

de Sede Company Event, November 22, 2019

Welcome address by Ambassador Dr. Andreas Baum

Dear Mrs. Monika Walser, CEO, and Mrs. Sonal Saxena, Director -
Sales & Marketing (India & Singapore)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you tonight to the Swiss Embassy. It is an honor that de Sede has chosen this location for the India launch of their handcrafted bags.

I was pleased to hear about the launch of de Sede handbags, because the company, established in 1962, is very well-known in Switzerland, and in over 70 other countries, for their exclusive upholstered furniture. At the company showroom in Delhi, which was opened in 2017, furniture for the Indian collection can be viewed.

I would be happy to know about the factors that lead to the diversification of their portfolio, to now include handbags. These bags, launched in 2017, are made in the de Sede facility in Klingnau, with utmost attention to the entire process - from leather storage, leather cutting and sewing, to finally, assembly and logistics. You will hear more about this during the course of the evening.

The Embassy works every day to make a contribution so that companies like de Sede can succeed in India. Our focus lies on the best possible framework and legal conditions for companies to do business.

Let me briefly outline two important projects we are working on.

To conclude a Free Trade Agreement with India is a priority. Negotiations between the EFTA-member States and India, started already in 2008, are ongoing, but there are still some obstacles to overcome. Now that the elections in India are behind us, we are confident that the next round of negotiations will take place soon. Another priority is the conclusion of a new Bilateral Investment Protection Treaty, which became necessary after India terminated almost all such treaties in 2017. Three rounds of negotiations have already taken place, a fourth round is planned to take place soon.

This year was marked by a very busy bilateral diplomatic calendar between India and Switzerland. In September, President Kovind was in Switzerland for a State visit. Two Memoranda of Understanding on technical cooperation on climate change and on the renewal of Hindi Chair at the University of Lausanne as well as a Letter of Intent on the establishment of a bilateral Science and Innovation Alliance were signed during the visit.

In October, Federal Councillor Sommaruga, Swiss Minister for environment, transport, energy and communication, visited India. Besides political discussions with her counterparts from the Railway, Power and Civil Aviation Ministries, she visited Bangalore and Coimbatore. Federal Councillor Sommaruga was accompanied by private companies from the Swiss railway and cleantech sectors. Her visit therefore focused on these two sectors, as well as on smart cities and climate change.

In September, the first exchange of data under the new Agreement on the Automatic Exchange of Information in Tax Matters took place.

This week Swiss State Secretary Stoffel, responsible for international finance, visited Delhi. She met with her counterparts from the Ministry of Finance to discuss ways to further enhance bilateral collaboration in the field of Finance and Tax.

We have multiple mandates in India, carrying out diverse tasks, and a strong presence of the official Swiss network. The Swiss Business Hub India, which represents Switzerland Global Enterprise, is the official export and investment agency of the Swiss Government. The hub is well-placed to support Swiss companies in expanding and strengthening their business activities in India, and to inform Indian companies about the advantages of Switzerland as a business

location. The start-up scene, academia and Vocational Education and Training are covered by swissnex, climate change and energy efficiency by the Swiss Development Cooperation Office, and tourism by Switzerland Tourism.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to conclude, let me give you an outlook of the activities of the Embassy in the coming months.

On December 13, we will conduct the second Swiss Business Roundtable here at the Residence. This event gives Swiss companies operating in India the opportunity to discuss issues and challenges they face while doing business in India. Just after the Swiss Business Roundtable, the Swiss Indian Chamber of Commerce will hold its traditional Leadership Lecture in the very same location. In February next year, the Embassy will organize an event on the topic of “Culture for Innovation”.

But before that, I look forward to tonight’s event, which promises several insights into the world of fashion and luxury, as well as, special announcements which will be made by the representatives of de Sede.

I wish de Sede all the best for the launch of their handbags in India. And I wish you all a very nice evening.