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Dear compatriots and friends,

I hope this Newsletter finds you in good health and positive spirits. Like hundreds of thousands of organizations, the Swiss Embassy in Accra was not spared from being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For many months now, our environment and our minds have been struggling to find a balance in our way to operate & provide services and to protect the health of all of us.

In 2020, the Embassy immediately adhered to the movement restrictions and our team partially worked from home before we returned to a situation which many people would describe as "the new normal"; with strict adherence to the various safety & hygiene protocols. Throughout the last year, I can proudly say that we were able to carry out our work fairly well.

My colleagues and I feel that we who live in Ghana, Togo and Benin are very lucky, because we are much less affected by the pandemic than people in Switzerland and Europe. With some concern, we look at the current number of cases in Switzerland during mid-winter season as the second or third wave hit us hard.

Despite the existence of the virus, the Embassy was active in executing various activities and organizing many small-scale meetings in the garden of the Swiss Residence. This Newsletter will provide you a glimpse of what we did since the last edition in May 2020.

With excitement and hope, we look forward to the New Year 2021 and to interacting with many of you again soon.

Mema mo fenhya pa o ! Ä Guets Nöis! Bonne Année!
Felice Anno Nuovo! Bun Di Bun Onn! Happy New Year!

Philipp Stalder,
Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Ghana,
Benin and Togo

WELL-WISHES FROM A FRIEND OF SWITZERLAND



I take the opportunity offered me by my friend and colleague, Ambassador Philipp Stalder, Swiss Ambassador to Ghana, to extend warm New Year greetings to the Swiss community in Ghana, Togo and Benin as well as to all cherished readers of this Newsletter. I have enjoyed tremendously working with Philipp on many areas of Swiss-Ghana relations and I look forward to an even bigger work agenda this year.

Last year, of course had its share of challenges but it also provided opportunities for Ghana and Switzerland to demonstrate to the world what can be achieved by two countries whose leadership decided to consolidate their historical ties and embrace common challenges. In that sense, it has been a great year! I had been asked several times earlier on, before the historical visit to Switzerland of Ghana's President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in the early part of 2020, what more lay in store for Ghana and Switzerland in terms of their bilateral relations. Agreements reached during the State visit, as well as events which have followed have answered that enquiry. The Swiss President, Her Excellency Simonetta Sommaruga captured it best when she paid glowing tribute to the strength of our relations in many fields of cooperation.

Beyond that, I cannot help feeling that the real wealth that we share and real test of the strength of our cooperation lies in the bosom of our people-to- people ties, and yet these cannot be measured in 'francs' and 'cedis' but in the cultural, educational exchanges and other diverse ways that Ghanaians and Swiss people view their partnership and foster it. Ghanaians in Switzerland find a welcome and people friendly atmosphere, and have children who are being educated in some of the best educational establishments in Switzerland. Others still, travel here on educational grants, or exchange programmes to further their studies. Then there is the cooperation in the area of trade and investment opportunities that have long characterised our bonds and which are still growing. Long may this partnership continue.

There is much to build on, and much more to look forward to in the course of the year. I wish us all a successful year, one that builds on what has been achieved but does not forget how far we've journeyed together.

Hope thrives eternally in the human breast!
Happy New Year to us all!

Ramses J. Cleland
Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Organisation in Switzerland,
and Ambassador of Ghana to Switzerland.

Ghana wählt!



Election process ongoing

Am 7. Dezember 2020 hat Ghana in weitgehend friedlichen und von internationalen Gremien als fair und frei bezeichneten Wahlen ein neues Staatsoberhaupt und ein neues Parlament gewählt. Die offizielle Schweiz nahm reges Interesse an diesem Urnengang, was sich unter anderem darin zeigte, dass das Eidgenössische Departement für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (EDA) im Rahmen der EU Election Observation Mission zwei Langzeitwahlbeobachter (LTOs) aus der Schweiz nach Ghana entsandte, die in der Central Region und in Upper West während mehreren Wochen im Einsatz standen. Darüber hinaus reiste der Afrika-Korrespondent des Schweizer Radio SRF, Samuel Burri, für die Berichterstattung des Publikums in der Heimat über die allgemeinen Wahlen in Ghana nach Akkra. Mit sämtlichen Personen stand die

Botschaft im Austausch. Wir gratulieren dem ghanaischen Volk herzlich für den mit wenigen Ausnahmen gewaltfreie Durchführung demokratischer Wahlen und gratulieren Präsident Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo von der NPP (New Patriotic Party) zu seiner Wiederwahl und Hon. Alban Sumana Kingford Bagin von der NDC (National Democratic Congress) zur Wahl des Parlamentspräsidenten des 8. Parlaments seit Ausrufung der 4. Republik im Jahre 1992.

