

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

What development policies should be shaped so that all can benefit?

The Gross Domestic Product per capita of Switzerland is 130 times higher than that of Mozambique. Why are the poorest countries benefitting so relatively little from globalization, and how can we change this?

One quarter of the world's population consumes three quarters of the available raw materials. How can we ensure that the world's population, soon to reach 7 billion, will have sufficient drinking water, food and energy, at affordable prices?

What do the words equality and social justice mean in the 21st century?

It is up to us to find the answers to this question. This calls for a sense of responsibility, a readiness to reflect together on norms, values and priorities, a readiness to fight together for justice - global social justice.

More than any other international organization, the United Nations has the potential and the prerequisites necessary for supporting these. Since its founding, the United Nations has developed into a dense institutional network. Even so, international governance today remains fragmented and inefficient. For the UN to succeed in imposing itself as the driving force of reorientation towards sustainable development, the structures of governance need to be strengthened.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The recent events in the Arab world are a reminder that democracy is the twin sister of sustainability. Ultimately, it is the lack of political freedom combined with social injustice and a lack of economic prospects that have brought about the fundamental changes in the Arab world which have taken us by surprise. Many nations are facing a difficult transition and must also face the fact that relations between the States and the region's relations with the world as a whole need to be based on new principles.

That is the challenge facing the countries concerned and the new social groups that have taken the lead in bringing about change - youth, women, the emerging middle classes and civil society as a whole. But that is also a challenge for the respective countries and governments, as well as for us all, the United Nations. We must do our best to ensure that the victims of unrest and violence are helped quickly and effectively. We must commit ourselves to strengthening security and the rule of law. We must help to bring about an all-inclusive political dialogue, promoting national reconciliation and legitimate efforts to create new constitutions. We must extend the authority of the state, making institutions transparent and restoring public services. We must help to protect the human rights of all

and support transitional justice. We must also support urgent measures for re-launching these economies. Only through such a wide-ranging program and with the aid of an international community in which each member is ready to make a constructive contribution, will it be possible to take the wind out of the sails of radical forces and to create favourable conditions for sustainable development.

I note with regret that the spirit of optimism borne of the Arab Spring has not succeeded in breathing new life into the Middle East peace process. We well remember the words of President Obama a year ago before the UN General Assembly, words that encouraged us to believe that there was hope for a breakthrough in the Middle East. For a few minutes we dreamed the dream of "the young girl in Gaza who wants to have no ceiling on her dreams, or the young boy in Sderot who wants to sleep without the nightmare of rocket fire". We entertained hopes that together with Palestine and Israel we could succeed in reaching an agreement that would allow us to welcome a new member to the United Nations, a sovereign and independent Palestine, living in peace with Israel.

Instead we look out with bitterness on a bleak horizon of lead-footed progress, stagnation and a hardening of positions. It is a fact that for over 60 years the international community has failed to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The "peace process" has replaced peace. In an effort to bring peace once again to the centre of the stage, influential people on both sides have attempted to breathe life into a tangible and lasting vision. We gave them our support and facilitated a model agreement. The Geneva Initiative is today a consolidated, detailed proposal compatible with internationally accepted parameters, including the Arab Peace Initiative. It remains at the disposal of the decision makers, as well as of the populations whose right it is to demand peace.

Preventing future wars was the reason for the founding of the United Nations and is still today among the noblest objectives of this Organization. The past two decades have shown that it is very much in the interest of the international community to find ways to strengthen UN efforts in the area of mediation. Indeed for the majority of conflicts the most sustainable solution is a negotiated one rather than a military victory. And for the international community it makes more sense and is more cost-effective to invest in the mediation and prevention of conflicts rather than in expensive and difficult peacekeeping operations.

The Security Council also has a key role to play in the prevention of conflicts. Switzerland would welcome a stronger and more lasting commitment to preventive diplomacy on the part of the Security Council.

But if the Security Council is able to make a worthwhile contribution to peace and security, it must be adapted to the reality of today's world in such a way as to better reflect the political balance of power in the 21st century. I would also like to see a Security Council that is more transparent and open and more accountable to the member states. The decisions of the Security Council affect all states directly and in ways that are legally binding. It is for this reason that Switzerland is working with its partners in the "Small Five" group to improve the Council's working methods. The "Small Five" have made proposals that are practical, concrete and can be implemented immediately without any need to amend the UN Charter. A genuine improvement in the way the UN operates can only come about however, when the nations which rightly insist on a greater say in decision making show themselves ready at the same time to accept greater responsibility for the Organisation's proper functioning as well as its financial situation.

The United Nations is unique in being the only Organisation that offers all the nations of the world the possibility of joining together to address the whole range of international challenges to peace and security, as well as the protection of human rights and such goals as sustainable development for all. Switzerland is ready and willing to continue making a contribution to these efforts in the years ahead. We look forward to working together with the new President of the General Assembly, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, whom I would like to congratulate on his election, offering him the full support of my country in this 66th Session of the General Assembly.

I thank you, Mr. President.