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A model of unity in diversity

Dear compatriots abroad:

Here in Switzerland and throughout the world, we Swiss are once again celebrating our National Day. We do so with joy and gratitude, as we reflect upon the Switzerland of the past, present and future.

We are a small country. Its narrow frontiers – and in particular its economic limitations – have led many of you to leave your homeland and settle abroad.

But small though we may be, Switzerland has its place in the

community of nations. And it has a role to play in a world with its super-powers and its opposing political blocks.

Thanks to our country's moral strength, integrity, its open attitude to the world, and its genuine independence and neutrality, Switzerland is able to be of valuable service to open doors and bridge gaps. Such actions are more necessary today than ever before. This is our mission, and we are ready to serve.

Switzerland is renowned throughout the world as a model of unity in diversity – as a country in which people of differing ethnic backgrounds, languages and cultures live together in peace and harmony. This national co-existence has become our international symbol, along with the Swiss cross and the archer's bow.

But these multiple facets of our country need to be fused into national unity – a national unity which is both the foundation and the roof of the Swiss Confederation. And the Confederation is the guarantee of this unity. It

safeguards the existence of our national community and the many groups which make up our society, in particular the humble, the weak and the minorities.

Dialogue, mutual understanding and solidarity enable us to build the bridges which lead the way from diversity to cohesion, and to national unity.

Dear compatriots, our unity can serve as an example – far beyond the frontiers of Switzerland – for peaceful co-existence between people and between nations. It can serve as a model for concerted action; action which has become more necessary than ever before if international problems are to be solved in a correct and just manner.

Dialogue, mutual understanding and rapprochement – these are the means and the ways which can lead to the accomplishment of such goals.

As a small country, whose history and very existence is firmly based upon such principles, we can contribute to the advancement and application of such

ideals elsewhere. Our example, our open-mindedness and our willingness to help are at the service of others.

Dear compatriots abroad, your attachment to your homeland also serves as example. Men and women, young and old, no matter what your language or your culture, regardless of your activity or occupation, of the continent and country where you now reside, you are serving as ambassadors of your Swiss homeland.

You are ambassadors of the solidarity and national unity rooted in the rich diversity that is Switzerland. You are also ambassadors of peaceful co-existence embracing different peoples, languages and cultures worldwide.

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Council, I convey to you my sincere and heartfelt thanks. I wish you all, dear compatriots abroad, an enjoyable but also reflective National Day.

Rest assured that in our hearts we remain united with you all, now and for ever. I wish you good luck, health and happiness.

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