Switzerland and Ghana sign historic Climate Agreement



Amb. Philipp Stalder and Mr. Heinz Kaufmann, Dep. Head of Mission, at the signing

On 24th November, 2020, Ambassador Philipp Stalder signed an important bilateral agreement with Ghana on behalf of the Swiss Government (Federal Council). The signing ceremony for the agreement between Switzerland and Ghana setting the framework for bringing the cooperative approaches of the Paris Climate Agreement to life, was held simultaneously in Accra and Berne, in the presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Federal Councilor Simonetta Sommaruga, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey and Dr. Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng. For Switzerland, it is the second agreement of its kind (after Peru) and the first one with an African state. The agreement will come into force in 2021 and will enable the implementation of climate friendly projects in Ghana. The agreement contains criteria on how to implement future projects in a sustainable & environment-friendly way by also respecting human rights standards.

Political Consultations



The Ghanaian delegation joining the meeting virtually

On 15th November, 2020, Ambassador Siri Walt, the Head of Africa and the Francophonie Division at FDFA (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) led the Swiss delegation to hold the 5th session of political consultations with Ghanaian officials virtually.

Main discussion topics were the status of bilateral, political and economic relations, development cooperation, West African regional and global issues, Cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, as well as on human rights, peace and security, the recently held general elections in Ghana, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Présentation des Lettres de Créance au Togo



Ambassador Stalder, with the Togolese President, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé

Le 16 octobre dernier, l'Ambassadeur Philipp Stalder a présenté ses Lettres de créance au Président de la République du Togo, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, lors d'une cérémonie officielle qui s'est tenue au Palais présidentiel de Lomé. L'Ambassadeur Stalder a transmis les salutations et meilleurs vœux du Conseil fédéral suisse et a réitéré l'engagement de la Suisse au renforcement des relations d'amitié existantes entre les deux pays. La visite éclair de l'Ambassadeur a été parfaitement organisée par notre Consule honoraire, Mme Myrna Tabchoury, rendant également possible un entretien avec la Première Ministre Togolaise, Victoire Tomegah Dogbè. A la veille de la cérémonie officielle, l'émissaire suisse a eu l'occasion de s'entretenir avec le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Robert Dusse.

1st August celebrations held virtually



Shooting the documentary

The Embassy commemorated the Swiss National Day virtually, with a short video celebrating relations between Ghana and Switzerland. The Anniversary celebration also highlighted 60 years of diplomatic relations between both countries. Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs featured in the 8-minute [video](#) with a congratulatory message to the Swiss Confederation. The Embassy produced the [video](#) focusing on Ghanaians who have links with Switzerland and are contributing to Ghana's sustainable growth.

An article by the Foreign Affairs Editor of the "Daily Graphic", Ghana's widest circulating newspaper as well as an [Op-Ed](#) from the Head of Mission were published within the period. A [press release](#) was published on varied platforms.

News from the KAIPTC



Amb. Stalder, opening a course at the KAIPTC

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Embassy was able to have satisfactory engagements with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC). Ambassador Stalder took part in the virtual meeting at which management of the center presented the annual report to its partners.

Two Swiss funded courses were also organized in the 2nd half of the year, namely the Multidimensional Peace Operations Course 2020 (MPOC) and the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The MPOC is one of the pillar courses organized by Switzerland since many years, for Ghanaian and international participants. Both courses provide peacekeepers with the needed training to deal with the daunting task of protecting civilians. Ambassador Philipp Stalder and Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation, Mr. Heinz Kaufmann were present to open and close both courses. The Embassy's support to KAIPTC is part of Switzerland's global commitment to peace, security and development.

Development Cooperation

Mini-grid projects for island communities



Ambassador Stalder at the sod-cutting

On 6th October, 2020, the Ambassador - together with Minister of Energy, Hon. John Peter Amewu – cut the sod for the construction of three renewable energy mini-grids for three island communities (Alorkpem, Aflive and Azizakpe) in the Ada East District of the Greater Accra Region. The project was funded by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) under the third phase of the Ghana Energy Development and Access Project (GEDAP). Upon completion, the mini grids will provide green electricity to roughly 300 households, 2,100 inhabitants, and 30 Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises. It will also boost the eco-tourism potential of the islands. The construction of the mini grids has been affected by the outbreak of the pandemic but the Minister remained hopeful of a timely completion which will bring substantial benefits to the livelihoods of the people and their environment.

