



**Mr President of the General Assembly,  
Mr Secretary-General  
Ladies and Gentlemen, the heads of State and of Government,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Delegates,**

Two years ago I had the great satisfaction of personally witnessing in this room the act of Switzerland joining the United Nations. I will never forget the whole-hearted and open-armed welcome that Switzerland received on this occasion.

Switzerland's accession to the UN took place at a time when the fight against terrorism dominated international discussion, and the divergences in opinion on how to proceed against Iraq were widening. Dissension has arisen again within the Security

By this I mean:

- fighting poverty, and
- that multilateral institutions must respond more rapidly to nascent crises.

A more rapid response does not necessarily mean military intervention. Switzerland has always held the view that force must remain the instrument of last resort. Besides situations of self-defence, force may only be used with the approval of the Security Council and when other methods of persuasion or pressure have been completely exhausted.

A more rapid response also means that the Security Council fully exercise its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, which is conferred upon it in the Charter of the United Nations.

At this point we come to the issue of the legitimacy of action of the Security Council and, in particular, the question of its composition. After 10 years of deliberations on these issues, it is time to act:

- The composition of the Security Council must better reflect the changes that have taken place in the international context since it was first established, and more say must be given to the countries in the process of development;
- The financial and material contributions of specific Member States must be taken more closely into account.

On the other hand, Switzerland is opposed to the creation of new seats with the right of veto, because the right of veto in its current form is undemocratic and hampers the capacity of the Security Council to act.

In order to gain greater legitimacy, it is also necessary that those countries which are not members of the Security Council have more opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. In particular, it is important to strengthen the mechanisms of consultation with countries directly involved in particular situations of tension.

Reforming the institutions may be an arduous and unrewarding task, but it is indispensable for raising the efficiency of the UN and of peace promotion. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the work he has already done and to encourage him to continue along the same path.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perfect institutions alone are not enough to achieve efficiency at the UN. The real commitment of its Member States towards its aims is also necessary.

To remain credible in its role as keeper of the peace, the UN and its member States must, above all, be unshakeable guarantors of international law and, in particular, international humanitarian law. Switzerland will not cease to say and say again that respect for the law is the only feasible way, and it will continue to say that in the absence of a political solution to the conflict in Darfur, attacks on civilians are serious violations of international humanitarian law – violations which must be sanctioned by the responsible national, or if need be, international bodies. This is also why, following resolution ES-10/15 of the General Assembly on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice - which found that the construction of the separation barrier in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel is contrary to international law - Switzerland accepts, in its capacity as Depositary of the Geneva Conventions, the mandate to conduct consultations on means and ways to achieve greater respect for international humanitarian law by the parties concerned.



We run the risk of heightening tensions through this extreme simplification of reality. The international community must find a solution, and the UN is the ideal forum for finding it.

The second area is environmental preservation. The increasing scarcity of resources is sowing the seeds of conflict over appropriation and distribution. Sustainable development must not be allowed to become an empty concept. Our actions to date within the context of the UN have not been enough to ensure our responsibilities towards future generations. Devoting more time to finding agreement on the Kyoto Protocol than the founding fathers took to draft the Charter of the United Nations seems to be beneath our dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN will be judged by its success in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The institutional reforms under way are going in the right direction. It is up to us, the Member States, to commit ourselves resolutely to promote peace and to make the UN the instrument for carrying out this essential task.