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**HELVETAS SYMPOSIUM**

# **DRIVING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN A CHANGING WORLD**

**Information for participants**



# DRIVING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN A CHANGING WORLD



## Program, Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Times are CET

13:30 Event check-in

### 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION – A WORLD IN CHANGE

14:00 Welcome and introduction

- Melchior Lengsfeld, Executive Director, Helvetas

14:15 Keynote speeches

- Shobhini Mukerji, Executive Director, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)'s, South Asia regional center
- Kathryn Nwajiaku-Dahou, Director of the Politics and Governance program, ODI

will share their views on development cooperation

14:45 Panel discussion on donor strategies

- Nicole Ruder, Assistant Director General, Ambassador and Head of the Multilateral Affairs and NGO Division, SDC
- Maria Melbing, Head of Unit, Western Balkans and Turkey, Sida
- Daniel Giorev, Head of Unit, Resilience, Peace, Security, European Commission – DG INTPA
- Chair: Antonia Potter Prentice, Director, Alliance2015

15:30 Break

### 2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION – THE SWISS RESPONSE

16:15 Welcome and introduction / Willkommen und Einführung

- Regula Rytz, President, Helvetas

16:20 Can Switzerland make any global impact? /  
Kann die Schweiz global etwas bewirken?

- Priya Mohanty, Policy Fellow: International cooperation & sustainable development, foraus

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# DRIVING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN A CHANGING WORLD



## Program, Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Times are CET, continued

- 16:35 The future of Swiss development cooperation /  
Die Zukunft der Schweizer Entwicklungszusammenarbeit**  
(bilingual German/French with translation to English if needed)
- **Franziska Roth**, Councillor of States, Social Democrats (Ständerätin SP)
  - **Laurent Wehrli**, National Councillor FDP, President of the Foreign Affairs Committees FAC (Nationalrat FDP, Präsident der Aussenpolitischen Kommission)
  - **Nicole Ruder**, Assistant Director General, Ambassador and Head of the Multilateral Affairs and NGO Division, SDC
  - **Moderation: Prof. Dr. Dina Pomeranz**, development economist, Assistant Professor of Applied Economics, University of Zurich (Entwicklungsökonomin)
- 17:20 Closing**
- **Melchior Lengsfeld**, Executive Director, Helvetas
- 17:30 Networking happy hour**
- 20:00 End of event**

# DRIVING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN A CHANGING WORLD



## Speakers



[Melchior Lengsfeld](#) is the Executive Director of Helvetas, an independent Swiss organization for development cooperation and humanitarian response. He has held this role since 2005. Lengsfeld is a Member of the Executive Board of Alliance2015, a strategic partnership of

eight European non-governmental organizations engaged in humanitarian work and international development. He also serves on the board of Alliance Sud, the Swiss Alliance of Development Organizations, and is a member of the Foundation Board and the Executive Committee of Swiss Solidarity. Furthermore, he served on the Swiss and the International Board of the Fairtrade movement. In past roles, Lengsfeld worked in field positions in India, Mozambique and Mali. He holds a MAS in Development and Cooperation (MAS) from ETH Zurich as well as a M.A. in sociology, development economics and political philosophy.



[Maria Melbing](#) is the Head of Unit for the Western Balkans and Türkiye at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). She has worked at Sida since the year 2000 and have had different assignments in the organisation. In 2005 she took up a position

in Tajikistan focusing on human rights and democracy followed by work within the same sector area in Türkiye. In 2011 she was appointed Head of development cooperation at the Swedish Embassy in Kosovo. After returning to Sweden she became the Head of Sida's Training Centre for capacity building of Swedish partner organisations, mainly from civil society, government agencies, academy and private sector. Since 2021 she has been focusing on the Western Balkans and Türkiye region.



