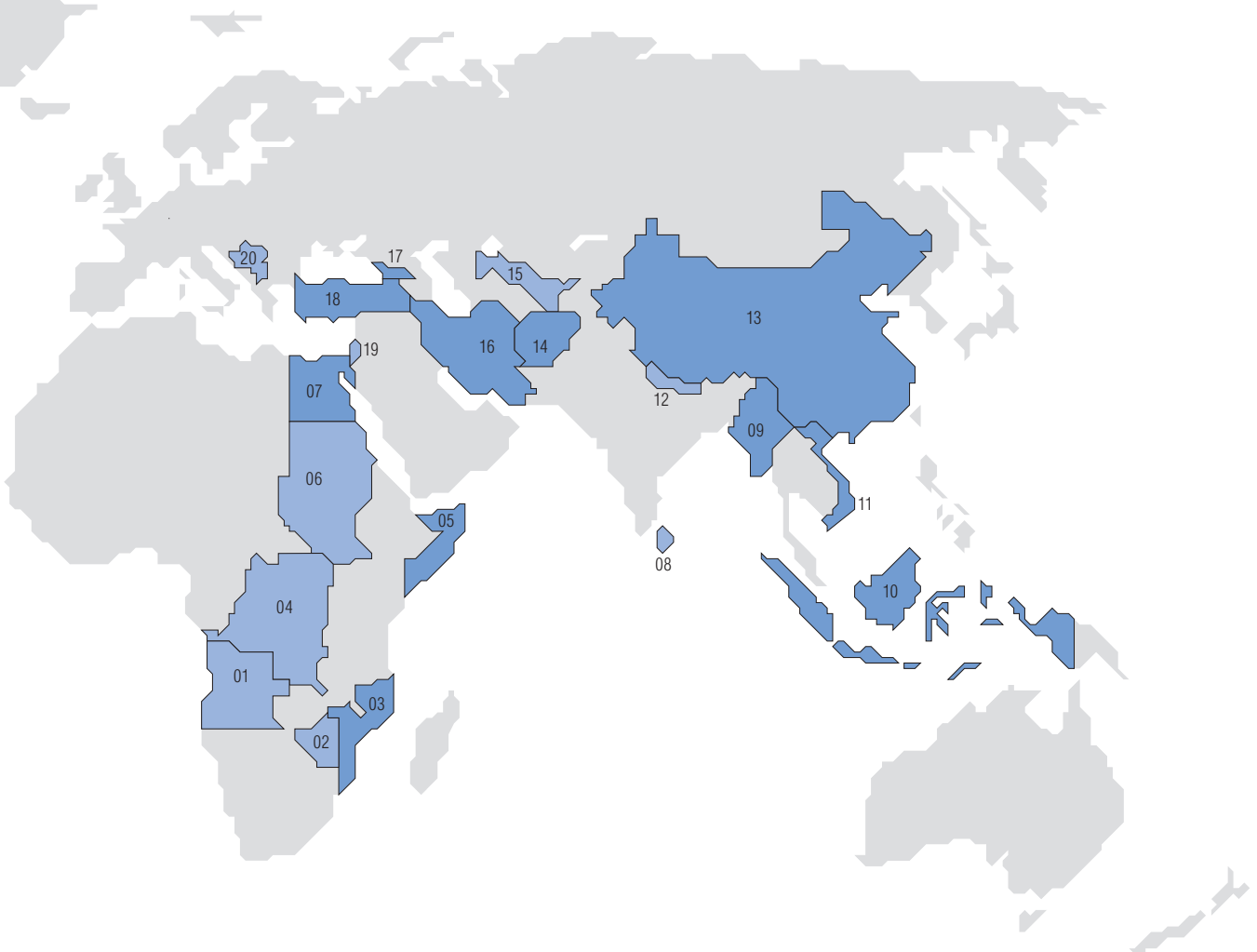


- 01 South-East Europe
- 02 Near East
- 03 Sudan
- 04 Ruanda, Burundi, RD Congo
- 05 Sri Lanka
- 06 Nepal
- 07 Columbia
- 08 China *
- 09 Iran *
- 10 Vietnam *

Local interventions: Georgia,
Indonesia, Tajikistan, Somalia



* Human rights dialogue (full-fledged, local)



1.2 Thematic intensification

In addition to the geographic focus, the thematic specialised competencies and instruments in the areas of peacebuilding and promotion of human rights are to be intensified. It is possible to build up existing strengths thanks to increasing resources with an unchanged distribution of thematic areas of focus. During the year under review, the emphasis was on increasing Switzerland's capacities for providing good offices, mediation and facilitation services in armed conflicts (cf. chapter 2.1).

Trend in the commitment of financial resources to measures for civilian conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights

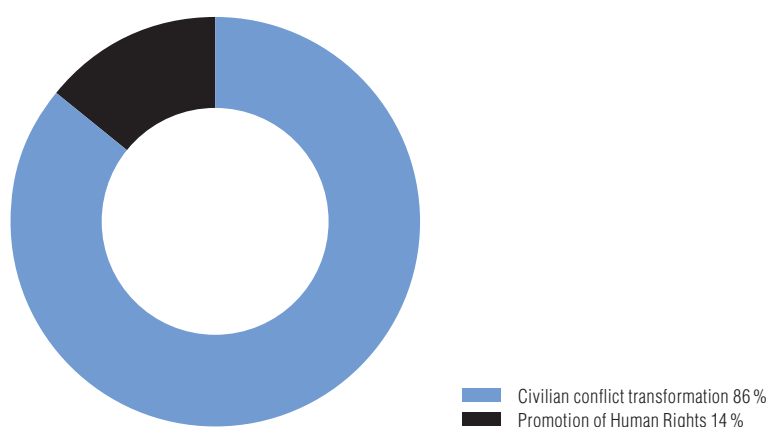
(annual draw-downs from the Credit Facility in CHF million)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
	expenditure	expenditure	expenditure	budget
Contributions to project costs	29.8	32.1	37.0	36.3
Secondment of experts abroad (personnel costs)	14.8	13.9	10.4	14.8
Personnel costs in Bern	1.3	1.9	2.6	2.9
Total	45.9	47.9	50.0	54.0

The Credit Facility has been available since 1 May 2004. As planned in the Bill and in keeping with the sense of the 2000 Foreign Policy Report, the resources for measures in civilian conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights have continually increased.

Conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights³

In 2006, 86% of the funds drawn from the Credit Facility were spent on conflict transformation, and 14% on the promotion of human rights.⁴



Political and diplomatic activities and co-operation with civil society

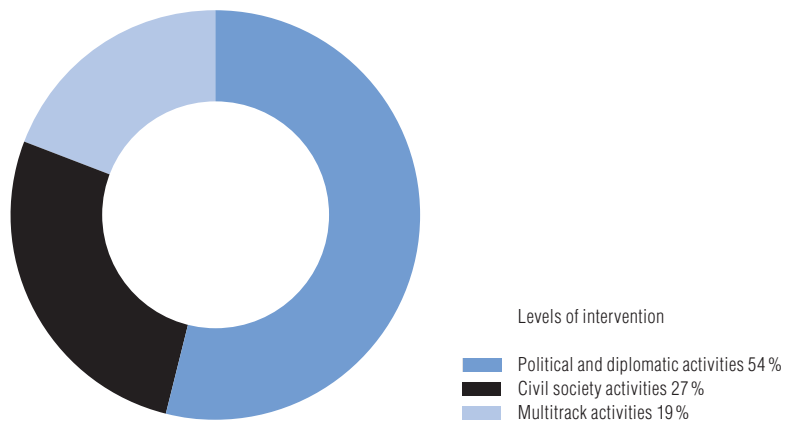
In recent years it has become clear that the interaction of commitments at various intervention levels is the key to providing sustainable support for peace processes and strengthening human rights. If political and diplomatic activities at various levels (national government, leadership of rebel forces, international organisations), are complemented by broad-based commitments in civil society, the chances of sustainable impacts are greatly enhanced. The FDFA is therefore active at all levels, though in line with the stipulations made in the Bill to Parliament its main focus is on political and diplomatic activities.

³ The figures shown in this report refer to total amounts drawn from the Credit Facility for Civilian Conflict Transformation and the Promotion of Human Rights in 2006 (CHF 49.97 million).

⁴ In chapter 2.4.1, the Bill to Parliament dated 23 October 2002 concerning the Credit Facility for Civilian Conflict Transformation and the Promotion of Human Rights proposes the following distribution of expenditure: 87.5% for civilian conflict transformation and 12.5% for the promotion of human rights.

The various levels of intervention

An analysis of expenditure of funds from the Credit Facility in 2006 shows that Switzerland focused primarily on political and diplomatic activities (54%), while co-operation with civil society accounted for 27%, and actions combining a number of intervention levels (multitrack) accounted for 19%⁵:



(% of Credit Facility draw-downs)

Main focus on political and diplomatic activities

Over the past three years the main trends have remained more or less unchanged. The main focus has been on political and diplomatic activities (2004: 61 %; 2005: 64 %; 2006: 54 %). In 2006 there was a slight increase in co-operation with civil society (2004: 19 %; 2005: 18 %; 2006: 27 %), while “multitrack” activities that combine all three levels, remained more or less unchanged at 20 % (2004: 17 %; 2005: 21 %; 2006: 19 %).

Switzerland as an active player

Thanks to the Credit Facility, Switzerland is able to finance a variety of institutions at home and abroad that are active in this area. Switzerland spends 49 % of the funds drawn from the Credit Facility purely for financing purposes, but the Credit Facility also enables it to assume the role of active player in the area of peace policy. In 51 % of the cases, Switzerland not only finances activities in this area, but also plays an active part in their implementation.

⁵ The levels of intervention are defined as follows: Tracks 1 and 1.5: political and diplomatic activities; tracks 2 and 3: co-operation with civil society; “multitrack”: combined activities.

Contributions towards the development of global policy

Switzerland focuses strongly on supporting global peace policy, strengthening the international conflict resolution system and promoting law enforcement. The proportion of *political activities* that did not occur within a specific region, but rather concerned multilateral negotiations and diplomatic initiatives, is increasing. This category accounted for 35 % of the activities in 2004, 40 % in 2005 and 42 % in 2006. The increase is attributable to additional efforts associated with the creation of the Human Rights Council, the fight against illegal small arms, and intensified efforts in the area of humanitarian policy.

	2004	2005	2006
Expenditure for individual regions	65 %	60 %	58 %
Non-region specific	35 %	40 %	42 %

(% of Credit Facility draw-downs in 2004, 2005 and 2006)

2. Civilian conflict transformation

2.1 Good offices and mediation

Good offices and mediation between the parties involved in a conflict play a central role in negotiating a cease-fire and comprehensive peace agreement. Peace talks have become an extremely time-consuming, complex and labour-intensive process. As a rule they involve a team of experts on location, lead by an experienced mediator who may be a high-level UN official, or perhaps a widely known and respected statesman. Switzerland recognised this trend at an early stage and frequently participates in the activities of mediation teams. In 2006, three special envoys from the FDFA participated in peace negotiations (in the Middle East, Sudan and Colombia), together with a number of qualified mediators. In the year under review, Switzerland provided good offices, as well as mediation and facilitation services, in armed conflicts in various parts of the world:

Uganda

On 14 June 2006, the government of southern Sudan initiated peace talks between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda and the Ugandan government. It called on the services of a Swiss mediation expert for the purpose of formulating the various agreements. Switzerland supported the negotiations at the political level in close co-operation with the Austrian presidency of the EU, and had to decide whether it wanted to support talks with a rebel movement, five of whose leading military figures were under investigation by the International Criminal Court. Switzerland decided to go ahead, though it simultaneously set out to maintain dialogue between the mediators and the ICC, as well as to seek a solution that would comply with the provisions of international law, without endangering the peace process. An agreement governing the cessation of hostilities was reached after only a few weeks, namely on 26 August 2006, following which a variety of states, as well as the UN, have been actively participating in peace talks. At the end of 2006, negotiations focused on socio-political issues – i.e. the main causes of the conflict – for the first time. The successful progress of negotiations to date has resulted in a considerable improvement in the situation for the general population and internally displaced persons, many of whom have already returned to their villages.

