

Opening of the remodeled Consulate General office space in Mumbai

Esteemed guests, dear friends,

As the last speaker before we can enjoy music, food and conversations, I promise to be brief. It is great to be back with you in Mumbai, to feel the pulse of this great commercial city, to gaze at the wide open sea horizons.

Tonight we are gathered to celebrate our reinvented Consulate general. The slightly dusty charms of the nineteen sixties have given way to sleek contemporary designs. With a new atmosphere comes improved collaboration. Swiss institutions that were physically separate have joined forces, liberating new synergies and creative ideas.

The most diverse issues are now dealt with side by side, from linking Swiss and Indian citizen in marriage, to matching Swiss and Indian businesses in mutual profit, to rekindling the love affair between Bollywood and the Swiss Alps. This is ideal for the colleagues who work at the Consulate, and I wish them well. It is also great for you our clients and partners: whether Swiss or Indian, private, corporate or official, your needs will be served even better.

In closing, let me draw your attention to the colourful logo behind me. On August 14th 1948, newly independent India signed its first Friendship Treaty with another country. This rather unlikely country, with close connections to Prime Minister Nehru, was Switzerland. As we approach the 70th anniversary

of the Treaty, the Swiss official network in India, - the colleagues here in Mumbai, but also in Delhi and Bangalore - , together with its Indian partners, is launching a new initiative. We call it “70 years of Swiss-Indian Friendship: Connecting minds, inspiring the future”.

Through a series of public events and meetings, we want to celebrate those 70 years of Swiss-Indian partnership and their architects. At the same time, we look resolutely towards the future, bringing together young, innovative Swiss and Indian minds. The result, we hope, will be a surprising, creative burst of energy to benefit both countries.

Central to the two year initiative is the notion of Swiss-Indian pairings in the most diverse fields: I think of the talented pair of architects that renovated the Consulate general. I think of the extraordinary musicians we will listen to in a minute. I think of so many of you, the Swiss and Indians in the audience, weaving day after day the fabric of the relationship through their personal stories and dreams. To the reborn Swiss Consulate general in Mumbai I wish a long and successful life, and to us a great evening. Thank you.