Press release

Astana, 18 July 2017

Perception Change Project highlights Sustainable Development at the Swiss Pavilion at Expo 2017 Astana

From 13 July to 27 July, the Perception Change Project raises awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals at the Swiss Pavilion Expo 2017 Astana through several activities. They include a temporary installation with a wheel of fortune introducing sustainable development, a Human Library with innovators and a talk on Education and Innovation with experts and changemakers. The installation at the swissnex Lab of the Swiss Pavilion, curated by the Perception Change Project, a creative communications initiative of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, showcases International Geneva among the backdrops of scenes from the storybook “Fairy Tales for a Fairer World”

The two-fold event on Education & Innovation on July 18, 2017 will be an opportunity to hear unique stories of speakers invited by the Perception Change Project in cooperation with partner organisations including the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Kazakhstan Institute of Standardization and Certification; the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Kazakhstan and its Liaison Office in Geneva; the University of Geneva (UNIGE); the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Youth and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

As part of the Human Library at 4 p.m., “Human Books” tell their stories with the objective to create empathy between the speakers and participants by touching on topics such as climate change, mainstreaming sustainability into education, education in emergencies and refugee camps.

One of the speakers at the Human Library is a 15-year old student from Kazakhstan Isaac Mustopulo. At the age of 8 months, Isaac was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and his parents were told their son would have both mental and physical disabilities. This year, Isaac has finished 8th grade at a local school in Taraz where he excels academically and is actively involved in extracurricular activities. Isaac has become an advocate for inclusion and is working on a project that would introduce tutors to public schools for students with disabilities.
At the Education & Innovation Talk at 6 p.m., presenters will showcase for example innovations and standards for Smart Cities, including Astana, or the portal “OpenShkola” to educate Russian-speaking audience about sustainability issues through non-formal online education.

The Swiss pavilion, organised by Presence Switzerland, showcases Switzerland as an innovative country with an interactive and surprising exhibition on the issues of energy efficiency, renewable energies and global water management.

Presence Switzerland, which promotes the image of Switzerland by implementing the Federal Council’s strategy of Switzerland’s communication abroad, invited the Perception Change Project and its partners to present International Geneva at the swissnex lab of the Swiss pavilion.

“The point is that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not the UN’s or only governments’ business, we all have a role to play in achieving them. The topics related to the SDGs and the work of organisations in Geneva and elsewhere can be illustrated in a playful manner and through story-telling. We are delighted to be a part of Expo 2017 Astana, after we showcased the International Geneva's impact on food at the Swiss Pavilion at the Expo Milano 2015 through International Geneva kitchen stand and Food Talks event,” said the Head of Project, Aziyadé Poltier-Mutal.

As part of the Swiss Pavilion, the swissnex Lab is dedicated to thematic immersion and networking, in order to facilitate bilateral cooperation and academic exchange between Switzerland and Kazakhstan. It thematically complements the Swiss pavilion with thematic events and workshops both for stakeholders and the broad public. Swissnex is the Swiss global network connecting the dots in education, research and innovation. Its mission is to support the outreach and active engagement of its partners in the international exchange of knowledge, ideas and talent. It is an initiative of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and is part of the Confederation’s network abroad managed by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Expo dedicated to the “Future of Energy” is taking place from 10 June to 10 September 2017 in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

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Photos:  [www.dropbox.com/sh/liixva10z5qjxi6/AACwlkWZQpazX7kd4jzRo8xYa?dl=0](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/liixva10z5qjxi6/AACwlkWZQpazX7kd4jzRo8xYa?dl=0)

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