Colombia

Switzerland is involved in all ongoing peace processes. Jointly with Norway and Spain it supports peace dialogues between the Colombian government and the ELN rebel group while it – in a team with France and Spain – simultaneously envisages a humanitarian accord between the Colombian government and the FARC rebel movement. This accord which includes a release of hostages would constitute a major step towards the relaunch of a real peace process. Finally, Switzerland supports the inclusion of the principles of transitional justice and dealing with the past in the implementation of legal procedures to guarantee the victims of the recently demobilised paramilitary forces their right to truth, justice and compensation.

Sri Lanka

Switzerland organised the last two official meetings between the government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) that were held in Geneva in March and October 2006, and provided good offices on both occasions.

Nepal

Through discreet advisory and mediation efforts behind the scenes, a Swiss peace expert was able to significantly contribute towards the conclusion of a peace agreement between the Maoist rebels and the government of Nepal on 21 November 2006.

Israel/Syria

In January 2007 the Israeli media publicised the fact that unofficial, secret negotiations have been carried out over the past two years that have led to a draft of a peace agreement between Syria and Israel, and to a solution of the conflict over the Golan Heights, which Israel has occupied since 1967. Switzerland acted as a mediator in these talks.

In view of international developments and findings obtained from mediation activities during the past few years, the FDFA intends to increase the number of available mediators and qualified specialists so that it will be able to provide experts for participation in international mediation teams, more effectively keep pace with exchanges of findings and expertise among the major players in the areas of mediation and facilitation (namely, representatives of the UN), develop internal further education modules for diplomats and specialists, and provide Swiss mediators with systematic and structured support directly on location.

2.2 Conflict transformation programmes

In the year under review, the FDFA maintained civilian conflict transformation programmes in a variety of conflict regions that encompass a broad range of measures, including humanitarian landmine disposal, promotion of human rights and reinforcement of rule of law, dealing with the past, constitutional issues, distribution of power, federalism and prevention of the use of force. The examples of *Nepal* and *Kosovo* presented below illustrate the strong interactions between Switzerland's foreign policy instruments (development aid, civilian and military peacebuilding). By contrast, the commitments in *Guatemala* and *Mexico* are examples of programmes that have been discontinued as a consequence of the strategy of focusing on priorities (as outlined above). In these cases, the aim is to draw up a balance and identify the sustainable results that have been achieved.

Peace in Nepal – a successful interaction between development co-operation, promotion of human rights and discreet mediation on the part of Switzerland

On 21 November 2006, a peace agreement was signed in Kathmandu which brought an end to a ten-year civil war that cost more than 13,000 lives. A Swiss mediator was able to make a significant contribution towards this outcome thanks to discreet consulting and mediation activities. Switzerland's presence in Nepal for many years and its credible commitment to development aid and the promotion of human rights were decisive factors here.

Switzerland has been involved in development aid programmes in Nepal for more than 40 years. The programme under the leadership of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), which focuses strongly on rural development, was not discontinued during the period of armed conflict, but instead was adapted to the changing circumstances and complemented by projects aimed at easing social tensions, integrating underprivileged population groups and promoting human rights. A country strategy developed jointly by the SDC and FDFA Political Affairs Division IV and encompassing commitments to development aid, promotion of human rights and peacebuilding has been in effect in Nepal since summer 2005.

In view of the increasing level of repression in Nepal, in spring 2005 Switzerland successfully brought about a resolution by the UN Commission on Human Rights concerning the human rights situation there, and this led to the creation by the UN High Commission on Human Rights of the largest ever human rights observer mission. Switzerland has been supporting the UNHCHR since summer 2005 both financially and through the deployment of a civilian expert. At the beginning of 2007, Switzerland also provided the newly created UN mission with 4 military observers and 2 civilian experts for the purpose of observing the cease-fire and disarmament process, and monitoring the preparations for elections (UNMIN).

Switzerland thus made a significant contribution towards peace in Nepal, co-ordinating the use of the instruments of development co-operation, promotion of human rights, and civilian and military peacebuilding.

Promotion of the rights of minorities and dealing with the past in Kosovo

Negotiations on the future status of Kosovo were conducted throughout 2006, but neither side (Kosovo Albanians and Serbs) displayed a readiness to compromise. Pristina continues to push for independence, while Belgrade categorically rejects this call. It is to be hoped that the UN Security Council will find a solution soon on the basis of the draft proposal put forward by Martti Ahtisaari.

Dealing with the past is a key factor for ensuring the peaceful cohabitation of the various population groups in Kosovo. In view of this, Switzerland handed over an options paper to UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari in September 2006, entitled "Dealing with the Past and the Negotiations on the Status of Kosovo". This paper contains an inventory of the numerous unresolved problems associated with past events in Kosovo and Serbia, and proposes a variety of potential solutions. It was also submitted to countries of the contact group, as well as to other states and international organisations, and the response has been exclusively positive. Switzerland wants to ensure that the future agreement on the status of Kosovo cites the necessity for an effective process for dealing with the past and bringing about reconciliation, and this point was subsequently included in the draft (Article 2.5) presented by the UN special envoy in March 2007, thereby creating an important prerequisite for dealing with the past at the institutionalised level.

While at the official level Switzerland campaigned for a negotiated solution to the status issue, at the same time it intensified its activities in Kosovo aimed at mediating between Serb population groups (internal dialogue) and between Serbs, other minorities and Albanians (overall dialogue in Kosovo). Three round table discussions were held for the purpose of building up trust and seeking solutions to the various problems, and these were attended by high-level representatives from the government of Kosovo and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as well as by leaders of minority groups (Serbs, Roma, Turks). Only the representatives of the Serb right-wing nationalist parties failed to attend. The most intense discussions concerned the issues of decentralisation, protection of minorities and the reintegration of Serbs into political institutions.

Guatemala – dealing with the past and the fight against impunity as contributions towards sustainable peace

In 1996, the conclusion of peace agreements officially brought the 36-year civil war in Guatemala, which had cost a total of around 200,000 lives, to an end. However, a large number of problems still have to be resolved and violence remains part of everyday life in Guatemala, which has one of the highest crime rates in Latin America – a situation that is intensified due to infiltration of the police force and administration by organised crime, as well as by widespread impunity. Guatemalan society is fragmented, and discrimination against the indigenous population remains unchecked.

