Minutes of the General Assembly

Berne, 11th March 2017 at GenerationenHaus, Bahnhofplatz 2, 3001 Berne, Spittelsaal and Bubenbergsaal

Participants
Allgöwer, Erik & Carole
Baumann, Werner
Behrschmidt, Sabrina
Bürgi, Hanspeter
Caminada, Leo
Cavin, Marianne
Coley-Saner, Elisabeth
D’Alcantara, Gonzales
Dannecker, Rudolf
Ditzler, Christoph
Dössegger, Alain
Frei, Christof & Marie-Noëlle
Frei, Marianne
Frey, Richard & Rosmarie
Gähwiler, Brigitte
Gerber, Pascal
Grollmann, Selin
Grossenbacher, Fabienne
Hanimann, Regula
Hansel, Silvia
Holzer, Benedikt
Huber, Erik
Huber-Hotz, Annemarie
Kramer, Monika
Külling, E. Werner
Loppacher, Brigitte
Maag, Hanspeter
Menzi, Martin
Moser, Samuel
Müller, René & Lisette
Nagel, Jörg
Perrenoud, Michel
Petkova, Svetlana
Pletscher, Dagmar
Rast, Lukas
Reinhardt, Ernst
Roder, Theres
Schwitter, Daniel & Ruth
Sieber Bürgi, Monique
Stern, Otto
Stierlin, Hansruedi
Truo, Brigitte
Wild, Markus
Zingg, Claudio

Excused
Biland, Thomas & Susanne
Bollmann, Felix
Cantieni, Johann & Jeannette
Engi, Sigrid & Christian
Faes, Ralph Remo
Fischer, Günther
Furrer, Christina
Gähwiler, Franz
Gilg, Rainer & Nadine
Güller, Peter & Ursula
Hartmann, Olivia & Christian
Henseler Stierlin, Iris
Hoch, Lisina
Hoch, Steven
Keller, Hans-Jakob
Koestler, Christa
Liebhref, Sabine
Lombard, Hubert
Lüthi, Simon
Maurer, Tashi
Menk, Helene
Moser, Peter
Müller, Lukas
Mueller, Jürg
Oberholzer, Erich
Rieder, Peter
Rohner, Tina
Rohrbach, Christian
Rothacher, Daniel
Schätti, Thomas
Suter, Stephan
Uhlenhoff, Roswitha
Vankrunkelsven, Jan
Wirth, Urs

Special Guests
Embassy of Bhutan
H.E. Ambassador Kinga Singye

Bhutanese Guests
Dasho Neten Zangmo
Jigme Drupka
Tshering Leki
Tshering Choden
Yarab Singye
Sangye Maurer
Phuntsho Namgay
Tenzin Norbu
Dhondup Roder
Jigme Thinley, Jimmy Tshering
Speakers
Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji,
President Bhutan – Switzerland Society BSS
OL Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Member of
Bhutan – Switzerland Society BSS

Swiss Guests
Losinger Tenzin
Coley Tom
Pletscher, Marianne
Mills Sue

Agenda:

1. Opening
2. Welcome address by Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji
3. Nomination of Vote Counters and Minutes Taker
4. Minutes of General Assembly 2016
5. Annual Report by the President (verbal/approbation)
6. Presentation of Accounts 2016 and Audit Report
7. Election of a new Board member
8. Programme and Activities 2017
9. Budget 2017
10. Membership Fees
11. Additional motions by members*
12. Date and Place of Next General Assembly
13. Miscellaneous
14. Closing OL Dr. Pema Gyamtsho

Decision 1:
The agenda is approved. No additional motions were submitted to the Board, point 11 of the agenda can be skipped.

1. Opening

Marianne Frei, President of SSB, welcomes the members and guests of the Society Switzerland Bhutan. She welcomes especially all the Bhutanese guests. Some of the Bhutanese guests are living, working or studying in Switzerland and found the way to Berne to attend our General Assembly and some of them took the long way from Bhutan to Berne. It is an honour for our General Assembly that we can also welcome Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji, the President of our sister organisation in Bhutan, Dasho Neten Zangmo and OL Dr. Pema Gyamtsho from Bhutan. Marianne Frei also welcomes the famous Bhutanese musician Mr. Drukpa Jigme.

