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**Eidgenössisches Departement für
auswärtige Angelegenheiten**

Collaborative science diplomacy: overcoming global challenges together (en)

**Bern, 21.04.2022 - Kyoto/Japan, 21.04.2022 – Rede von Bundespräsident Ignazio Cassis,
Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departements für auswärtige Angelegenheiten EDA
anlässlich eines Besuchs an der Universität in Kyoto – Es gilt das gesprochene Wort**

President
Excellencies
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Bilateral relations between Japan and Switzerland

It is an honour to visit your renowned university today. The university is a hotbed of science and research. It produces the knowledge and insights that are indispensable for the common advancement of humanity for peace, justice and welfare. Beyond that, there is a profound need for global cooperation – in science as well as in politics. Japan is an outstanding partner for Switzerland and we share many core values. Values that are fundamental for trust between academic institutions, such as democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech and the academic freedom that is necessary for research. Both our countries have high standards in science and innovation, and both are among the world's largest investors in research and development. This bodes well for developing lasting solutions.

I am visiting Japan this week together with a delegation from government, business and

academia. Together, we want to provide an impetus to further develop the long-standing and diverse collaboration between our two countries in science and research for the benefit of business, society and politics. Several projects have come to fruition this week:

- the Swiss National Science Fund and Japan National Science Foundation have signed a memorandum of cooperation;
- a new cooperation between the Riken Supercomputer and research teams in Lugano and Zurich has been announced;
- and we have initiated preparations for a new Swiss consulate in Osaka which will promote cooperation in science and innovation.

Rapid progress is being made in many fields, like regenerative therapies in medicine, for example. Since 2013, Kyoto University has cooperated closely with Switzerland in this field, culminating in the signing of a strategic partnership with the University of Zurich in 2020. I am delighted to note that around 70 such agreements between Swiss and Japanese universities are already in place.

Universities are also centres of learning. They train young people who will have the task of mastering the challenges of our age. You are well aware of many of these challenges: pandemic, war, climate change, and others to come. I believe that to achieve this, it is extremely important to bring together the worlds of science and politics. Japan and Switzerland, with their high standards in science and innovation and commitment to an effective and efficient international order, are best equipped to set a good example. Japan has been doing this since 2004 through its Science and Technology in Society forum – the STS forum – right here in Kyoto. This annual event serves as a platform to discuss issues related to science and technology and their implications for society.

2. Science diplomacy in the service of the global community

The coming together of science and international politics is commonly described as science diplomacy. We need to enable the international community to anticipate developments in science and technology in order to harness their benefits for the common good and keep an eye on any problematic aspects. We all ask ourselves questions about the future. But we know that we cannot predict the future. All the more reason to shape it and make it possible. But how? Today, we can observe the interaction between two parallel developments: the convergence of sciences on the one hand, and the accelerating pace of technological development on the other.

Neurosciences, biosciences, nanosciences and information sciences are converging, opening up an as yet unimagined field of scientific activity and discovery. A rapid succession of technological revolutions, the consequences of which can hardly be predicted. You know

the keywords: quantum revolution, artificial intelligence, human augmentation, geoengineering. Do we have any idea of what these developments will bring? Certainly not the full picture! All we know is that something is happening, driven by human genius that could change humanity. And it will also change the way humanity organises itself, how it comes together to cultivate the global commons.

In the end, it will come down to global governance. We all depend on an international system that works, that is capable of identifying challenges and opportunities, and that can harness them for the benefit of all. The international community must be able to anticipate so that scientific trends and developments can be debated in the public arena and the best possible decisions are taken on behalf of all human beings around the world. To this end, the Swiss government has established the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator Foundation – or GESDA for short – with the mandate to develop and implement an appropriate methodology. This can be summarised in three terms:

1. Anticipation
2. Acceleration
3. Translation

3. GESDA: anticipation

The foundation compiles the GESDA Science Breakthrough Radar, which provides an overview of scientific trends and developments that can be expected over the next five, ten and twenty-five years. It also includes a synthesis of the global public debate on these developments. The radar is innovative in two respects: for the first time, it offers the international community a complete overview of scientific and technological future analysis, instead of merely isolated, specialised papers. It also marks a paradigm shift for diplomacy: instead of starting out with specific, existing challenges and then trying to get to grips with them as well as possible, diplomatic actors are empowered to anticipate developments and to adapt to them in good time.

While the first report in 2021 was produced with contributions from 543 of the world's leading scientists, including from Japan, the 2022 Radar report will involve 2,000 scientists from around the world. It would be great to have even more researchers from Japan involved.

4. GESDA: acceleration

The scientific findings regarding these anticipated developments must then be discussed at a political level. The aim here is to speed up informed international action. This discussion must be broad-based and include all relevant stakeholders and interest groups – the scientific community, diplomatic and political actors, business and philanthropy, civil society organisations and citizens around the world. This will involve discussions across a variety of fields, addressing issues such as advanced artificial

intelligence, the quantum revolution, neuro-rights, decarbonisation, digital empowerment, and the norms and principles of scientific activity.

This October, the second GESDA Summit will present the first results of these discussions. The foundation acts as an honest broker. It provides the scientific input, organises the discussions and ensures that exchanges involve all stakeholders that will be affected by the anticipated developments, for good or ill. In this way, insights and ideas can mature and solutions can be developed that can be seized upon by the international community.

5. GESDA: translation

It is not up to GESDA to implement these solutions. The foundation has no intention of acting as a new international organisation. It is no substitute for existing institutions and states as legitimate actors of international governance. Rather, it is up to those bodies to take up the possible solutions that emerge from the anticipation and acceleration process I have described, and to implement them through conventional processes.

6. Daring to innovate

Ladies and Gentlemen

What Switzerland is seeking to do here with GESDA is something new. It is therefore also a difficult undertaking. Combining anticipation – which looks far ahead – with action – which must take effect immediately – is a challenge in itself. In addition, the method we want to use to build this bridge is new and untested for all involved. But I have yet to see a better proposal as to how international governance can use smart science diplomacy to equip itself for the challenges of the coming era. I would like to invite you, students of Kyoto University, to join us on the path of anticipatory science diplomacy and contribute your expertise and insights. Because the world is depending on all of you: on your commitment, your ingenuity and your courage to break new ground, to take the plunge and let new solutions emerge from what may initially seem like crazy ideas.

I would like to close with a quote from Hermann Hesse. The Nobel laureate for literature, who spent many years in my village of Montagnola in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, once said: "To achieve the possible, we must attempt the impossible – again and again". I look forward to your generation's contribution to a sustainable, peaceful world. Thank you.

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