

**swissinfo**

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## Swiss development aid fails to make big impact



Switzerland has taken part in few international peacekeeping missions (Keystone Archive)

Switzerland has made little progress contributing to the alleviation of poverty in the world, according to a United States think tank.

It however has moved up three places – from 13th to 10th – on the Commitment to Development Index (CDI) compiled each year by the Washington-based Center for Global Development.

Launched in 2003, the CDI ranks 21 of the richest nations on their performance in several policy areas including trade, investment, migration, security, environment, and technology. This year as last, northern European states led the pack of nations whose policies contributed to improving standards in poor countries. The Netherlands tops the rankings in 2006, ahead of last year's leader, Denmark. Sweden and Norway came third and fourth respectively. Japan has the dubious distinction of finishing last, behind France, Italy and Greece. The US is 13th, three places behind Switzerland. Even though Switzerland improved its ranking – it was 13th last year - its score was similar to that of 2003. The CDI bases its results not only on the level of the states' development aid budgets, but includes the barriers they put in place to exports from poor nations. Environmental factors take into account what rich countries are doing to reduce their disproportionate exploitation of what the CDI considers "global commons", such as the world's forests and fisheries. CDI also rewards countries for permitting

the immigration of unskilled labourers, and evaluates their level of involvement in international peacekeeping operations and their laws pertaining to arms sales. David Roodman, the main author of the study, told swissinfo he was happy to see Switzerland score well for its migration policies since it "received more immigrants from developing countries".

## Immigration and emissions

This, Roodman said, benefited the immigrants' countries of origin since they sent part of their earnings home to their families. "Switzerland's development aid budget was above average and [compared with the other countries rated] it produced fewer emissions responsible for global warming," he added. Switzerland lost points for its decision to sell weapons to non-democratic states such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, and its peacekeeping efforts, according to the CDI criteria, were poor. "Switzerland is one of the countries doing the least in United Nations peacekeeping operations. And the fact that it only joined the UN in 2002 is no excuse for its limited engagement," Roodman said. Switzerland's recent entry to the UN also affects its score on the environment. It lost points in the CDI since it still has not ratified the UN treaty to limit fishing in international waters even though it is a landlocked nation. Roodman said Switzerland could improve its rating if it did more to reduce tariffs on imports from poor countries. "The protection granted its agricultural sector is a big problem," he said. "The government can't continue to subsidise each Swiss cow to the tune of \$1,000 while only giving 60 cents of aid to each of the 2.7 billion people in the world who live on less than \$2 a day." He concluded by calling on Switzerland to make a greater effort as a member of the World Trade Organization to reduce trade barriers. swissinfo, Marie-Christine Bonzom in Washington

## CONTEXT

The Commitment to Development Index (CDI) of the Washington-based Center for Global Development, ranks 21 of the world's richest countries by evaluating their stance on seven domains of government policy to determine how those policies affect developing countries. The index is compiled in cooperation with the influential US magazine, Foreign Policy. Two-thirds of the countries rated have improved their score.

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- [Commitment to Development Index](http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/cdi) (http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/\_active/cdi)
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