Switzerland has been endeavouring for some time to preserve this fragile peace in Guatemala. In view of the planned withdrawal of the UN observer mission (MINUGUA) in 2004, Switzerland began to develop a peace and promotion of human rights programme in 2002, and sent a peace expert to Guatemala. The comprehensive provisions in the peace agreements require the implementation of central reforms for establishing a sustainable democracy and maintaining law and order, but progress has been sluggish in both these areas. The objectives of Switzerland's support are to strengthen the resolve and capabilities of civilian and state players for carrying out the necessary reforms.

Right from the start, Switzerland's commitment in Guatemala was limited to a period of 6 years. In view of the impending withdrawal at the end of 2007, Switzerland's efforts were submitted to external evaluation in the year under review. The final report confirms that the peace programme has had positive impacts despite the difficult political circumstances, and it assesses the efforts to promote more effective co-operation between civil society and the government as highly valuable. A project aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the public prosecutor's office which was implemented in close collaboration with an independent forensic anthropology institute, yielded positive impacts that reached well beyond the declared objective of training police officers, public attorneys and crime scene investigators: it succeeded in establishing a fruitful working relationship between a non-governmental organisation and the justice sector, including up to management level, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. This is a very rare occurrence in Guatemala. Switzerland's contribution towards the strengthening of small or institutionally weak organisations should also be noted here. These efforts focus on long-term criteria and their effects will undoubtedly be maintained beyond the period of Switzerland's commitment. The office of the human rights ombudsman received support, for example through the deployment of Swiss archiving experts who were placed at its disposal in an advisory capacity in order to help secure and process the police archives placed in its care. These archives, which were discovered in 2005, contain important new documents for the investigation of human rights violations that were committed during the civil war.

The currently unstable political situation is reducing the chances that far-reaching changes will take place in the near future. It thus remains to be seen whether Switzerland's efforts will one day lead to the targeted transformation of society. Nonetheless, as the examples cited above underscore, Switzerland has succeeded in utilising its resources in such a way as to bring about lasting changes in many areas.

Mexico: Promotion of a more effective national human rights policy through dialogue between government and civil society

Mexico is a member state of the OECD, posted economic growth of 4.6 percent in 2006, yet it still faces immense social problems. In 2006, 47 percent of the population were living below the poverty line, and 17 percent suffered extreme poverty. The gaps between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the underprivileged, and the indigenous population and the other inhabitants, are as wide as ever, and the tensions that result from these inequalities repeatedly lead to violent confrontations: for example in Oaxaca, the second-poorest province of Mexico, where confrontations have been taking place since June 2006. Cases of human rights violations by security forces also came to light in 2006, and the curse of impunity is reaching extremely disturbing dimensions. The efforts of the central government aimed at improving the human rights situation are being severely hampered by a widespread culture of impunity, corruption and discrimination.

For many years, Switzerland has been committed to promoting human rights, narrowing the social gaps and securing a democratic society that deals with its conflicts without the use of violence. Its initial commitment was limited to the province of Chiapas, where in 1994 an armed conflict broke out between government troops and members of the EZLN rebel force. In the meantime, Swiss charity organisations (Caritas Schweiz, HEKS, Fastenopfer, Brot für alle, Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund and Schweizer Bischofskonferenz) have sent a number of Swiss observer missions to the region. Between 1999 and 2002, the FDFA financed 6 such observer missions comprising representatives of Parliament and religious institutions. Since 2001, Switzerland (together with Caritas Schweiz, Fastenopfer and HEKS) has been actively pursuing a programme aimed at promoting the peace process in Mexico. The objective here is to promote the readiness on the part of both sides to come to the table and hold peace talks, mainly through sensitisation measures and by strengthening competencies in terms of both content and methodology.

In 2003, projects with a focus on the entire nation were initiated: President Fox had launched a national human rights programme that had been created in collaboration with the local office of the UNHCHR. Switzerland supported this move both financially and in the form of expertise: a non-governmental organisation in Geneva succeeded in gaining the trust of the relevant government bodies and the involved civilian players, and this resulted in a joint declaration of intent by the Genevan NGO and the Mexican Ministry of the Interior to co-operate on the development of a human rights programme. Acting as a neutral mediator between civil society and the authorities, the NGO concerned was able to maintain dialogue between the two involved parties, and used its expertise to drive this dialogue forwards. At the end of 2006 it organised an event that was attended by more than 400 representatives from all involved ministries as well as from civil society. This conference proved to be a valuable vehicle for transporting priority issues from the national programme into the human rights agenda of the new government.

The Mexican authorities recently repeated their willingness to co-operate, and in view of the positive experiences outlined above, institutions at the provincial level in their turn expressed their interest in this form of international co-operation, which is entirely new for Mexico.

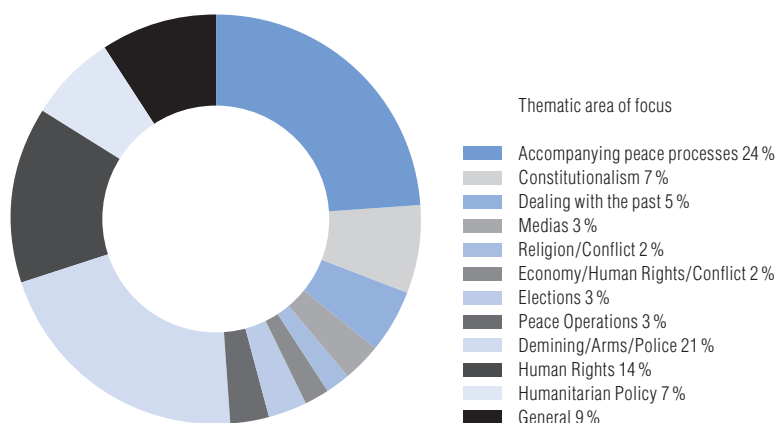
Switzerland will be withdrawing from its commitment in Mexico at the end of 2007. The process described above has made a significant contribution towards the urgently required implementation of a uniform national plan for the promotion of human rights. The fact that a Swiss human rights organisation has successfully acted as mediator between civil society and government and supported the Mexican Ministry of the Interior through the provision of expertise represents a good example for implementing similar projects in other countries.

2.3 Political development and diplomatic initiatives

Switzerland has acquired a considerable amount of specialist know-how in areas of relevance to peace policy, and in 2006 it once again contributed towards international policy-making and peace promotion at the multilateral level through a variety of special diplomatic initiatives. Examples here include the fight against illegal small arms and armed violence.

