

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Beijing, 8 April 2016 – Fourth Edition of the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum**

**The 4th Sino-Swiss Economic Forum (SSEF) was successfully held on 8 April 2016 at the Rosewood Hotel in Beijing with the exceptional presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann at the occasion of his State visit to China and the China International Trade Representative and Vice Minister of Commerce of P.R. China, H.E. Zhong Shan. More than 380 guests attended the event, including top leaders from Swiss and Chinese companies as well as high level representatives from both countries. The Forum explored a very hot topic: Connectivity for innovation: the Sino-Swiss dimension and examined the unique partnership between Switzerland and China, looking into how the two countries could create value for those relying on innovation like investors, entrepreneurs or large companies.**

“Both Switzerland and the People’s Republic of China have made a strategic choice to enable innovation-driven growth through connectivity. Today’s high level Sino-Swiss Economic Forum brings together outstanding minds from our two nations to examine how our two countries can deepen this partnership”, affirmed H.E. Ambassador Jean-Jacques de Dardel in his welcome message. “The 4th Sino-Swiss Economic Forum opens its doors for economic elites from both countries to meet and greet, fully accommodating the wish from both sides to enhance mutual understanding and to plan for the future”, added H.E. Ms. Zhou Xiaoyan, Director General of Chinese Ministry of Commerce, Department of European Affairs.

“I want to promote the image of Switzerland as a destination – not only for the many Chinese tourists who enjoy the beauty of our country, but also for investments in our innovative economy. The topic of the forum today follows this spirit of openness”, explained President Schneider-Ammann. Vice-Minister Zhong Shan expressed “his wishes to strengthen the cooperation in the fields of innovation, financial services and clean technologies”

The panel was composed of eminent figures from the Sino-Swiss business community, including Mr. Wang Hongzhang, Chairman of China Construction Bank, Mr. Peter Voser, Chairman of ABB, Mr. Mei Meng, Chairman of TusHoldings and Mr. Christoph Maeder, Member of the Executive Committee of Syngenta.

The SSEF takes place every two years in Beijing and is by far the largest economic summit between Switzerland and China. The 4th edition of the Forum was jointly organized by the Economic Section of the Swiss Embassy and the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, in partnership with Switzerland Global Enterprise and swissnex China.



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**SwissCham Beijing (Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce) – 中国瑞士商会**

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## Topic – Connectivity for innovation: the Sino-Swiss dimension

As the slowdown of the global economy is accentuating, identifying and promoting sustainable development engines has become a global challenge. Innovation has been deemed a key factor in overcoming the national and global growth crunch. Shaping Asia's growth pattern, China's has made a strategic choice to enable innovation-driven growth through connectivity – in infrastructural, technological and financial dimensions. On an unprecedented level the One Belt One Road initiative aims at boosting infrastructure connectivity in the vast region between China and Europe. Switzerland – who persistently ranks as leader in innovation worldwide - has been a pioneer in accompanying China onto the world stage in signing an FTA with China as first European country, establishing an RMB offshore trading hub in Zurich and by becoming one of the first non-Asian members of the China led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Upon signing the FTA Prime Minister Li Keqiang declared 'Innovation is the lifeblood of mankind'. A focus lies i.e. on the development of R&D investments in both countries as companies continue to shift their focus from searching for a low cost production base to an increasingly higher demand for brain power. In combination with a rapidly developing ecosystem, it is expected that more innovation will be coming out of China in the near future.

### **Many thanks to the sponsors and partners of the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum 2016:**

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## About Us

Founded in 1996, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in China (SwissCham China) is the only Swiss non-profit and non-governmental business & trade association officially registered in Mainland China. Our main goal is to gather all actors of the Sino-Swiss business community on a common platform to strengthen the political and economic bonds between the two countries to stimulate interaction and develop business opportunities. Our close relations with Swiss and Chinese official institutions allow us to have the ability to make your voice heard in regards to your experience in doing business in China. Our 3 offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou total more than 450 members and among them 150 are in Beijing.

## 2016: a Jubilee Year

2016 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of SwissCham China, an iconic age. In the last two decades (1996-2014), the value of Swiss exports to Mainland China has increased almost nineteen-fold while Switzerland purchased ten times more in value from China. The number of Swiss companies established in China spectacularly increased to reach about 1'000 in China in 2015.



We also would like to mention a few milestones. In 2007, Switzerland was the first Western country to recognize China as a market economy. Then, the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement on 1 July 2014 which is a true token of our eminent relations with China, not only in trade, but in various other fields. More recently, Federal Councillor Alain Berset and Social Security Minister Yin Weimin signed on 30 September 2015 a social security agreement, following a survey conducted by SwissCham China. Meanwhile, SwissCham China has developed during the last two decades some unmissable events: the Ambassador's and Consular Briefings, the Swiss Ball, the Sino-Swiss Business Awards and of course the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum.

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