The SSB President informs that SSB has a total of 259 members. The General Assembly of today is attended by 49 members.
2. Welcome address by Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji, President Bhutan-Switzerland Society BSS

Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji is very pleased to attend today’s General Assembly of the Society Switzerland-Bhutan. For him it is always a pleasure to visit Switzerland. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji mentions the long lasting and deep friendship between Bhutanese and Swiss people. He appreciates so many years of collaborating in a very prospering manner. During these years one could learn a lot about Switzerland and the relations between the two countries. He expresses his hope to keep very close personal contact and exchanges, because this brings our relations forward. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji also mentions projects, which were implemented together. For example the School Programme in remote areas in Zhemgang. The impact which was created by these School Projects was very positive not only on the children but also on the parents and the teachers. Another example was a prompt help for the people who suffered of the fire disaster in Chamkhar. After this very sad incident Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamthso helped to arrange the support and SSB collected 50’000 SFR SSB members and friends of Bhutan. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji thanks for these very kind and generous support of SSB.

Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji expresses his hope for a good cooperation also in future. Since SDC moved out by the end of 2016, a new phase of cooperation will start. The two societies will play a major role to bring this close cooperation still forward. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji thanks all the members of SSB who have worked in Bhutan and he appreciates very much that they still keep Bhutan and the Bhutanese people in their heart.

3. Nomination of the Vote Counter and Minutes Taker

- Proposed vote counters: Lukas Rast and Otto Stern, accepted
- Proposed minutes taker: Ruth Schwitter-Allenspach, accepted

*Decision 2:*
The proposed vote counters and minutes taker are appointed by acclamation.


See also http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/meetings.htm

*Decision 3:*
The minutes of the General Assembly 2016 are approved unanimously. Marianne Frei thanks Ruth Schwitter-Allenspach for her excellent work.

5. Annual Report by the President

Activities 2016 in Bhutan:

School Programme
To start the school support in Yangbari was possible through a private donation. Marianne Frei shows several pictures of the school.
BSB together with the Ministry of Education conducted an impact study in two schools (Kagtong and Tradjong. This project had a positive impact not only on the children, but also on their parents and teachers. The study is published on the SSB website.

General Meeting of BSS
The seventh general meeting of BSS took place on 1th of August 2016 in Thimphu. The president and several members of the Board were re-elected. Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji was re-elected as the BSS President for the 3rd time. As new board members were elected Mr. Draygel T. Dorjee (Secretary), Mrs Pema Baumgartner, Mrs Kunzang Wangmo, and Mr. Nado Dukpa.

Events and Activities 2016 in Switzerland:

SSB Events

• General Assembly at the ETH in Zürich in March with presentations on “Mountains and Earthquakes – fieldwork and results of two geophysics projects in Bhutan” (Prof Dr. György Hétenyl) and “Landslide Hazards in the High Himalaya of Bhutan: A new ETH research project” (Prof Dr. Simon Löw).

• Annual excursion on May 28th to the Elephant-House at the Zurich Zoo with presentations by Carlo Galmarini and Andreas Galmarini on “Construction of the Elephant House” & “Reconstruction of the Wangdue Dzong”.

• Invitation to Embassy in Geneva. H.E. Ambassador Kinga Singye and his wife Mrs Kesang Singye invited the SSB Board to Geneva in June. The warm welcome and the interesting discussions were very fruitful for the SSB Board members.

• Bhutan at the Film-Festival in Locarno in August (3-13). Strong representation of Bhutanese filmmakers. Several Bhutanese films were shown. SSB invited to a reception after the world premiere of “Hema Hema – Sing me a song while a wait”

• On September 23rd, Lars Mülli (Director GVZ) gave a lecture in German on “Improving the fire safety in Bhutan” at Songtsen House.

• 8th Meeting of European Bhutan Friendship Association in Greece in October 2016 with a delegation of the SSB Board.

• January 27 – 29, 2017: The Bhutan Film Days Zurich were a real success. The film sessions were completely booked out and the reactions were very positive. Opening with Corinne Mauch, Mayor of the city of Zurich. It was a great opportunity to show the work and art of very talented and professional Bhutanese directors, producers and actors. Four Bhutanese filmmakers were invited to the event. The delicious culinary support from Aum Kesang Singye and her team was a highlight.

• In 2016, SSB could welcome many Bhutanese visitors in Switzerland: Hon’ble Chief Justice of Bhutan Mr. Tshering Wangchuk with his delegation, study visit of officers from judiciary, Dr. Dhruphob Sonam and an assistant officer from Thimphu hospital, a big group of fire fighters as well as many friends: Namgyel Tshering, Tenzin Norbu, Jigme Thinley (ETH), Dorjee Tso, Kuendrak Tobgyel, Jigme Thinley (WALO).