[Priya Mohanty](#) has been co-head of the Development Policy Program at foraus since 2022. She recently finalised her Mercator Fellowship on International Affairs, where she focused on decolonising urban narratives within international cooperation and worked with ylabs,

UN-Habitat, Kounkuey Design Initiative and the Bartlett School of Architecture at UCL. Previously as a program manager with ETH for Development at ETH Zurich, she oversaw programs that cultivate and promote interdisciplinary research collaborations in lower-and middle-income countries. She has a particular interest in Switzerland's role in global sustainable development, postcolonialism and social justice issues around equity, inclusion and anti-racism. She holds a master's degree in Development Studies from SOAS, University of London, and a bachelor's degree in International Relations from the University of St. Gallen.



[Shobhini Mukerji](#) is the Director of the South Asia Regional Center of the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a research center dedicated to applying research to poverty reduction. She started her career in 2002 at Pratham, one of India's largest NGOs working for universal and quality primary

education. Shobhini holds a Master's degree in Social Research Methods from the London School of Economics. She is passionate about the use of evidence and data in policy making and advises multilateral organizations and donors on the effectiveness of policy spending. With Nobel laureates such as Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, she has worked on large-scale randomized trials of basic education in India and developed literacy programs that have proven effective and are currently being scaled up in several Indian states and parts of Africa to reach more than 60 million children. She is also a member of several advisory and steering committees, including Community Jameel and Jameel Arts and Health Lab, and is committed to integrating scientific knowledge into health care and social welfare.



[Kathryn Nwajaku-Dahou](#) is the Director of ODI's Politics and Governance programme, where she leads a team of political economy experts. With over 25 years of experience, she is recognized for her expertise in politics, peace-building and corporate accountability in conflict-affected areas. Kathryn holds a PhD in Politics and International

Relations from the University of Oxford and an MA in Area Studies from SOAS. She has worked with various international organizations, including the OECD.



[Dina Pomeranz](#) is an assistant professor of applied economics at the University of Zurich. The development economist has made a name for herself as a fact-based poverty researcher. She taught at Harvard Business School and was a fellow at MIT's "Poverty Action Lab". She is a member of the extra-parliamentary Commission for International Cooperation.

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## Speakers



[Antonia Potter Prentice](#) is an experienced leader in humanitarian, development, and peace-building sectors, with 28 years in the not-for-profit sector. She has worked with organizations like Oxfam GB, Save the Children, and co-founded the Athena Consortium, focusing

on gender and the women, peace, and security agenda. Educated at Oxford and LSE, she has lived and worked in Afghanistan, Belgium, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and the USA, along with numerous international missions. Currently, she directs Alliance2015, a strategic partnership of European humanitarian and development organizations aimed at enhancing impact through collaboration.



[Franziska Roth](#) born in 1966, has been a member of the Council of States for the canton of Solothurn since 2023 and a member of the Security Policy Committee (SIK), Foreign Policy Committee (APK) and Audit Committee (GPK). She was previously a National Councillor and

member of the Security Policy Committee (2019-2023) and a long-standing Cantonal Councillor (2009-2019). She is a qualified primary school teacher and special needs teacher and has worked in this field since 2008. In addition to her political activities, she is also involved in several social and educational organisations on a voluntary basis.



[Nicole Ruder](#) is the Assistant Director General, Ambassador and Head of the Multilateral Affairs and NGO Division at SDC. Earlier in her career, she worked for the UN in Beirut and New York. She was then assigned as Deputy Head of Co-operation in Pakistan before returning to New

York to support former Federal Councillor Deiss in his role as President of the General Assembly. In 2012, Nicole Ruder returned to Bern to become Chief of Staff of Swiss Humanitarian Aid and, later, of the SDC's Global Institutions Division. In 2019, she took on the role of Head of Cooperations in Kyiv. Three years later, she was appointed to her current position as Assistant Director General of the SDC and Head of the Multilateral Affairs and NGO Division. She holds a master's degree in Earth Sciences from the University of Bern and in Public Policy from Princeton.