Thematic area of focus

The thematic focal points of Switzerland's commitment are depicted below. These reflect the various priorities by means of which Switzerland is able to offer added value in the areas of conflict transformation and promotion of human rights in comparison with other states or international organisations:



(% of Credit Facility draw-downs)

The thematic areas of focus have remained almost unchanged since 2004.

Armed violence and development

At the beginning of 2006, Switzerland launched an initiative aimed at sensitising governments to the devastating effects of the use of armed violence. A number of studies have shown that the majority of countries in which armed conflicts are being carried out or have been recently been carried out are to be found near the bottom of the Human Development Index. If these states want to secure sustainable development for their population, they must do everything in their power to prevent the use of armed violence. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the FDFA organised a ministers' summit on 7 June 2006 that focused on the topic of armed violence and development. This summit was attended by heads of government, development ministers, ministers of foreign affairs, and high-level officials from 42 countries throughout the world. All participating states adopted the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*⁶, thereby entering into a commitment to reduce the devastating effects of armed violence on socio-economic and human development. It is now the responsibility of these states to implement the Geneva Declaration. Switzerland co-ordinates a small group of countries that is to advise the donor states and those countries affected by armed violence on suitable measures that can be taken. Here it is able to follow up on its successful initiative calling for the marking and tracking of small arms, which had led to the approval of a politically binding instrument by the UN General Assembly at the end of 2005.

⁶ Text on <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/june-2006/governments-agree-to-armed-violence-reduction-measures.en>.

3. Promotion of human rights and protection of the civilian population

3.1 UN Human Rights Council: from creation to development of a new institution

The UN General Assembly passed Resolution 60/251 calling for the creation of a new Human Rights Council based in Geneva, on 15 March 2006 following extensive negotiations and intensive lobbying. On 9 May 2006, the General Assembly elected the 47 member states of the Human Rights Council. With 140 votes, Switzerland was elected to serve on the new Council for a term of office of three years. Then on 19 June 2006, the first session of the UN Human Rights Council was officially opened in Geneva, and Switzerland was elected to the office of Vice Presidency. This represented a successful conclusion to a diplomatic initiative that was launched by Switzerland in 2004 and proposed the creation of this new UN institution, and for the implementation of which Switzerland actively campaigned over a period of more than 2 years.

The expectations placed on the UN Human Rights Council are very high. It is too early to draw any meaningful conclusions regarding the Council's development, but both positive and critical tendencies have already been identified. For example, the creation of a quasi-permanent institution for the promotion and protection of human rights is regarded as a positive development. Unlike its predecessor, it is able to react immediately in urgent cases: up to the end of 2006, four special sessions had been convened to deal with urgent cases of human rights violations. All players appreciate the interactive dialogue with those in charge of the special procedures, and this direct form of exchange permits in-depth discussions about urgent themes relating to the protection of human rights.

One of the most negative tendencies to be identified to date concerns the formation of blocks along familiar lines, and this is a matter of some concern. It is not yet clear whether there will be a move in the direction of the frequently cited "new start", or whether the politicised atmosphere that existed during the era of the Commission on Human Rights will persist.

As in the past, Switzerland is looking for a way to put an end to the practice of block forming, and finding a compromise solution by means of which an objective and non-selective human rights policy can be pursued that is free from double standards and politicised debates. Switzerland is therefore campaigning for the dialogue on institution building within the Human Rights Council to be systematically carried out beyond the existing blocks and regional borders.

In Switzerland's view, institution building is a priority task during the period of transition from Commission to Council. In order to avoid endangering the creation of the Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly left a number of major issues open regarding the structure of the new institution, and these now have to be dealt with. The institutions concerning which the form and structure are currently being debated will determine the direction in which human rights policy will move in the next few years. In accordance with resolution 60/251 of the UN General Assembly, the main parameters for the structure of the new institution are to be defined by mid-June 2007.

3.2 Human rights dialogues

Human rights dialogue is an instrument of bilateral human rights policy. It involves formalised human rights talks at the government or administration level that may be complemented by support activities such as the exchange of experts or co-operation on projects. In the year under review, Switzerland conducted human rights dialogues with China, Iran and Vietnam, and on a local level in Indonesia.

Human rights dialogue with China: a long-term and consistent commitment

The tenth round of human rights talks with China was held in Switzerland in March 2006, and they focused primarily on criminal law and penal proceedings, the rights of minorities and religious freedoms, business and human rights, and international human rights issues. Some aspects were discussed in depth on the occasion of visits to various institutions and via contacts with experts. In some areas, e.g. ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, exchanges of experts on penal proceedings, partnership among think tanks on the rights of minorities, and business and human rights, opportunities were opened up for implementing joint projects. In accordance with the defined medium-term concept, an external institution was entrusted with the mandate of evaluating human rights dialogue between Switzerland and China. The resulting report is due to be published in summer 2007, and is to be used as a basis for defining the structure and objectives of future talks. Switzerland also informally exchanges findings with other states that hold human rights talks with China. Finally, the FDFA also took steps to assist a number of defenders of human rights in 2006.

Human rights dialogue with Vietnam: fruitful exchange and targeted support

Human rights dialogue with Vietnam was initiated in May 2005, and the second round of talks was held in Bern on 3 and 4 July 2006 in a constructive atmosphere. Here, themes such as criminal law and penal proceedings, the rights of minorities, religious freedom, women's rights and international human rights issues, were discussed in greater depth. In the year under review, some of the support activities associated with specific priorities in the ongoing dialogue were intensified. For example, in association with the signature and ratification of the Convention Against Torture, a group of Swiss prison experts was received in Hanoi. And in association with the approval of the new Equal Rights Act, a Vietnamese delegation paid a visit to Switzerland in spring 2006 to carry out studies on the topics of equal opportunities and prevention of violence against women. Thus the objectives of the human rights dialogue with Vietnam were achieved, and the degree of trust between the two countries was significantly strengthened.

Human rights dialogue with Iran: some progress despite international tensions

Switzerland and Iran have been holding human rights talks since October 2003. The main topics are corporate punishment, torture, capital punishment, freedom of expression and domestic violence. No more talks were held in 2006 following the second round that was held in June 2005, but at the end of 2006 Switzerland received an official invitation from the Iranian authorities to attend a third round of talks, and these subsequently took place in Tehran in February 2007. At the multilateral level, Switzerland supported a resolution at the 2006 UN General Assembly concerning the human rights situation in Iran. At the bilateral level, Switzerland has regularly intervened in the form of demarches in addition to the official rounds of dialogue. Most recently, these efforts have focused on preventing the execution of minors or members of especially vulnerable groups, as well as the administering of capital punishment and suppression of freedom of expression.

