



Embassy of Switzerland in Nigeria

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Editorial

Dear readers,

Have you ever asked yourself what Africans really know about Europe and Europeans about Africa? More specifically, what do Nigerians know about Switzerland and Swiss about Nigeria? You might say “everything!”, as there are no secrets anymore these days, thanks to the new means of communication. We know everything about each other’s political affairs, elections, ministerial changes, scandals, international entanglements, etc. We also know how each other’s economies are developing, what our growth rates are and which sectors merit investment. We know immediately when big accidents or catastrophes occur and learn about the misery of the affected people. Also, we heard that both Nigeria and Switzerland had qualified for the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil immediately after the decisive games ended. We have even read President Jonathan does not rule out that Nigeria might win the World Cup. Whether President Maurer thinks the same for Switzerland, we however don’t know.

In Europe, we also think we know African culture. There are exhibitions of pottery, textiles and sculptures from African civilizations and the occasional performance of a more or less professional dancing company. Nigerians, on the other hand, know our mountains and Heidi.

But what do we know about each other’s’ daily lives, our eating habits and our real joys and sorrows? What do people do after work, how do they celebrate their family reunions?

I don’t know of any African restaurant in Switzerland or of any Swiss restaurant here in Nigeria. Anyway, our compatriots would probably not fall on grass cutter paws and grilled caterpillars, the same way as the

average Nigerian would not necessarily long for fondue and raclette cheese.

Where in Europe can you watch Nollywood movies, the number one entertainment for Nigerians who have access to electricity and which could tell you much about daily life here? Where in Nigeria, on the other hand, can you see a serious play or a comedy or listen to an opera or even a symphonic concert? In Abuja, there is *one* decent movie theatre, but what you get are mainly Hollywood movies.

For next year, I and my team at the Embassy have decided to change this, as far as our means allow. At this stage, we will not reveal more, however...

After the recent changes in the management team of this Embassy (Head of Mission, Deputy Head of Mission, Head of Chancery), there is now a team in place which will work together for some time. You will find more information on that inside this issue of the Swiss Gazette.

I wish you, dear readers, a quiet and happy holiday season and a new year full of happiness, well-being and success.

Dr. Hans-Rudolf Hodel

Ambassador of Switzerland

Portrait

Asimiyu Falana: twenty years with our Embassy



20 years, 6 ambassadors and many more friends and happy memories. Retiring next year, Asimiyu Falana is looking forward to starting new projects.

Asimiyu Falana is from Ibadan. He is married and has four children. This year, he is celebrating his 20th year



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We “ will continue to pursue democratic principles that will uphold and protect citizen’s rights...”. A Human Rights message from the Inspector General of Police.

Our Embassy also organized a national youth slogan competition was organized. “Know your rights, live your rights” was the winning slogan, proposed by 18-year old Chika Ugwu, from Suleja. The slogan was printed on t-shirts worn by hundreds participating in NHRC activities across the country and Chika was invited to attend the celebrations in Abuja.



“Know your rights, live your rights”. A youth’s message for Human Rights Day by Chika Ugwu.

On the day itself, our Ambassador joined the NHRC members and a dozen other Heads of Mission on a “Human Rights Walk” through the streets of Abuja, culminating into a national dialogue on “Advancing Peace & Security through Human Rights”.

In his statement, Ambassador Hodel called upon all States' collective responsibility to ensure that a dignified life is a reality for all, and appreciated the constructive mutual engagement which Switzerland enjoys with Nigeria on human rights issues, notably

through annual rounds of high level Human Rights Consultations, as well as through financial and technical project partnerships.

Symbolically, the word was that day united in mourning the passing of Nelson Mandela, whose extraordinary life should lead each one of us to strive to uphold his vision, ideals, and enduring legacy.

Economy

Visit of Swiss business delegation



Swiss technology displayed: Gushing Wells Ltd., an Abuja-based company, shows how they purify water using equipment from their partners, Trunz.Water Systems

In early September, the Embassy was pleased to support the visit to Nigeria of a Swiss business delegation. From the 2nd of September until the 6th, the team spent two days each in Abuja and in Lagos. Ten companies from different commercial sectors were represented on the delegation, and took part in a structured programme that was organized by the Swiss-African Business Circle and Switzerland Global Enterprise (formerly OSEC).