Visit to the northern regions



One of the Swiss partly-funded projects

Following a previous official trip to Kumasi and many more private excursions especially along the coast line, Ambassador Philipp Stalder executed his first visit to the northern part of Ghana. In Tamale, the Swiss envoy exchanged with some compatriots living in this area for many years and in Wa, he met with one of two Swiss long-term election observers deployed by the EU Election Observation Mission to the capital of the Upper West Region. Further on his busy programme, Ambassador Stalder met with the Municipal Coordinating Director of Tamale and held an interesting discussion with representatives & beneficiaries of the Swiss [Botnar Foundation](#). Last but not least, the trip also provided a chance to see two infrastructure projects in Tamale and in Damongo which were financed with Swiss taxpayers' money through SECO's decentralized budget support for the Ministry of Local Governance. Certainly, a highlight was also the honor to be received by the paramount chief of Damongo, the Yagnonwura Tumtumba Boresa (I) and to see elephants at the Mole National Park.

Support for COVID-19 related PPE production



Launch of the support project

The local manufacturing of hygiene and medical materials as well as personal protection equipment (PPE) became an important pillar in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is important to ensure that these products are fit for purpose and conform to relevant quality and safety standards. To strengthen the efforts of the Government of Ghana, Switzerland supported the Ghana Standards Authority through the SECO funded Global Quality and Standards Program to develop such key standards. Among the forty standards – some developed locally and others adopted from international standards – are standards for face masks and shields, sanitizers, ventilators, PPE, as well as standards for a series of test methods. The program also carried out promotional activities to educate SMEs and the general public on the importance and implementation of the standards.

COVID-19: Embassy donates Personal Protective Equipment



Amb. Philipp Stalder, making the presentation

On 5th August, 2020, Ambassador Stalder and the Country Director of GIZ Ghana jointly presented Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other essential hygiene items to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to help fight and contain the spread of COVID-19. The items were received by the Minister of State for Agriculture Dr. Nurah Gyeile. The donation was made within the frame of the ComCashew Initiative, which Switzerland co-funds through SECO.

Trade & Business

Swiss Business Lunch



A cross section of the Swiss private sector in attendance

On 16th September, 2020 and for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Embassy gathered the Swiss private sector operating in Ghana at the garden of the Ambassador's residence. To limit risks to a minimum, the event was held open-air and in two separate groups. The Embassy took the opportunity to interact with the Swiss private sector and collect information on the experience of our companies on how to do business in Ghana. Among the topics discussed was the important question on how to bring more Swiss companies to Ghana and what is still needed to make it an even better destination for foreign investments.

Visit of the Secretary General of AfCFTA



SG Wamkele Keabetswe with Amb. Stalder and Deputy Head, Heinz Kaufmann

Ambassador Stalder and the Deputy Head of Mission & Head of Cooperation, Heinz Kaufmann, had the pleasure to host and interact with the Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra, H.E. Wamkele Keabetswe Mene and to get first-hand information about the prospects of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

AfCFTA provides the opportunity for Africa to create the world largest free trade area, with the potential to unite 1,3 billion people, in 2,5 trillion economic bloc and usher in a new area of development. It is estimated that intra-African trade will increase as much as US\$ 35 billion per annum or 52% by 2022.

Swiss African Business Circle



Amb. Stalder and his staff, making the presentation

The Swiss African Business Circle (www.sabc.ch) in Berne reached out to Ambassador Philipp Stalder to give insights and a business briefing on Ghana. At the webinar held on 12th October 2020, the Ambassador briefed some two dozens of Swiss companies on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of doing business in Ghana.

Besides presenting data on economic standing of Ghana and the bilateral trade with Switzerland, he also answered questions from the very diverse audience, offering ways the Embassy could help potential Swiss investors. Ambassador Philipp Stalder was actively supported by our trade officer, Mr. Alex Tseh. The event was well attended by the members of SABC.

