

Inauguration of the new office building of the Climate Change and Development Division on 30th September 2015

Welcome speech Ambassador Linus von Castelmur

Honorable members of Parliament,

Excellencies – dear ambassadors, high commissioners and fellow diplomats,

Ladies and gentlemen,

dear friends,

On the occasion of the inauguration of the new temporary office building of the International Cooperation Division at the Swiss Embassy, Françoise and I warmly welcome all of you.

This evening is taking place in the framework of the Year of Swiss Innovation in India. The Year of Swiss Innovation in India – or YoSI as we fondly call it – was launched in Ahmedabad on the occasion of the landing of Solar Impulse, a solar-powered aircraft designed to remain in the air day and night without using a single drop of fossil fuel.

As an idea born in Switzerland, the Solar Impulse project embodies many of the features that characterize Switzerland as a global leader in innovation: pioneering spirit, entrepreneurship, excellence in research and development, well-educated and well-trained people and a fine-tuned R+D collaboration between the private and the public sector. During 18 months, from March 2015 to October 2016, we are organizing a series of symposia, workshops and travelling exhibitions on topics such as renewable energy, green buildings,

robotics, intellectual property rights, gaming, digital innovation, design and artistic performances based strongly on science and innovation.

The construction of a new temporary office building has given us an opportunity to put some of these issues into practice in our own backyard. In doing so, we could directly benefit from the expertise gained from ongoing cooperation projects between India and Switzerland, which are supported through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The new building is the culmination of the ideas from two flagship projects: the Building Energy Efficiency Project, in short known as BEEP, and, the Low Carbon Cement project. Dr. Sameer Maithel and Dr. Shashank Bishnoi will throw some light on various aspects that have been integrated in the new office building.

I am proud to say that our new edifice truly stands for innovation in energy efficiency and new construction materials. In these endeavors, we are working very closely with the Government of India. It is of particular pleasure that Dr. Ajay Mathur, the Director General of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, is with us tonight.

Switzerland is an environmentally conscious country. Here, at the Swiss Embassy, we strive to further make the environment clean and green. Beside the consideration of resource and energy efficiency in the new building, we are in the process of installing solar thermal technology on the main embassy edifice for the purpose of cooling the building.

Ladies and gentlemen, on this pleasant evening, I welcome all of you once again and wish you a nice and inspiring evening. Thank you!