[Regula Rytz](#) has had a long political career. She got her start in the cantonal legislature, which led her to the executive of the city of Berne and finally to the Federal Parliament as a member of the National Council and President of the Green Party of Switzerland. Now, the

committed historian is setting up her own business and expanding her activities in civil society. She is, among other things, President of the Commission for Equal Opportunities of the Canton of Bern, a member of the Board of Directors of the Biel Transport Authority and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Fondation Gobat pour la Paix. Her main areas of expertise are climate policy, gender equality and education. Sustainability, social security and fair global economic relations are also among her core concerns.



[Laurent Wehrli](#) is a Swiss politician (PLR) from the canton of Vaud. He has been a member of the National Council since 2015, where he specializes in foreign and security policy. He was previously Syndic of Montreux from 2011 to 2021 and a member of the Vaud Parliament

from 2002 to 2015, which he chaired in 2013/14. Wehrli is also involved in social institutions, including Pro Senectute and ARTISET. He is also active in the military as a lieutenant colonel and president of the Swiss Fire Brigade Association.



[Sabine Zwaenepoel](#) works since 1997 for the European Commission in Brussels. She is since November 2023 Deputy Head of Unit in DG International Partnerships in the thematic unit dealing with Peace, Resilience and Security. Prior to that she worked for 11 years as a Senior

Expert and team leader in the European Commission's Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), mainly on the accession negotiations with Western Balkan countries in the fields of rule of law, anti-corruption, law enforcement cooperation and the fight against terrorism and organised crime. She also worked for a decade in the European Commission's Directorate-General for HOME Affairs on both the internal/external security nexus as well as on the fight against organised crime. Prior to joining the European Commission, she worked in the European Parliament and in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France). She earned a Master's degree in Political Science at the Ghent University (Belgium, 1990) and a Master's degree in International Relations at the Antwerp University (Belgium, 1992). She also obtained a MA in Eastern European Studies (Belgium, 1991).

## How to find the location

**Please travel in a climate-friendly way and use public transportation.**  
**The Eventfabrik can be reached in 6 minutes by PostBus line 101 from Bern railroad station (PostBus station or Schanzenstrasse) (Güterbahnhof stop).**

### Address

**Eventfabrik Bern Services AG**  
**Fabrikstrasse 12**  
**CH-3012 Bern**

### Barrier-free access

**Completely wheelchair accessible**

### Directions by public transport

- Take the Bus line 101 from Bern, Schanzenstrasse to Bern, Güterbahnhof (3 stops/5 minutes).
- The building is located 200 meters to the north-east.
- [Timetable to Bern, Güterbahnhof](#)

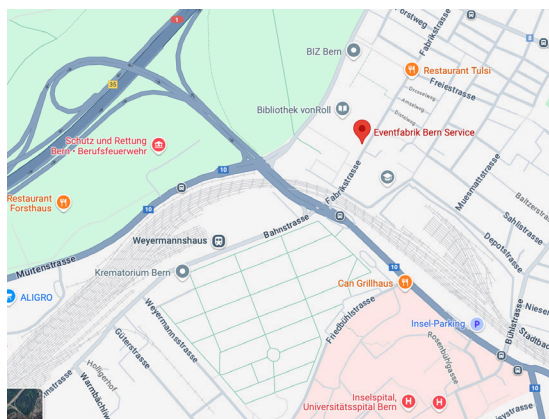
### Directions by car

The nearest parking garages are:

- Insel parking garage (exit Forsthaus, then follow the signs to “Inselspital” and “Insel-Parking”). 700m walk to the factory building.
- Parking garage Neufeld (exit Neufeld, then follow the signs “P+R”) 1.5km walk to the factory building

### Map

[Fabrikstrasse 12, 3012 Bern](#)



## Helvetas Annual Report 2023

[https://www.helvetas.org/Publications-PDFs/Switzerland/Jahresbericht-Finanzbericht-Rapport-annuel-financier/EN/IB2022\\_E\\_final\\_web\\_DS.pdf](https://www.helvetas.org/Publications-PDFs/Switzerland/Jahresbericht-Finanzbericht-Rapport-annuel-financier/EN/IB2022_E_final_web_DS.pdf)