Visit to Yayra Glover facilities



The Embassy's team with Yayra Glover and representatives of Fairafric Ghana Limited

On September 23rd September, 2020, the Embassy paid a visit to the facilities of Swiss-Ghanaian entrepreneur Yayra Glover in Suhum/Eastern Region. The visit to the factory was also extended to one of his 5'000 organic cocoa farmers. Close by, the company Fairafric Ghana Limited (www.fairafric.com) was just about to start its production of organic chocolate made in Ghana with cocoa beans from Yayra Glover and using latest Swiss technology from Bühler Uzwil.

The whole visit was very interesting and also relevant since the Embassy is closely associated to the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa which fosters the collaboration between the cocoa and the chocolate industry, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, and research institutes.

Science & Culture

ETH Zurich and Ashesi University introduce new course in 2021



Scenes from the virtual launch event

On 15th October, 2020. Ambassador Philipp Stalder joined the virtual launch of the Master in Engineering Program jointly formulated by the [ETH Zurich](http://www.ethz.ch) and the [Ashesi University](http://www.ashesi.edu.gh) in Ghana. Lecturers and professors from Ashesi University and ETH will teach in tandem, while helping Ashesi build the capacity to independently run the Master's degree programme. In addition to donor funding raised through the ETH Foundation, industrial partners ABB, Barry Callebaut, Bühler, LafargeHolcim and Nestlé are supporting this pioneering project through funding and scholarships. In addition, the internships and career opportunities being offered at their African offices will equip graduates with the skills needed by emerging local labour markets. Ambassador Stalder noted that Ashesi University has found the right partner to develop such a course with, especially as Switzerland enjoys a reputation as the world's most innovative country for the 10th year, according to the United Nations Global Innovation Index.

Embassy supports women's football



Enthusiastic players of the Ridge City FC with their coaches and Amb. Stalder

The Embassy had the pleasure to support the Ridge City FC women's football team to deliver the Women in Football Initiative, a programme to educate female women footballers on their rights in the football world as well as the laws of the game to ensure their understanding of the football ecosystem. A team from the Embassy participated in the first day of events where over 50 young women footballers were present. Ambassador Stalder also shared the limelight with the football team when he was featured on CITI TV's Diplomatic License TV program. After four months of activities under the program, it was climaxed by Mini Tournament organised for various women from various football clubs in Accra.

International Day of the Girl Child



Ambassador Stalder, with Ms Nurinyne

On 8th October, 2020, Ambassador Stalder gave up his seat as Head of Mission, although temporarily, for Ms. Leticia Nurinyne, a 17 year old visually impaired but dynamic young woman from Lawra in the Upper West Region, on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child which the world commemorates every year in October. Ms. Nurinyne had an exchange with the Ambassador on the duties of an envoy and on other subjects like girls' needs & rights in Ghana and the shared view that "disability does not amount to inability". This initiative was in support of Plan International Ghana.

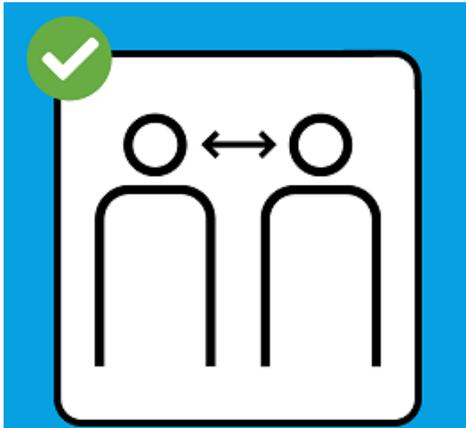
Embassy supports skills training



Mrs. Susana Stalder presenting items to participants

The Embassy, as part of its small action projects and in partnership with Plan International Ghana, supported the training of visually and hearing impaired young persons from the Mampong School for the Deaf in Akropong in the Eastern Region. The Ambassador's spouse attended the closing ceremony of the project, which aims to empower these persons with disabilities with income generating skills. The ceremony ended with a donation of startup kits like sewing machines, baking ovens and soap making tools to students, according to skills learnt.

COVID-19: Functioning of the Embassy



Throughout the pandemic, the Embassy of Switzerland remained open to the public from 08.00 am to 12.00 pm. This is largely possible due to our visitors complying with the health protection measures currently in force, in particular the efforts made towards social distancing.

