

Topics

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1970)**

Heft 1605

PDF erstellt am: **08.08.2024**

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TOPICS

(The following has been taken from Dr. Iselin's speech to the City Swiss Club.)

SWISS DEVELOPMENT AID

A draft law on the introduction of investment credit guarantees has also been drawn up to encourage private enterprises to increase their direct investments in less stable developing countries.

State aid can take the form of technical assistance, financial assistance, trade policy measures and humanitarian and food aid.

The Federal Council's Delegate for Technical Cooperation is responsible for administering the overall credit, and he has a staff of 70 in the Federal Political Department. Typical projects of bilateral technical assistance include the many Indian projects. For details see: "Botschaft des Bundesrates an die Bundesversammlung über die Weiterführung der technischen Zusammenarbeit der Schweiz mit Entwicklungsländern (May 1969)", pages 45, 48, 51, 55, 57 and 61.

In this connection I must also mention the young Swiss volunteers, of whom there were 436 in action in 1968. At the same time there were also about 500 Swiss experts working in the developing countries.

Swiss financial assistance embraces the Confederation's loans to IDA (a subsidiary of the World Bank) and to individual countries such as Turkey within the framework of the OECD.

Our trade policy is to adhere to international raw materials agreements aimed at stabilising the price of basic commodities produced by developing countries (such as the International Coffee Agreement and the International Wheat Agreement), and we co-operate within the OECD on the working-out of a customs preference system for developing countries.

Our humanitarian and food aid includes, for instance, support for the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the distribution of dairy products.

The UNCTAD conference in New Delhi in 1968 recommended that the industrial nations should spend at least one per cent of their gross national product on development aid.

In 1968 Switzerland's total expenditure in connection with her development policy amounted to about 1.1 thousand million francs or 1.5 per cent of her gross national product, and our country ranked highest among the donor nations. I must point out, however, that of the total expenditure only 82 million francs or 8 per cent represented contributions by the State and the remaining 984 million francs or 92

per cent was raised by private business in the form of direct investments, suppliers' credits and financial aid. If we limit ourselves to state expenditure, then Switzerland was the lowest contributor in 1968, giving only 0.11 per cent of her gross national product (Sweden, for example, gave 0.28 per cent of her national product). The fact that Swiss private development aid is ten times larger than state aid is due to the structure of the Swiss state, which is orientated towards private enterprise.

Although the development aid contributed by private firms in Switzerland is appreciated by its recipients as a valuable contribution, private enterprise is necessarily interested in those countries offering the best commercial opportunities, in other words, developing countries with a relatively high economic standard. However, it is in the most backward countries that development aid is most needed, so that Switzerland will increase her efforts to supplement those useful private contributions with more state aid in future. Thus, for the three-year period 1970-72 an overall credit of 180 million francs is available for technical co-operation, which is a 50 per cent increase over our previous contribution.

SWITZERLAND AND THE U.N.

On various occasions Switzerland has participated, directly or indirectly, in the U.N.'s peace-keeping activities. I should just like to mention Switzerland's participation in the Korea Armistice Commission, in the providing of air transport during the Suez operation of 1956, in the Congo operation of 1960, in the Middle East crisis of 1967 and in a considerable financial contri-

bution to the U.N. peace-securing action in Cyprus.

As to Switzerland's relations with the various organisms of the U.N., our country is a member of the International Court of Justice, which is open to non-member States. Not being represented in the General Assembly itself, Switzerland participates in the work of several subsidiary organs such as UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), U.N. High Commission for Refugees, UNCTAD (U.N. Conference on Trade and Development), and UNNIDO (U.N. Industrial Development Organisation). Switzerland is also a full member of all the specialised agencies of the U.N., with the exception of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. Faithful to her principle of co-operating as far as possible in the activities of the U.N., Switzerland is a signatory to numerous conventions concluded under her auspices. Last but not least, I must mention the hospitality which Switzerland extends to the U.N. in Geneva. Among the more important organisms and specialised agencies of the United Nations permanently represented in Geneva are the ECE (Economic Commission for Europe), UNCTAD, ILO (International Labour Organisation), ITU (International Telecommunication Union), WHO (World Health Organisation), WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).

To help the evaluation of the prospects and conditions for Switzerland's entry into the U.N. the Federal Council has submitted a comprehensive report on Switzerland's relations with the U.N. to the Federal Assembly in June 1969. This has also been translated into English.

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