To welcome the Swiss guests, Ambassador Hodel hosted a reception at his residence in Abuja in the evening of the 2nd of September, to which he invited other business people and several diplomats. In his address, our Ambassador praised members of the delegation for taking the step to explore the Nigerian market. He stressed his conviction that Swiss companies should be doing a lot more business in “a country of the size and economic potential of Nigeria”. Also on the night, Mr. Michael Wong (Team Leader, Finance & Private Sector Development Unit, World Bank Nigeria) gave an insightful presentation on “Nigeria’s Private Sector Competitiveness”.

In addition to holding one-on-one meetings with existing and potential local clients, the group also



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visited some companies already established in Nigeria, where they got a firsthand account of what it takes to thrive in the Nigerian market. In Lagos, our Embassy hosted a “Business meets Politics” Forum to inform the delegation on the business opportunities available in Nigeria’s commercial hub (see below).

This visit was a follow-up to one organized in January 2010, and the feedback we received was positive. Convinced of the potential to further develop commercial relations with Nigeria, our Embassy will continue to support similar initiatives. We hope that these efforts will lead to concrete projects to the mutual benefit of both countries.



Can I have your card? Networking over dinner at the “Bush House” of our Ambassador.

BmP Forum on commercial opportunities in Lagos

As part of the programme for the visiting delegation, our Embassy hosted its third Business meets Politics (BmP) Forum in 2013. Guests gathered at the Eko Hotel, Lagos in the evening of September 4, to participate in an event themed “Show-casing Lagos: Niche opportunities and challenges for doing business”. This forum was organized with the support of the Nigerian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Ben Akabueze, the Lagos State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, spoke passionately about the state government’s vision from developing the state’s economy, which is already larger than Kenya’s. For a private sector view, the Forum heard from Mrs. Thessa Brongers-Bagu, the Managing Director of Naijalink Ltd., a Lagos-based consultancy.

Around 80 guests were in attendance, including members of the delegation, other business people, the Swiss community in Lagos, and some representatives of the consular corps.

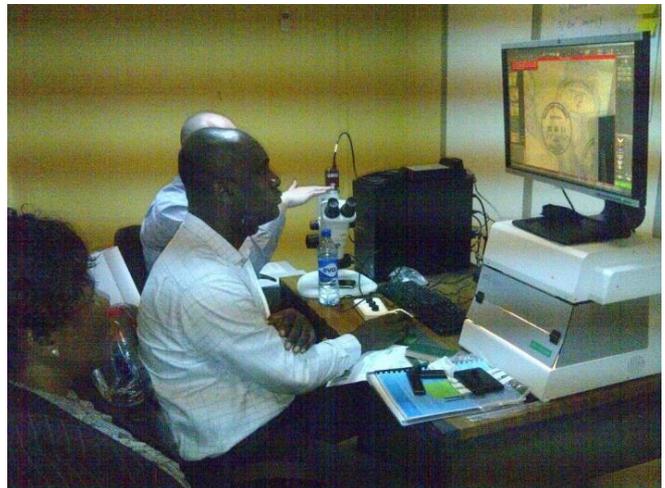
Fourth BmP Forum hosted in Abuja

On 14 November, the fourth and final Business meets Politics (BmP) Forum of the year was held at the Ambassador’s residence in Abuja. The topic was “Improving skills and employment generation through vocational and technical education”. Dr. Masa’udu Adamu Ka-zaure, the Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), spoke alongside Mr. Daniel Morales, the Chief Engineer at Nestlé Nigeria’s Agbara factory. Mr. Ralph Stamm, the Embassy’s diplomatic trainee, gave a brief insight into the Swiss vocational and technical education system.

The NBTE has the official mandate to handle all aspects of technical and vocational education that fall outside university education, and the board supervises all government owned technical education colleges in Nigeria. Officials from some of these technical colleges attended the BmP event, along with business people and Nigerian government officials. The event was a good occasion to highlight the Swiss system of vocational education and to showcase the opportunities the system offers for companies operating in Nigeria and for the Nigerian educational system.

Development and Cooperation

Establishment of a new Document Fraud Unit in Lagos



Familiarization with the new equipment at the Lagos Document Fraud Unit