Berne, le 14 avril 2023

**Swiss contribution to the call for papers of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights on issues related to the policies and methodologies adopted by national and international trade and development agencies as operational actors of development agendas.**

**Main questions** (for all stakeholders)

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| 1. How are human rights generally integrated in your policies and programmes? Please indicate if human rights are mandatory considerations, at what stage of the programme they are integrated and if any, what kind of impact assessment and monitoring is done of their implementation. | * The Federal Constitution tasks the Federal Council with promoting human rights and democracy around the world (Art. 54 para. 2 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation).
* At the political level, the [Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23](https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy/aussenpolitischestrategie.html) sets out how Switzerland works to protect human rights. Furthermore, the [Human Rights Guidelines 2021–24](https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/67117.pdf) also lay out Switzerland's efforts to promote human rights in the fields of peace and security, the economy, and sustainability. To promote human rights is integral part of Switzerland’s poverty reduction mandate. It is essential for the implementation of the Swiss Strategy on International Cooperation 2021-24 (especially sub objectives 7-10). SDC reconfirmed its human rights commitment with the **SDC guidance on human rights** in 2019 ([SDC Guidance on Human Rights in Development and Cooperation](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/DocumentsFCHR/SDC%20Guidance%20on%20Human%20Rights%20in%20Development%20and%20Cooperation%20EN.pdf)).
* Through its HR treaty ratifications, Switzerland has a **legal obligation** to ensure that all its interventions in international cooperation are accurately and explicitly in line with human rights law and international humanitarian law.­
* SDC applies a human rights-based approach to all its interventions as part of project cycle management and strategic orientation, thereby contributing directly to the realization of one or several human rights.
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| 2. Please provide examples of any programmes that contribute to the respect, protection and implementation of cultural rights, in particular:* The right to choose and maintain one’s identity, and to take part in the cultural life of one’s choice;
* The right to access, enjoy and transmit cultural heritage, including languages and ways of life;
* The right to access and transmit creative expressions and knowledge, and to access the creativity and knowledge of others;
* The right to access to the benefits of science and its applications, including scientific knowledge, technology, and opportunities to contribute to the scientific enterprise;
* The right to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which one is the author;
* The right to take part in decision making processes that have an impact on one’s cultural life, including:
	+ the right of effective participation and consultation for minorities;
	+ the right to free, prior and informed consent by indigenous peoples and by local populations.
 | SDC considers the access to and the free participation in cultural life as a human right and includes it accordingly in its international development cooperation.SDC supports in over 40 country programs interventions in the area of arts and culture with at least one percent of the budget (“culture-%”). A special focus is being laid on the participation of minorities and socially disadvantaged groups.Selected project examples: (1) Ukraine: Preservation and promotion of the cultural traditions and modern arts of the indigenous people of Crimea with a focus on Crimean Tatars; (2) Bolivia: “Rescue and revalorisation of the Amazonian Maropa language through stories and puppets”. Contribution to the rescue, reappropriation and continuity of the Amazonian Maropa language, with intergenerational bridges and an audible record of the language (App), which is at risk of extinction.(3) In Somalia, SDC supports online archiving of the primarily oral Somali culture (sounds, poems, religious and historical manuscripts etc.) in order to make it accessible to future generations. |
| 3. Please provide recent examples of programmes, policies and commitmentswhere:* + sustainable development is discussed beyond wealth accumulation model;
	+ cultural rights are mentioned and explained;
	+ cultural development is mentioned and explained;
	+ the expression of cultural diversity is respected, protected and
* implemented;
* marginalized voices and aspirations are identified and heard;
* commitment to ensure that development is self-determined and community
* led are included;
* commitment to take into account the local aspirations, values and
* priorities, rather than work on a one-size-fits-all model, are explicit;
* - commitments are made to ensure forward looking development.
 | The SDC Thematic Guidance on Culture and Development reflects on the relevance of culture as a human right, shows the interlinkages between culture and sustainable development, points out the protection of cultural rights and focuses on the importance of cultural diversity. In this guidance, SDC considers the following key issues for culture and development: 1. Intercultural dialogue and exchange lays the foundation for peaceful relations between people, communities and states. Exchanging ideas and openly debating differences is essential to mutual understanding and tolerance. The non-recognition of a minority, a language or religious traditions can stir up tensions, or even unleash conflict.
2. Cultural rights, such as accessing and participating in a cultural life of one’s own choosing, are a part of human rights and are indispensable to human dignity and individual fulfilment. Support for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue is important for peacebuilding and for sustainable development in general.
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| 4. Please provide information on any monitoring or evaluation mechanisms assessing the impacts of your development programmes or policies on cultural rights. Also please discuss any mechanism to submit complaints and seek reparation in cases of violations. | The SDC monitors results in a manner that is suited to the nature of culture programmes. In general, culture programmes are monitored using the SDC’s standard monitoring tools. In working with its partners, however, the SDC takes into account, both at the planning stage and in its assessment of results that such programmes are intended to bring about changes that are primarily qualitative in nature, and thus often difficult to measure or to predict. It is careful to observe, to listen, and to identify the intangible effects of its support, making use of information sources (testimonials, narratives) that complement its standard tools (logical framework approach). |

**Additional questions for Governments and their national development agencies**

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| 1. How are human rights generally integrated in your development policies and programmes both in your internal policies and in all programmes of development assistance and cooperation? | See [SDC Guidance on Human Rights in Development and Cooperation](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/DocumentsFCHR/SDC%20Guidance%20on%20Human%20Rights%20in%20Development%20and%20Cooperation%20EN.pdf)* SDC applies a human rights-based approach to all its interventions. This means (1) starting from the standards set out in the international human rights framework, (2) integrating human rights principles (equality, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency) in our policies and programmes, and (3) empowering rights-holders and strengthening duty-bearers across all thematic areas of interventions.
* The Human Rights based approach is applied at all levels:
* Normative level: build on HR framework and principles in definition of visions, cooperation programmes, policies
* Analytical level: include HR in analysis of context and impact of SDC's activities
* Operational level: use HRBA as guidance in projects and programmes
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| 2. What human rights guarantees have your Government and its agencies integrated in the development strategies, programmes and cooperation and assistance agreements? | Switzerland includes in its bilateral cooperation treaties as well as project agreements an artile on the basis of cooperation, which states that respect of human rights and democratic principles as set out in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights inspires the internal and external policies of Switzerland and the partner country and constitutes an essential element on an equal footing with regard to the bilateral cooperation/programme. |
| 3. Are there participatory processes influencing and informing the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the development policies and programmes conducted by your Government abroad? If so, how are they integrated? | Switzerland puts a strong emphasis on participatory approaches. With regard to international cooperation, this happens as follows:* Since 2021, the **international cooperation strategy** is subject to a public consultation procedure in Switzerland
* **Cooperation programmes** with partner countries are subject to consultations in the partner country. This process generally includes government offices, civil society in the partner country, local private sector, the local donor community and multilateral actors.
* At **project level**, several tools exist to ensure participation of the local community, for example [Participatory Assessment](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/pa-to-leave-no-one-behind)
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| 4. Have the development priorities or the assistance provided by global agencies (such as the World Bank, the IMF and any other relevant international trade and development organisations) impacted the cultural rights and diversity aspects of your country’s development policies? Please provide positive and negative examples where relevant, especially after 2018. | The “UNESCO 2005 convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions” has profoundly influenced the SDC Culture policy in the reorientation of the SDC's cultural programme in 2010. |