SSB Activities

• Number of SSB members by March 1, 2017: 259

• 2 Newsletters in June and December 2016, editor is Dr. Otto Stern
• 5 Board Meetings
• SSB Website: Relaunch February 2016:
  Marianne Frei thanks Hanspeter Bürgi and Lukas Rast for their work to make the website
  more user friendly
• SSB Facebook Site: 429 members

**Decision 4:**
The General Assembly unanimously approves the President’s annual report by voting and
acclamation.

### 6. Presentation of Accounts 2016 / Audit Report

The Treasurer, Rosmarie Frey, presents the Annual Accounts for 2016.

**Balance**

The society has accumulated a profit of 14’161 SFR instead of the estimated loss of 5’700 SFR in the
budget. Of course it is not the aim of the Society to accumulate a large fortune. The following
remarks will clarify the situation.

The deferred charges to income of 7’500 SFR are tied donations for the film days. This amount was
received already in December 2016 and will be spent for the Filmdays in 2017 only.

Concerning the Bank of Bhutan account, the balance is nearly the same as last year. Balance 2015:
152 000 Nu., balance 2016: 146 000 Nu.

**Costs**

We had much less costs during 2016. The film days were already planned, but there were not many
bills to be paid for in 2016 as the film days took place only in January 2017. So these costs will

Less money was spent for publicity, because several projects were not ready for implementation.

The School Children Programme has been stopped for an evaluation before going on. Only Yangbari
Community Primary School was supported for the first time through a private donation. There were
no other projects proposed from our sister organisation which were ready to start.

The total costs of 13’037 SFR were less than half of the costs in budget2016.

**Income**

The income was even higher than stipulated in the budget. Rosmarie Frey explains that the SSB
received more member fees, additional donations and more books were sold. The treasurer thanks
all the members for their continuous support.

The result is a benefit of 14’161 SFR for 2016 resulting in and financial assets of 68’014 SFR.
Audit

- Christoph Ditzler informs that the auditors have checked and verified the accounts of 2016 and can state that all transactions and bookings have been done in a correct way. The auditors expressed their appreciation and thanks to Rosmarie Frey for this perfect job. Christoph Ditzler and Christian Rohrbach hope that in future the society will have the possibilities to finance more projects.
- For details refer to the report by Christian Rohrbach and Christoph Ditzler on the website.

Decision 5:
The General Assembly unanimously approves the annual accounts and financial statements for the year 2016. The Executive Board is fully discharged.

7. Election of a new Board Member
a) Resigning Board member:
Werner Külling has submitted his resignation as a SSB Board Member. Marianne Frei thanks Werner Külling for his excellent work on the SSB Board during the last seven years. He was an active Board member: his network was very helpful for the Society, he contributed a lot of texts to the newsletters, he wrote minutes and official letters whenever needed and he was always ready to take Bhutanese visitors around. All the board members appreciated his personality and friendship during the last years. Marianne Frei also wishes Werner Külling all the best for his future.

b) Election as a new Board member:
- Franz Gähwiler (Jona) is nominated as a new Board Member. He is the Programme Coordinator Himalaya at HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and will resign from HELVETAS in summer. From 1992 – 96 he spent four years of his professional and family life in Bhutan. He is at the moment in Bhutan and therefore can not attend the GA.

Decision 6:
The General Assembly elects Franz Gähwiler with acclamation as the new Board member.

8. Programme and activities 2017

In Bhutan
School Children’s Programme continued in 6 schools in remote areas:

- Tradijong Primary School, Zhemgang (since 2011)
- Barpong Primary School, Zhemgang (since 2012)
- Kagtong Primary School, Zhemgang (since 2013)
- Yaragia Primary School, Mongar (since 2013)
- Tashibi Primary School, Mongar (since 2013)
- Yangbari Primary School, Mongar (since 2016)
Impact Evaluation School Children’s Programme to be carried out by BSS with the officials of Ministry of Education and Dzongkhag Administration:

- 3 Schools: Barpong, Tashibi and Yaragla
- Pilot Bakery Project Bjoka Primary School (Zhemgang)

Swiss Film in Bhutan: A woman’s place “Das Tal der Frauen” (1994) was shown at the Bhutan Film Days in January 2017 in Zurich and was very well received by the Bhutanese. We hope that the film can be screened in Bhutan.

