

Three Questions for Olivier Bürki, Head of the Global Institutions Division, SDC**«The goal is that JPOs remain within the UN system after their assignment»**

Olivier Bürki was chosen in October 2011 to head the Global Institutions Division at SDC. The Global Institutions Division is responsible for SDC's relations with the United Nations System and the World Bank Group. For the last four years Olivier Bürki was Senior Advisor to the Executive Director for nine different countries at the World Bank Group. Previously, he worked for SDC in Berne and abroad. He was Country Director in the Russian Federation, Senior Economist in the Governance Division, Deputy Country Director in Tanzania and Economist for the East Africa Division. Prior to that, Olivier Bürki held management positions with Credit Suisse in Geneva and was a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Uganda. He is an economist with a Masters equivalence in business administration from the University of Lausanne (HEC), Switzerland.

Why has SDC decided to fund the new JPO positions within UN organisations?

Each year Switzerland devotes considerable financial resources to those UN development and humanitarian organisations that are considered as priority institutions by the Swiss Federal Council.

Compared to that of similar donors, the presence of Swiss nationals in these organisations is clearly insufficient. Switzerland is a significant contributor to UNDP, for instance, ranking 7th on the list of core donor countries. However, only around 20 out of a total of 2650 (0.6 %) staff members are Swiss. Switzerland's funding of positions for young professionals in UN organisations is a consistent approach to promote Swiss nationals' presence in United Nations organisations. Moreover, this measure is in harmony with the more general aim of enhancing political dialogue with target organisations.

How do the new JPO positions differ from previous initiatives, especially the former SDC JPO Programme?

Unlike the former SDC JPO Programme, this new initiative aims to promote young talent in multilateral organisations rather than within SDC. Over the next three years, a total of 33 positions in the below-mentioned UN organisations will be advertised and recruited for, and selected candidates will be contracted directly by the respective organisation. In order to give selected Swiss young professionals an opportunity to obtain relevant experience, most positions are in the field. At times it might be possible to move to another duty station during the JPO assignment; however, it is not possible for a JPO to rotate among different organisations. If a JPO is assigned to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), she or he will remain with UNICEF for the entire duration of her or his JPO assignment.

What can young professionals expect from the newly funded JPO positions, and what is expected from them?

Although appointments are limited to a period of one to three years, serving as a JPO is highly regarded within the UN system. One-fourth of current UN Resident Coordinators¹ began their careers as JPOs. These new SDC-funded JPO positions are thus a unique entry-point for Swiss young professionals wishing to embark on a career in the United Nations. SDC's objective is to ensure that JPOs remain within the United Nations after the completion of their JPO assignment, thereby increasing the number of Swiss nationals in the United Nations system. It should be noted that once the JPO's initial period of employment has ended, securing subsequent employment in the United Nations system can be a challenging task. We are therefore looking for highly motivated, ambitious, proactive, mobile candidates with a proven interest in pursuing a career within a multilateral organisation.

Priority UN institutions of the Swiss Federal Council

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UN Women
- UNAIDS
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

¹ As designated representative of the [UN Secretary-General](#), a United Nations Resident Coordinator is the highest [United Nations](#) official and the chief of the UN presence in a country.