

Basel, 29 January 2019 – Media Release

A change in top management at Mission 21

Claudia Bandixen hands over to Jochen Kirsch

Rev. Claudia Bandixen, Director of Mission 21, the international mission organisation headquartered in Basel (the Basel Mission), will be retiring at the end of August 2019. As her successor, the Board has appointed Rev. Jochen Kirsch, who comes from the Palatinate in Germany. Rev. Kirsch joined Mission 21 in 2004 and he has headed its International Relations Department since 2014.

Claudia Bandixen took up the office of Director of Mission 21 in 2012, at a time when the organisation faced huge financial and structural challenges. She succeeded in stabilising Mission 21, and she has played a key part in shaping its ongoing development. Her term of office has seen many major advances: Mission 21's projects and programmes have been refocused, the cantonal churches of German-speaking Switzerland and several German regional churches have been integrated as members of the international Mission Synod, the Mission's advocacy and emergency relief work has been brought up to date, and its international work on women and gender has been extensively restructured. Rev. Bandixen, a theologian and pastor, began her service on behalf of the Mission in Chile; she then participated in renewal process of the Reformed Regional Church of Aargau, serving as President of its Church Council for ten years. Rev. Bandixen will hand her office over to Jochen Kirsch during the Mission Synod at Basel in June 2019.

Her successor, Rev. Jochen Kirsch, was already elected by the Board in November 2018. He will take up his post in September 2019. By making this appointment, the Board of Mission 21 has opted to ensure continuity in the Mission's development. Jochen Kirsch is a pastor in the Protestant Church of the Palatinate. As the holder of a diploma in NPO management and an acknowledged expert on international cooperation, he served for many years as Programme Officer and Team Head in Africa prior to taking up the post of Head of the Mission's International Relations Department in 2014. In response to the pressing crises in Nigeria, South Sudan and Cameroon, he was most recently mandated to develop and implement emergency relief and reconstruction programmes on the ground. The appointment of Jochen Kirsch will guarantee Mission 21's good working relationships with churches and partners. The new Director is recognised as a professional management figure with a proven track record.

We shall be glad to arrange interviews with Johannes Blum (President of the Board), Claudia Bandixen and Jochen Kirsch. We look forward to receiving your enquiries.

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Mission 21 sends out a message of hope for a fairer world. All over the world, we are committed to peace, improving education and healthcare, and combating poverty – especially for women and girls; and we also carry out educational work in Switzerland. We are actively involved in development cooperation with a long-term horizon, as well as emergency relief and reconstruction work. We gear our activities to the Sustainable Development Goals stated in the UN's 2030 Agenda. As an international Christian institution, we are involved in over 100 projects spanning 20 countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, in collaboration with some 70 partner churches and partner organisations.
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