Electric fencing Programme EFP: Our aim is to choose farming communities in Zhemgang as for the School Children Programme

Events in Switzerland

- 6. September 2017, Bern: „Die inneren und äusseren Bedingungen des Glücks: was wir von Bhutan lernen können“. Presentation and Discussion on GNH in German by Dr. Tho Ha Vinh, Programme Director GNH Centre:
- Two Newsletter (new concept) in June and November with the following topics: “The Emergence of a Film Industry in Bhutan (Dieter Zürcher) and “Architecture in the Bhutanese Himalayas and in the Swiss Alps (Hanspeter Bürgi)
- Pre announcement: Excursion Schlattwald-Eiche 2018 with Erich Oberholzer
  Visit a 250 year old „mysterious“ tree. There will be presentations and discussions of forest related topics (Bhutan – Switzerland) at Naturzentrum Thurauen with Erich Oberholzer and experts involved in projects in forestry in Bhutan.
- Pre announcement: Meeting of European Bhutan Friendship Associations, June 21 - 23, 2018 in Geneva (CH) and Chamonix (FR) will be organized by Amis du Bhoutan and by SSB. In Geneva, Annemarie Huber-Hotz will inform about the Red Cross in general and the Red Cross in Bhutan. Afterwards 2 days in Chamonix with the topic “Tourism in Mountainous Areas”.

9. Budget 2017

Rosmarie Frey presents the budget 2017 explaining some key figures:

Costs

In 2017 a loss of 14'000 SFR is anticipated: that is just the benefit of this year.
As decided but not spent last year, SSB will contribute 3000 SFR for the film days. How much the deficit-guarantee (which was also decreed at the GA 2016) will be required is not certain yet. We hope for another promised deficit-guarantee. The deficit-guarantee is still listed in the budget.

Concerning Publicity it is planned to relaunch the flyer, a cooperate design in documents and the newsletters with new concept. 2000 SFR are proposed for the budget.

School Programme will continue this year after very promising evaluations: Support to 6 schools (including Yangbari Community Primary School) with 12000 SFR.

We propose to provide 5'000 SFR to start new projects in 2017 (e.g. Electric Fencing Programme EFP).

**Income**

Expected member fees and donations: ca. SFR 21’000.

The anticipated loss of 14’000 SFR will be covered by our asset of 68’000 SFR.

*Decision 7: The General Assembly approves the proposed budget and thanks Rosmarie Frey with acclamation for her excellent work.*

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**10. Membership Fees**

- Proposal: Reduction membership fees for students to CHF 50.-
- Confirmation of current membership fees

*Decision 8: The General Assembly approves the proposed Membership Fees.*

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**11. Additional motions by members**

There are no additional motions by the members.

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**12. General Assembly 2018**

The Board suggests conducting the next General Assembly on Saturday, March 17, 2018. The venue is not yet decided. Afternoon programme: Screening of the film “Chuut Wai” by Phuntsok Rabten (2013, 90’). Most probably the main actor will be invited to the event.

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**13. Miscellaneous**

The following books are available outside: Tiger and Monk – A Himalayan Fiction by Erik Allgöwer, children’s books by Kunzang Choden and Marie Noelle Frei.
14. Closing address by Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamthso

OL Dr. Pema Gyamtsho appreciates the relations of the two societies SSB/BBS as a bridge between Switzerland and Bhutan. He emphasises the close contact between Bhutanese and Swiss people during so many years like Prof Dr. Menzi, Werner Külling, Ernst Reinhart, medical doctors, veterinarians and many others. He thanks all the people who have contributed to Bhutan and especially to the rural areas of Bhutan. Dr. Pema Gyamtsho is very happy that so many Swiss and Bhutanese are part of the friendship between the two countries. He expresses his hopes and confidence that this reciprocity – for example with exchange of youth programme – will take place in the future.

For example an internship with an organisation could be a youth exchange programme. He mentions partnerships in business, forestry, medicinal institutions as other possibilities of collaboration. Furthermore he is thinking of the vocational fields for young Bhutanese people and sabbaticals for Swiss senior experts.

Dr. Pema Gyamtsho is happy to see young Bhutanese at the General Assembly. This also gives hope in fostering the friendship in future. He thanks the President Marianne Frei for her sound engagement and her commitment for the friendship between the countries.

Marianne Frei closes the General Assembly thanking OL Dr. Pema Gyamtsho for his closing remarks, Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji for his welcome address and the musician Mr. Jigme Drukpa for his very touching music performance with traditional Bhutanese music instruments.

Marianne Frei closes the assembly around 12.20.

Afternoon Programme

- 13.30 – ca. 17.00 at Bubenbergsaal:
  “Deepening Democracy in Bhutan – The Contribution of SDC”
  Public Event Commemorating the end of SDCs involvement in Bhutan
- Address by the Chief Guest H.E. Ambassador Kinga Singye, Embassy of Bhutan in Geneva

Keeper of the minutes: Schwitter-Allenspach Ruth

March 31st, 2017