3.3 Political development and diplomatic initiatives

In the year under review, Switzerland participated in global political development in various areas of human rights and humanitarian policy, including transitional justice, the role of players in the business sector, economic and social rights (e.g. fundamental rights such as the right to water and the right to own property). The following descriptions of Switzerland's commitments in the areas of migration policy and measures to prevent trafficking in human beings serve as examples of its commitment.

International partnerships in the area of migration policy

At the 61st General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2006, a high level dialogue was held at minister level on the topic of migration and development, which represented a major step towards establishing migration as a global theme.

The following areas of focus were identified in the course of the debates:

- Migration has an inherent potential for a country's social, economic and cultural development that needs to be promoted.
- Partnerships in the area of migration promote the formation of synergies between country of origin and country of destination, and lead to joint solutions for fighting the causes of irregular migration such as poverty, conflicts and human rights violations.
- Migration is inseparable from employment and integration, and states have to take appropriate measures to protect the rights of immigrants.

Switzerland had successfully campaigned in favour of the fact that the report of the *Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM)*, which it had co-financed, should be used as a basis for the dialogue. This report was thus integrated into the outcome document of the dialogue, together with the *Bern Initiative* (a Swiss initiative aimed at improving the control and regulation of migration at the global level).

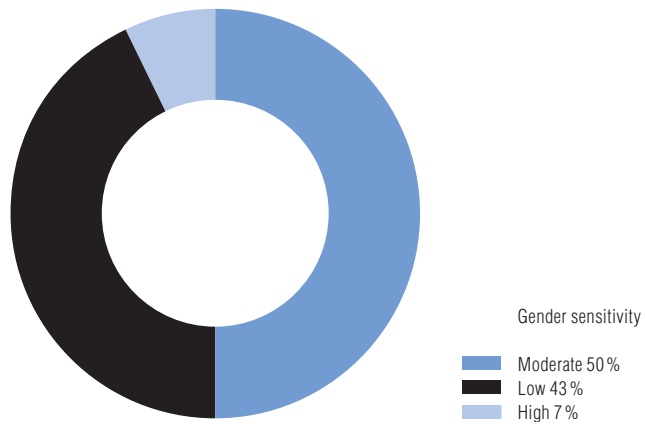
The report of the GCIM and Switzerland's active participation in the high level dialogue also led to action on the domestic policy front. For example, in the preparatory stage a workshop for the federal administration and a national conference on migration were organised with representatives of civil society, and the conclusions from these two events formed a valuable basis for Switzerland's statements of position at the high level dialogue.

One of the main chapters of the GCIM report deals with the issue of governance of international migration, which calls for a coherent policy at the national level. In this connection, Switzerland has already made significant progress in the area of interdepartmental co-operation. Platforms for global and regional co-operation are to be created or reinforced. The idea of the *Global Forum on International Migration and Development* was initiated at the high level debate. The aim behind this new platform is to provide states with an informal and non-regulatory framework for targeted debate. Switzerland will continue to campaign in favour of strengthening the role of the UN in the area of migration, so that important related themes such as gender and migration, mixed migration, and migration and conflicts will also be discussed at the global level in the future.

Gender sensitivity

Gender is an important dimension in the area of conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights. The different impacts of armed conflicts and human rights violations on women and men are taken into account in all phases of gender mainstreaming programmes, from initial analysis through to the implementation of specific projects.

In 2006, 7 % of activities gave a high level of attention to the gender dimension, 50 % a moderate level and 43 % a low level. The criterion was applicable in 68 % of the cases.



(% of Credit Facility draw-downs, excluding the "not applicable" category)

On average over the past three years, 16 % of activities gave a high level of attention to gender sensitivity, 54 % a moderate level and 29 % a low level.

On the whole, our activities take the gender dimension sufficiently into account, although a slight decline occurred in 2006. During the year, considerable efforts were made to improve internal leadership instruments in order to ensure that greater attention is paid to the gender dimension. As a result of these efforts, our instruments are now fully compatible with the evaluation tools of the OECD, and a pilot project of the FDFA was initiated that focuses on gender-sensitive budgeting.

Trafficking in human beings: effective prevention and protection of victims

In the area of trafficking in human beings, Switzerland primarily focuses on promoting more effective preventive measures and better protection of victims, and it applies these priorities both in its project activities and in its multilateral commitment in the formulation of international viewpoints. In 2006, for example, Switzerland co-financed a project in Santo Domingo: here, young women who want to leave the country and migrate to Europe are provided with information about the associated migration risks. At the same time, efforts are being made to support the reintegration of women into society and the labour market who return from Switzerland and other countries where they were above all forced into sex work.

Switzerland supports specific projects of relevant international organisations. In this way it wants to help ensure that findings obtained from project activities can be more directly utilised for the formulation of multilateral policies and regulations. In Iran, Switzerland contributed towards a comprehensive UNODC project that promotes efforts by the local authorities aimed at more effective prevention of trafficking and better protection of victims. A report prepared jointly with the authorities concerning trafficking in human beings in Iran, together with the formulation of corresponding strategies for fighting this phenomenon, serve as the basis for information campaigns for potential victims which are to be launched in co-operation with governmental and religious institutions as well as non-governmental organisations. In Brazil, Switzerland is supporting a prevention project that was initiated at the beginning of 2007 and was prepared by the Brazilian government in co-operation with the UNODC.

Switzerland also supported the Council of Europe's campaign against trafficking in human beings, and financed the translation of the educational comic, "Tu n'es pas à vendre" ("You're not for sale") into German, Italian and Ukrainian, so that it can be used as a sensitisation instrument in countries in which human trafficking takes place, as well as in Swiss schools.

3.4 Partnerships

Thanks to a broad network of partnerships with international organisations, like-minded states and partners from the science and business sectors, Switzerland is able to more effectively pursue its commitments in the areas of conflict transformation, promotion of human rights and humanitarian policy. For example, it consults regularly with the EU, Norway and other like-minded states, and also works together with independent institutions and national and international non-governmental organisations that possess special know-how or are able to globally represent a given issue particularly effectively. Switzerland's co-operation with the University of Harvard's *Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research* is presented below as a good example of its partnership activities.

