

PREFACE

The first volume of the Swiss Human Rights Book series on Realizing Property Rights appeared in 2006. In view of the many positive responses and the interest shown by readers we decided to continue the series.

The second volume deals with the rights of the child, one of the priorities of Swiss foreign policy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 was complemented in 1959 by a Declaration on the Rights of the Child. In its efforts to make the general declaration binding, the UN faced a double challenge. On the one hand it needed to protect children and on the other, children had to be recognised as persons in their own right. Even if children are minors, they are right holders. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was finally adopted by a large majority in 1989 and is now worldwide the most ratified UN document. Its implementation is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which obliges all State parties to submit regular reports on how the rights are being implemented.

In 1997, the Convention was ratified by Switzerland. By endorsing the convention, Swit-

zerland committed itself ten years ago to respect the rights of children, to inform children of their rights and regularly to report on the implementation of these rights to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The first Swiss state report to the Committee was discussed in 2002. The next report is due at the end of 2008.

Violence against children often remains hidden, mainly because children are vulnerable, lack power and lack a voice. Switzerland is actively committed to the protection of children's rights. We are convinced that the protection of children from corporal punishment and from death penalty is an objective that should remain valid regardless of cultural and religious differences. Prostitution, pornography and child labour as well as the protection of children in armed conflicts need to be combated by the combined efforts of governments, civil society and the private sector.

Furthermore, Switzerland advocates the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and intends to propose measures to en-

sure greater international respect for the prohibition of the involvement of children in armed conflicts. At the multilateral level, it actively supports the work of the UN to protect children against violence, sexual exploitation and abuse within the family.

The present publication contains articles on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child worldwide. It examines the subject from legal, philosophical and economic perspectives. We hope that the wide variety of articles will contribute to a discussion of the rights of the child in Switzerland and abroad.

I am pleased that the Political Philosophy Department of Zurich University headed by Professor Georg Kohler together with editors Carol Bellamy, Jean Zermatten, Thomas and Peter G. Kirchschräger and with rüffer&rüb Publishers are presenting the second volume of the series entitled Swiss Human Rights Book.

Together with the publication of the Swiss Human Rights Book we maintain a discussion forum in which the above articles are available to interested readers under: www.swisshuman-rightsbook.com.

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Thomas Greninger, Head of the Political Affairs Division IV, Human Security (Peace, Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy) since August 2004, Ambassador Thomas Greninger joined the diplomatic service of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in 1990 after completing his studies in history, economics and political science at the University of Zurich (PhD). He started his diplomatic career as an attaché at the Swiss Embassy in Tel Aviv. In 1992 he became diplomatic adviser for development policy at the Swiss Agency for Development and



Cooperation (SDC). He was a co-author of the Federal Council's Guidelines North-South and deputy-head of the division in charge of their implementation in the SDC. In 1996, he was promoted to head of the Development Policy and Research Division of the SDC and Secretary of the Federal Council's Consultative Commission for International Cooperation. From 1999 to 2001, he was chargé d'affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Maputo and country-director of Swiss Development Cooperation in Mozambique. On his return to headquarters, he became deputy-head of the Political Affairs Division IV, in charge of the Peace Policy and Human Security Section.