In order to help us avoid queues in front of the Embassy premises, we would like you to book an appointment by email on accra@eda.admin.ch or by phone: +233 302 228 125. People who spontaneously present themselves during opening hours will only be received if conditions allow.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Issuance of Visa at the Embassy



COVID-19 has been making headlines since March 2020 and is particularly restricting travel activities worldwide. Due to the decision of the Federal Council in March 2020 not to issue Schengen and national visas (type D), the visa section suspended its services until further notice. This means, that very few Schengen files are accepted for Switzerland upon authorization by the SEM (State Secretariat for Migration), such as close family visits, medical and family emergencies, etc. Applications for long-term D-visas – student, family reunion - beyond 90 days are normally accepted and issued.

Our external visa partner, VFS Global, which is responsible for the Schengen visa applications, also had to stop its services until further notice. For so-called risk countries, there is only the possibility of

obtaining a Schengen visa, if a hardship according to regulations from SEM is met. Schengen visas and national visas (type D) are currently only processed at the counter if an appointment is confirmed in advance.

For more information and a possible reopening of the Visa section, please consult the Embassy website <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/ghana/en/home/vertretungen/botschaft.html>

You can get updated information about the entry regulations on the SEM's website

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home.html>

and questions about the quarantine regulations upon entry are answered on the website of the Federal Office of Public Health (BAG) <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov.html>

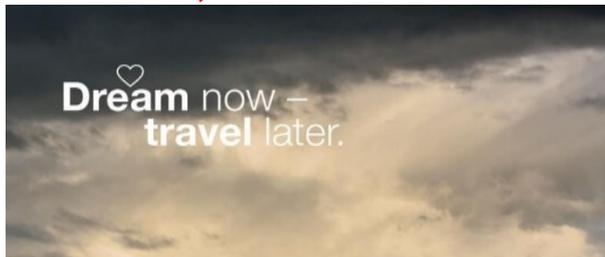
Please note that the lists refer to the country of origin and not to the nationality of the travelers. For further visa questions or to apply for an appointment, send an email to the visa section: accra.visa@eda.admin.ch

COVID-19: Information for Swiss nationals about vaccine

- Persons residing abroad must comply with the vaccination requirements of their host country. For logistical reasons, the vaccines that will be administered in Switzerland cannot be dispatched to the external network. **No** vaccine deliveries are planned by the FDFA for Swiss nationals living abroad.
- Swiss nationals insured under the Swiss compulsory health insurance (basic insurance) with a Swiss provider have the possibility to be vaccinated in Switzerland. Please, contact your health insurance provider and/or your Swiss general practitioner (médecin de famille/Hausarzt).

- Swiss nationals abroad not covered by a Swiss health insurance policy should contact their health insurance provider to find out about the vaccination policy in their host country.
- More information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the FOPH webpages: [Coronavirus: Vaccination & Protect yourself and others: Vaccination](#)

Dream Now, Travel Later



Unfortunately, it is not possible to vacation in Switzerland at the moment. But we can still be inspired and dream to realise in the future! That is why Switzerland Tourism wants to bring a little bit of Switzerland to your home. You can take a virtual tour of the most beautiful places and most exciting galleries in our country [here](#).

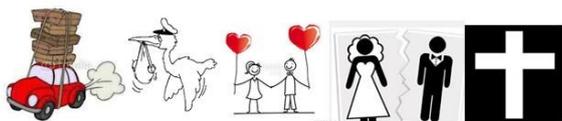
Itineris – Plan well, travel well.



The Embassy of Switzerland in Ghana strongly recommends its fellow citizens to register with [Itineris](#), which allows entering dates of your leisure or business trips. It helps the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs to locate and contact you more rapidly if a serious crisis occurs abroad and to warn you if the security

situation in a region suddenly deteriorates drastically. Please install the app on your Smartphone free of charge.

Keep your data updated



Regular contact between yourself and our Embassy can be very useful to both parties. To ensure that you can be contacted quickly, it is important that your contact information (address, phone number and email) is always up to date.

Reporting a change of address will also enable you to continuously receive the documentation on your right to vote by correspondence (if you are registered in the electoral roll), as well as the “Swiss Review” published by the Organization of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). This magazine is distributed free of charge to Swiss citizens registered abroad.

At the same time, according to the Ordinance on Civil Status (OCS), it is your obligation to report any changes in your civil status to this Embassy. Therefore, kindly inform us about any changes in your civil status: marriage, birth of a child, divorce or death of a relative, by e-mail or through a personal visit at the Embassy (with a prior appointment via email) from Monday to Friday between 8-11 AM. We will be happy to advise you on the required documents.

