

# Preface

The purpose of the Swiss Human Rights Book series is to highlight a specific human rights topic and to consider it from a variety of different perspectives. Launched in 2006, the first volume of the series was entitled *Realizing Property Rights*; it was followed by the second volume in 2007 dedicated to the rights of the child.

The right to health is both a practical and a political issue. For millions of people in the world, the full enjoyment of the right to health is still elusive, especially for those living in poverty. The cost of health care remains unaffordable for many, even in wealthy countries, despite the adoption of health policies and programmes. Realizing the right to health is an opportunity and a challenge, and the bulk of the work to achieve this right for all is still to be done.

Health is a fundamental human right, indispensable to the enjoyment of other human rights. It is to be understood as the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health as it is defined in the relevant international conventions. It is not confined to the right to health care but embraces a wide range of socio-economic factors that create the conditions in which people can lead healthy lives, and it extends to the underlying determinants of health, including food and nutrition, housing, access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, safe and healthy working conditions, and a healthy environment.

In spite of the indivisible nature of all human rights, economic, social and cultural rights have not always received adequate treatment at the international level. The development of those rights is a priority of Swiss foreign policy, and this publication contributes to furthering the renewed interest in economic, social and cultural rights. It is a contribution of an interministerial approach of the Swiss government towards the promotion of a global health policy.

I am very pleased that the Political Philosophy Department of Zurich University, headed by Professor Georg Kohler, together with the editors Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Andrew Clapham, Director of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, together with Rüffer & Rub Publishers are presenting the third volume of the Swiss Human Rights Book. I thank the experts who made it possible. As authors, they explore and map the right to health from various thematic and geographic perspectives, offering a comprehensive picture of this challenging issue. Their contributions are available to interested readers at: [www.swisshumanrightsbook.com](http://www.swisshumanrightsbook.com).

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Human Rights, Humanitarian Policy) since August 2004. Ambassador Thomas Greminger 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

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