Practical co-operation with the University of Harvard

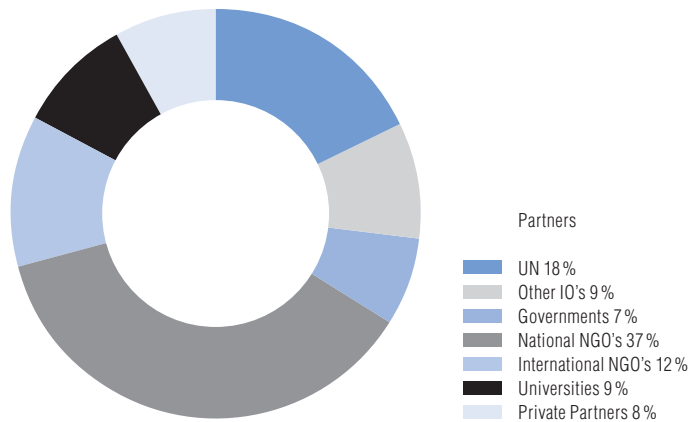
The *Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR)* is a long-term partner of Switzerland in important areas of humanitarian policy, e.g. reinforcing international humanitarian law or enhancing the safety of personnel of international organisations on field missions in which they are exposed to dangerous situations. In 2006, a variety of notable processes were initiated and implemented in both these areas.

Switzerland and the HPCR jointly organised the 3rd informal conference of experts on current challenges relating to international humanitarian law, which was held in Montreux in May 2006. This event formed part of an informal reflection process (the "Alabama Process") on international humanitarian law and ongoing conflicts, which Switzerland had initiated in January 2003 in collaboration with the HPCR. Switzerland's main aims here are to create a platform for exchange and informal dialogue between government and university experts, and promote research in the area of international humanitarian law. This process is to support governments with their formulation of political principles that can be applied for dealing with the current challenges in the area of international humanitarian law. The main topics at the conference were the provisions of international humanitarian law governing the use of aircraft and missiles in warfare, and the examination of a draft manual. The latter is the result of a number of conferences of experts, and represents the first attempt since 1923 to reinforce the provisions of international customary law and international treaty law governing the use of aircraft and missiles in warfare. The activities relating to the finalisation of, and commentary on, the manual are to be continued in 2007. The second topic at the conference in Montreux concerned transnational armed groups. Here, discussions focused on themes related to the problems facing the world after 11 September 2001. This debate has not been concluded and discussions are to continue.

Within the scope of the Safety Management Initiative, a groundbreaking course was initiated in 2006 to support representatives of a comprehensive range of organisations. The aim of this course was to sensitise decision-making authorities that are responsible for the planning and implementation of field missions in dangerous situations to important issues relating to the safety of personnel. For example, participants were able to use computer-based tools to practice making decisions in simulated crisis situations, and to focus on issues relating to the new security personnel in the field – mainly private security companies – and the legal responsibility to be borne by organisations deploying personnel in dangerous situations.

Partners

In implementing its conflict transformation and human rights policies, Switzerland works together with a variety of partners. Around 27 % of the spending in these areas went on co-operation with international organisations, in particular the UN. Bilateral relations with other states (7 %) and national NGOs (37 %) permitted the implementation of actions in conflict regions. International NGOs (12 %) and universities (9 %) with which Switzerland co-operates, plus a variety of private companies, consultants, etc. (8%), form the bulk of the strategic partners that directly support the activities of employees of the federal government, and in particular FDFA Political Affairs Division IV (Human Security).



(% of Credit Facility draw-downs, excluding administration costs)⁴

International organisations represent a significant proportion (on average, around 30 %) of the partners with which Political Affairs Division IV works together. Here the UN is growing increasingly important (2004, 14 %; 2006, 18 %). But at the same time, co-operation with national NGOs is of considerable importance (on average, around 32 %), whether in the form of contributions to organisations in countries in which projects are in progress, or support for partners in Switzerland which co-operate with organisations on location or participate in the development of political objectives in which Switzerland is involved.

4. Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding

The Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding is a key instrument for the promotion of peace and human rights. Swiss experts participate in bilateral programmes as well as in multilateral organisations, where they are in great demand due to their excellent qualifications. Since the Pool is managed on the militia principle, Swiss peace experts can be mobilised at short notice for international missions. Through the Expert Pool, Switzerland is present in many conflict regions: as of the end of 2006, it comprised 570 members (170 women and 400 men) with qualifications in a variety of areas, for example election observers, police advisers, customs experts, specialists in constitutional law, mediation, rule of law, dealing with the past, human rights and humanitarian law. The thematic and geographic focus of the Pool is in line with the priorities of Switzerland's peacebuilding and human rights policies. In the year under review, 174 members of the Pool were seconded on short-term or long-term missions. Below is an example of the activities carried out by the Expert Pool in 2006:

A peace expert and a human rights specialist in Sri Lanka

The armed conflict in Sri Lanka has had an indirect impact on Switzerland since the 1980s. Some 40,000 people (mostly Tamils) have applied for political asylum here, and this means that Switzerland has the second-largest proportion of Tamils to the overall population after Canada. Finding a solution to the conflict is therefore very much in Switzerland's interest as well.

Switzerland began trying to mediate a political solution at a very early stage: in 1996, it invited Sri Lankan members of Parliament to attend a seminar on federalism. In mid-2001, the *Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation (RNCST)* was opened in Colombo with the aim of strengthening the conflict transformation competencies of various players and encouraging networking. The FDFA also organised conferences for specialists in constitutional law, representatives of the government and opposition, as well as civil society. The purpose of these conferences was to look for ways in which the Tamil minority in the north and east of the country could be granted a high degree of autonomy without the need to amend the constitution.

In February 2002, the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are fighting for their own state in the north and east of the country, agreed on a cease-fire for an indefinite period. Ensuing peace talks rapidly gave rise to substantial progress. In December 2002, the government and the LTTE agreed to seek a political solution that is based on internal self-determination and a federal structure within a unified Sri Lanka⁷. The LTTE delegation paid a visit to Switzerland immediately after this move, in order to gain some insight into a federal model. As a multicultural country with four official languages and a flourishing economy, Switzerland has been regarded as a prime example in Sri Lanka for decades.