Do you turn 18 in the year of 2021?



On the occasion of their 18th birthday, young Swiss nationals registered in their parents' file receive a letter at the start of the year containing, among other things, a personal summary of their administrative data.

The Embassy points out that dossiers of young Swiss nationals who do not reply to the said letter with a duly completed, dated and signed form accompanied by a copy of their valid Swiss or foreign identity document by the end of this year will be deactivated and archived. This noncompliance may cause delays in ordering Swiss identity documents or updating any changes in civil status, as proper reregistration is required prior to the execution of any other consular service.

Further important information is found [here](#).

Personnel changes at the Embassy

Deputy Head of Mission & Head of Cooperation



In September, the Embassy was glad to welcome Mr. Heinz Kaufmann as the new Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation. He has been working for the Swiss Confederation since 1991, in different functions in Bern and abroad (Washington, Sofia, Warsaw, and London). In the last few months before Ghana, he worked at Headquarters, before, his last assignment in London, to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, representing eight shareholders in the Board of Directors, among them Switzerland. Mr. Kaufmann replaces Mr. Matthias Feldmann, who has returned to Berne with his family after working for five years in Accra.

Cheffe du Bureau de la Coopération Suisse au Bénin



Elisabeth Pitteloud Alansar est la Cheffe du Bureau de la [Coopération Suisse au Bénin](#), où elle a pris fonction en septembre 2020. Collaboratrice du DFAE/Direction du Développement et de la Coopération depuis 1998, elle a occupé précédemment des fonctions à Berne, au Tchad, au Burundi et au Burkina Faso. De formation ingénieur hydrogéologue, son parcours professionnel l'a amenée à travailler en bureaux d'ingénieur en Suisse, pour un projet d'hydraulique pastorale au Niger et pour le suivi de plusieurs programmes de coopération en Afrique et en Asie, notamment dans le secteur de l'eau.

Mariée, elle a trois enfants qui ont de 17 à 27 ans.

Stagiaire diplomatique



Mit Herrn Tim Segessemann darf die Botschaft im neuen Jahr erstmals die Betreuung eines Diplomatenanwärters übernehmen. Vor der 15-monatigen Ausbildung 'on the job' in Akkra trat der gelernte Jurist im Mai 2020 ins EDA ein und sammelte erste Erfahrungen mit Westafrika bei seinem Einsatz in der Abteilung Subsahara-Afrika des Eidgenössischen Departements für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten in Bern. Wir freuen uns auf die Verstärkung und wünschen unserem Jungdiplomaten viel Freude und Erfolg bei seinem Einsatz in Ghana!

In January 2021, the Embassy says goodbye to **Ms. Kimberley Mbarga** who has worked with us for over five years as an accountant. A vacancy [announcement](#) (until 18th January) for her position has been made subsequently.

Varia

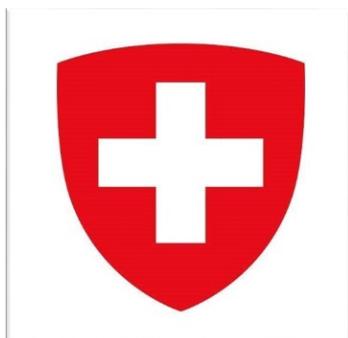
Public relations



Ambassador Stalder with show host, Seyram Apiokor

The Embassy aimed at, and attained significant public exposure for itself and Switzerland. Positive and significant limelight was first achieved with the State Visit of H.E. Nana Akuffo-Addo to Switzerland in February, for which the Embassy hosted a major press conference. Subsequently, Ambassador Stalder has had opinion pieces featured in a number of print media and granted interviews. In November 2020, the Ambassador was profiled for Citi TV's well-known [#DiplomaticLicence](#) TV program, and shared information about his childhood, family life and personal interests.

Follow, Like us on Facebook



Do you belong to the 2'000 friends who follow us on Facebook since we launched our social media channel in December 2019?

If this is not yet the case and if you want to get regular news and updates on Switzerland and the Embassy's activities, click on the icon to the right and like the Embassy's Facebook account or follow the link below: [Facebook.com/SwissEmbassyAccra](https://www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyAccra)

Mein besonderes Jahr auf der Botschaft in Ghana

Lucienne Vaudan



Lucienne Vaudan

Auf meinem neuen Arbeitsweg laufe ich jeden Tag an der ghanaischen Botschaft in Bern vorbei. Ich denke dann jeweils an meine eigene Arbeit an der Schweizer Botschaft in Ghana zurück. Zwischen Oktober 2019 und 2020 habe ich dort mein einjähriges Hochschulpraktikum absolviert.

