

**Speaking notes for Ambassador Urs Ziswiler**  
**The Future of Social Security and Healthcare in Aging Societies:**  
**Swiss and U.S. perspectives**  
**2 p.m. – 6.40 p.m., November 6 2007**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you all here today at the Embassy of Switzerland. I am thrilled to see such a diverse audience and so many experts in the field of longevity and social security from government, academia and the private sector.

Also, I would like to thank all the excellent speakers on both the U.S. and the Swiss sides for being here. Our Swiss experts have travelled a long way to share their knowledge today. Today's event is a result of the successful cooperation between the Embassy, the World Demographic Association in Switzerland and the Chair of today's panels Professor Bing Chen of the University of Massachusetts. I want to thank our partner organizations on their initiative and organization.

The Swiss Embassy is hosting this event under the auspices of the Think Swiss program. "Think Swiss – Brainstorm the future" is a U.S.-wide program on Education, Research and Innovation. It focuses on the exchange of expertise and know-how in academia and business community in Switzerland and the U.S. The program is supported by Presence Switzerland (PRS), the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

Let me begin by saying, Switzerland does not only produce delicious cheese and chocolate... :-) We are also an innovative and future oriented country. Switzerland has demonstrated an excellent capacity for innovation and is home to outstanding research institutions. My country is strongly committed to the promotion of education and science. The ThinkSwiss Program has already hosted more than 50 events throughout the U.S. this year. Let me give you a couple of examples: We organized an event on e-democracy and electronic-voting here at the embassy in April. A thought-provoking exhibition on Human Rights was displayed at the Airports in Boston and in Atlanta earlier this year. A third example is a fascinating demonstration of how a Swiss quantum physicist uses science and technology, physical properties of materials and the human body to create a 3D fashion show. This event will take place first in San Francisco and then here in Washington on Friday. . . I'm happy to announce that ThinkSwiss programs and initiatives will continue throughout 2008 thanks to the program's great success this year.

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Please have a look at our website [www.thinkswiss.org](http://www.thinkswiss.org) where you can find more information, contacts and pictures of today's and future events.

The timing for this workshop couldn't be better.

The U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt is travelling to Switzerland tomorrow to meet Swiss government representatives, hospital officials and insurance executives. Secretary Levitt is interested in what the U.S. could learn from the Swiss health care system . Moreover, Democratic presidential candidates Hilary Clinton and John Edwards borrow heavily from changes in the Swiss healthcare system in their proposals for a U.S. healthcare program. As governor of Massachusetts, Republican presidential candidate Mit Romney based some of the healthcare changes in his state on a Swiss model. So you can see that the Swiss model is very interesting for American policymakers and hopefully for you as well.

Our workshop here today will offer a closer look at the future of healthcare and social security in aging societies from Swiss and U.S. perspectives. Switzerland has a widely acclaimed three-pillar social security system. At the same time, the Swiss and the American systems face some similar challenges regarding demographic change and finding feasible economic solutions for pensions in the long run.

Now, without further ado, I look forward to a very productive workshop. I am sure it will offer vital insights into the U.S. and the Swiss systems and generate discussions for future cooperation. Now I would like to give the floor to Professor Sousa-Poza, Director of the World Demographic Association in St. Gallen...