⁷ Declaration dated 5 December 2002

In June 2003, Switzerland sent a civilian peacebuilding expert to Sri Lanka. He is fully integrated into the Swiss Embassy in Colombo and advises the head of the mission on matters relating to peace policy. He also monitors, supports and evaluates civilian peacebuilding projects, and maintains contacts with local, regional and international players. Switzerland's commitment focuses on the vision of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society that is able to live together in peace. Multi-lingualism and multi-culturality should each be perceived as benefits, not as problems. The Swiss expert also supports the efforts on the part of Norway to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. In May 2006, Switzerland broadened its commitment by sending an expert on human rights (also a member of the Pool) to Sri Lanka.

This increased commitment on the part of Switzerland is greatly appreciated in Sri Lanka. A number of delegations of ministers, members of Parliament, journalists and representatives of the LTTE have visited Switzerland in order to learn more about our country's federalism model, and numerous experts attended the summer courses of the Institute for Federalism. When it appeared that planned peace talks in 2006 might fail to materialise due to a dispute over the location, both the government and the LTTE agreed on Switzerland as the location for their negotiations.

Although the talks that took place in February and October 2006 in Geneva failed to yield the hoped-for breakthrough, and the humanitarian situation has taken a drastic turn for the worse in the past few months, the FDFA remains convinced that it will only be possible to achieve lasting peace by finding a political solution to the armed conflict. Both experts from the Pool have maintained contacts with both sides. By supporting a broad variety of projects in the areas of development co-operation and peacebuilding within the scope of a joint medium-term strategy of the SDC and FDFA Political Affairs Division IV, Switzerland wants to help bring about a political solution to the conflict that takes account of the interests of all involved parties, promotes human rights and puts an end to suffering in Sri Lanka.

Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding

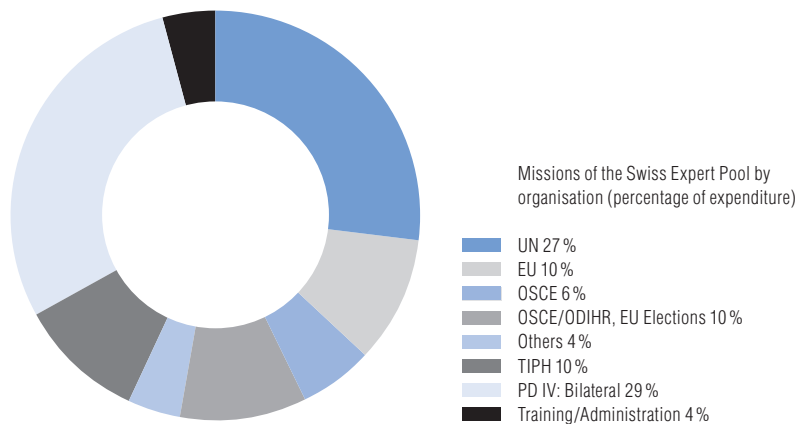
A high-performance tool for Switzerland

In 2006, 175 members of the Expert Pool were involved in bilateral or multilateral missions in 37 countries. Swiss experts were active at the headquarters of the UN, the OSCE and the EU, as well as in the field, primarily in the areas of protection of human rights, humanitarian policy and peace policy. 11 peacebuilding and 4 human rights experts supported priority programmes at the bilateral level. Swiss experts participated in a total of 16 international election monitoring missions in 14 countries, mainly on behalf of the OSCE and the EU. The Expert Pool deployed 24 civilian police officers and 1 customs specialist in the course of the year. On average, 72 experts were deployed simultaneously, and 35% of all deployed experts were women.

Missions of the Swiss Expert Pool in 2006 by organisation (percentage of expenditure)

Co-operation with international organisations

Approximately 70% of pool members were seconded to international organisations. The chart below shows the key international organisations to receive such support in 2006. The United Nations and the EU head the list, followed by the OSCE and various other international or regional organisations and international programmes, such as the Council of Europe and the Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron (TIPH).



5. Organisational development and quality management

Programme development

The thematic and geographic programmes in the areas of peacebuilding and promotion of human rights have undergone development on the basis of the operational and policy principles that have been developed and established over the past few years, and this applies especially with respect to planning, monitoring and evaluation methods. In this connection, data concerning the allocation of working hours of all employees of FDFA Political Affairs Division IV to the various themes were collected for the first time in the year under review. The result of this survey was that more than one-fifth of the overall commitment in terms of time was devoted to the promotion of human rights, whereas financial expenditure at this level was only around 14 percent. Findings of this nature permit not only greater transparency, but also the most precise steering possible of this foreign policy commitment.

Selected audits

Certain important programmes were evaluated by independent auditors, e.g. the entire commitment in Guatemala (cf. page 16), the human rights dialogue with China, the strategic partnership with the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR), as well as the media commitments in Sudan and Southeast Europe. In all cases, the results of these external audits were positive with respect to the effectiveness and visibility of the efforts implemented or financed by Switzerland. These evaluations were intended to serve as mutual learning processes for the FDFA and its partner organisations. Identified options for improvement are to be implemented without delay. Adequate evidence of effectiveness was found in all audited cases.

Updating of SAP database

The projects database was thoroughly overhauled as of the beginning of 2006. Here the categories according to which all projects are classified were adjusted to the conceptual categories that have since been developed. At the same time, the classification of projects from previous years was also carried out in a highly labour-intensive process. The head of Political Affairs is now able to obtain aggregated data on all projects on the basis of current statistical problems. The aim now is to use these statistics for steering the development of programmes in terms of key criteria (e.g. geographic distribution, relationship between player and donor, track record of commitments, gender sensitivity).

Organisational development

Political Affairs Division IV has reviewed its organisational structure and business processes in an externally supported process. The aim here is to lay the organisational foundations, in addition to those relating to strategy and content, for the continued development of active Swiss peacebuilding, human rights and humanitarian policies. The last review of this nature took place three years ago, but in the meantime the Division has undergone many changes. The review will only be completed in 2007. It appears likely that the new structure will consist of four thematic sections, three staff units and a financial and administration service. By contrast, a moderate thematic focus should sharpen the profile of the Division. Furthermore, an increasing number of special task forces is to be deployed for limited periods of time in certain thematic areas that extend beyond the scope of individual sections and divisions.

