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**Embassy of Switzerland in Ghana**

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## **WRF21 GHANA HUB**

Dear Chief Director Cynthia Bediako, dear colleague from the German Embassy Franziska Jebens, Deputy Head of Cooperation, representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and from the GIZ, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends.

It is a great pleasure for me to say a few words on behalf of Switzerland here today at the World Resources Forum 21. A warm welcome to the participants from all over Ghana sitting in the room and from all over the world joining us online.

This year's World Resources Forum runs under the theme 'Green Deal for Sustainable Resources'. The governance, management and use of natural resources play a pivotal role in the global transition towards green, low-carbon and resilient economies. Such policies and processes are decisive for humankind's ability to cope successfully with the interlinked environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It is our conviction that only by having in place sustainable, equitable and inclusive processes for harnessing resources, can the transition deliver long-lasting environmental, economic and social benefits.

This is why we need a 'Green Deal for Sustainable Resources': a wide engagement and commitment of all stakeholders to collaborate on solutions for the sustainable extraction, use and recovery of natural resources. Today's forum aims at providing the grounds for stakeholders from policy, science, industry and civil society to come together and engage in an open and inspiring dialogue to discuss the most pressing challenges and co-create solutions for a prosperous future for all.

It is therefore a great pleasure for me to open this in-person event of the World Resources Forum here in Accra, together with the Honorable Minister of MESTI and the German Embassy. I would also like to express the best wishes for the meeting from the Swiss Ambassador Philipp Stalder who could not join us due to other obligations.

The mining industry is an important backbone for Ghana's economy. Informal recycling activities add another stream of resource extraction to the local economy. However, besides opportunities, both sectors, formal and informal, are also causing environmental and social challenges, including pollution by ways of extracting resources and the use of unsound techniques such as cable burning to recover copper. It is hence obvious that the management of resources is of high importance for Ghana and no coincidence that Ghana is hosting the first World Resources Forum on the African soil.

This allows us to discuss the environmental issues at stake in this conference and to combine our efforts to ensure current and future well-being of all.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana and Switzerland have a successful and longstanding partnership. Switzerland, a country with very few natural resources of its own, is an important importer of gold and cocoa from Ghana; in fact, Ghana is Switzerland's second most important trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The good relations between the two countries culminated last year in the official state visit of President Nana Akufo-Addo to Switzerland. Discussions focused on the deepening of economic relations and the possibility of closer cooperation on environmental issues, such as climate protection and the disposal of hazardous waste.

Subsequently, in July 2021 the Swiss President of last year and current Minister for Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication, Mrs. Simonetta Sommaruga visited Ghana to advance talks regarding climate issues and e-waste management.

A milestone underlining the good relations between Ghana and Switzerland was the signing in November 2020 of an agreement to help both countries reach their targets under the Paris Climate Agreement, only the second of its kind worldwide and the first with an African country. Specifically, the agreement will involve the rolling out of various climate projects under the "Ghana National Clean Energy Program": the development of renewable energy sources, a decrease in the use of wood and charcoal, and the promotion of solar technologies.

This agreement joins a long list of successful cooperation efforts in education, research and innovation, promotion of peace and human security as well as economic cooperation between Ghana and Switzerland.

Switzerland's support has the main goal to contribute to a resilient and self-dependent Ghana; this through promoting attractive framework conditions for sustainable growth and the creation of decent income opportunities for the population, to help Ghana to get more resilient, to diversify its economy and use its resources more sustainably.

An example of such support is the Sustainable Recycling Industries project, which builds capacities for sustainable recycling in developing countries, financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and implemented by the World Resources Forum and its Ghanaian partners.

Currently, the Sustainable Recycling Industries programme develops comprehensible Standard Operating Procedures for the Used Lead Acid Batteries industry in Ghana and beyond. The Standard Operating Procedure documents show the do's and don'ts of battery recycling in a very illustrative manner and shall be guidance for both industry and regulatory bodies.

With the support to the Sustainable Recycling Industries Programme and the World Resources Forum 2021, Switzerland wants to make a relevant contribution to a fair recovery of raw materials from waste and the sustainable extraction of natural resources.

We are happy to work towards these goals together with our partners from the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, the Environmental Protection Agency and GIZ.

Wish these remarks, I would like to wish you a day full of interesting insights and inspiring discussions; I hope the ideas and network created through this conference will be an important step for change needed towards an economy that better takes care of our environment. I thank the World Resources Forum for having organized this important event and all of you for your participation.

October 14, 2021

Heinz Kaufmann

Deputy Head of Mission Swiss Embassy Accra