Ich wurde sofort herzlich aufgenommen, bereits am zweiten Tag ging mein erster Bericht nach Bern und in diesem schnellen Takt ging es gleich weiter. Die Organisation und Durchführung kultureller Anlässe, das Einführen der ersten Social Media-Auftritts der Botschaft, die Mitarbeit an der Organisation des Staatsbesuchs von Präsident Akufo-Addo in der Schweiz, die pandemiebedingte Repatriierung gestrandeter Schweizer durch das EDA, die Bearbeitung der Bewerbungen für das «Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship» und die Betreuung der «Small Action Projects» - in den 12 Monaten, in denen ich in Accra gearbeitet habe war ich in alle Bereiche einer Schweizer Vertretung eingebunden, von der klassischen Diplomatie, über die

Öffentlichkeitsarbeit hin zum konsularischen Dienst und der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit des Seco.

Botschafter Philipp Stalder hat mich genauso selbstverständlich an Sitzungen mit dem ghanaischen Aussenministerium beteiligt, wie er mir Projektverantwortung anvertraute. Die Unterstützung, sowie das Vertrauen, auch von allen anderen Kolleginnen und Kollegen, sowie von Projektpartnern und Schweizern vor Ort in unsere Arbeit hat mich immer wieder berührt und stolz gemacht. Ich konnte so das diplomatische Handwerk von der Pike auf erlernen und habe einen äusserst reichen Erfahrungsschatz mitgenommen. Dazu gehört auch die Lektion, dass nicht alles so funktioniert, wie wir uns das in der Schweiz vielleicht gewohnt sind, sich daran anzupassen, wenn erforderlich aber auch, sich durchzusetzen. Vor allem aber einen Weg zwischen den verschiedenen Mentalitäten und Auffassungen zu finden. Weil Accra recht überschaubar ist, gelingt es zudem rasch, Kontakte zu jungen Kollegen anderer Vertretungen und ghanaischer Institutionen zu knüpfen und wertvolle Freundschaften zu schliessen.

Die Schweiz geniesst einen hervorragenden Ruf und verfügt über herausragende Instrumente, um sich im Ausland zu positionieren. In einem Land wie Ghana, das genauso viele Möglichkeiten wie Herausforderungen bietet kann man das Ausmass und die Erfolge unserer Arbeit hautnah miterleben. Wer sich für die Schweizer Diplomatie interessiert und wichtige Erfahrungen sammeln möchte, dem kann ich dieses Hochschulpraktikum an der Schweizer Botschaft in Accra deshalb nur ans Herz legen.

My Swiss Experience

Beatrice Baiden (bbbaiden@gmail.com)



Ms. Beatrice Baiden

I gained full scholarship from the government of Switzerland to commence my studies in Geneva, in "Leadership in International Security" and "Master of Advanced Studies in International & European Security" at the [Geneva Center for Security Policy](#) (GCSP). The course was a blend of intellectual academic mentorship and extensive hands-on experience in addressing international security challenges of the 21st century. Topics ranging from leadership fundamentals, strategic communication and foresight, security policy and concepts in international security, built my knowledge base and skills set, to find solutions to today's complex security issues. The program offered much more than knowledge acquisition. Then came COVID-19 and dealing with the new normal. I would commend the GCSP for the proactive manner of transitioning physical classroom activities, to a virtual system without a glitch to the program. This depicts what the Centre dubs, "GCSP, *Where Knowledge meets Experience*".

Aside academic work, Geneva offered me a pleasant home that overlooked the beautiful lake Geneva and the Alps. The strategic location of Geneva enabled me explore many parts of Europe - moving from Spain to France, Belgium to Italy and Amsterdam. I also visited the UN offices, history museums, the ICRC museum and the Ariana Museum among others. My internal travels took me to places such as Lausanne, Fribourg, Lavaux, Zurich, Bern and Basel. I also sampled lots of Swiss chocolates and cheese, fondue, flavored teas and even took French lessons. From my time there, I would definitely say Switzerland and Swiss higher education is an experience everyone should have.

Facts & Figures



Switzerland.

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