

'To each his own' not a viable alternative in a world facing shared challenges, Swiss President says

19 September 2017 – With the world facing complex challenges such as climate change, humanitarian disasters and migration, all spanning geographical borders and requiring collective efforts to effectively address, the President of Switzerland told delegations in the General Assembly today that a strong multilateral system centered on a strong United Nations must be established.

“We need a strong United Nations and the fact that we need to repeat this today should set the alarm bells ringing,” stressed Doris Leuthard in her address to the Assembly’s annual general debate, noting at the same time that it is important to recognize the milestones UN Member States have achieved in tackling global challenges, coming together to adopt the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

“The success of those efforts will depend on how well those instruments are implemented,” she said, also welcoming reforms outlined by the Secretary-General in the areas of peace and security, development and management, expressing particular support for the priority placed on prevention, as the price to pay for conflict in humanitarian, economic and financial terms was much higher than the costs of prevention activities.

Citing the migration crisis in Europe as a challenge requiring cooperation, she stressed: “We need solutions based on solidarity between countries. All countries must do their part.” Turning to the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, she said Switzerland is committed to non-proliferation and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. “Only negotiations and a diplomatic process will make it possible to find a solution to the security problem posed by the nuclear crisis in the Korean Peninsula,” she added.

On other pressing issues, Ms. Leuthard said access to the Internet, the impact of digitization on sustainable development and cybersecurity must be addressed hand in hand. In addition dialogue is essential and must be conducted on large scale and include all relevant parties. Yet, political dialogue has proven insufficient on the issue of climate change. “The Paris Agreement must be quickly implemented,” she said, noting the importance of the private sector’s role in devising solutions.

Indeed, scientific diplomacy has allowed for making the correct decisions, and politicians must base their decisions on evidence-based policy, she said, convinced of need invest in effective multilateral system. “To each his own is not a viable alternative,” she asserted.

The 21st century will be an African century, African Union President tells UN General Assembly

19 September 2017 – The 21st century will see Africa take its rightful place on the world stage, Alpha Condé, the President of Guinea, which also holds the current presidency of the African Union, told the United Nations 72nd General Assembly on the opening day of its general debate today.

“The 21st century will without doubt be a century in which Africans are going to are going to count for more and in a decisive way because there is an ever-greater determination among Africa’s leaders and youth that the hour of renewal has arrived,” he said.

“Africa, formerly subjugated, ruthlessly exploited and molded by the will of others, has awakened. She has arisen to lead the battle for sustainable development, justice and good governance.”

Stressing that Africa’s lack of development is not its fated destiny and that it has been the most dynamic continent over the past decade, Mr. Condé highlighted the need for economic diversification, industrialization and the need to instruct and deploy two million community health workers throughout the continent.

As African leaders have repeatedly advocated at many previous General Assembly General Debates, he called for the enlargement of the 15-member Security Council, the only UN body whose decisions are mandatory and have the force of international law, to reflect the new realities of the world, including permanent seats with veto powers for African States.

[*Full statement \(in French\) available here*](#)

At General Assembly, France urges return to optimism, values that underpinned UN’s founding

19 September 2017 – Citing a litany of world crises and quoting directly from victims of man-made and natural disasters, French President Emmanuel Macron today called for a return to the optimism and universal values that inspired

the founding of the United Nations 72 years ago, taking into the account the new realities of the 21st century.

“In the 21st century we need a responsible and efficient United Nations endowed with the means to overcome its own blockages when hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake,” he told the 72nd UN General Assembly on the opening day of its general debate, calling on the UN Security Council’s five permanent members to forgo their right of veto in cases of mass atrocities.

From Syria, Iraq and Libya to Mali and Myanmar, Mr. Macron denounced extremism, terrorism and human rights abuses, called for compassion for [refugees and migrants](#) and warned that the root causes behind these disasters must be addressed through development, education and elimination of hunger.

Citing the fate of a compatriot on St. Martin, whose house was destroyed by Hurricane Irma which recently devastated the Caribbean island, Mr. Macron underscored the vital importance of the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#) limiting the emission of global warming greenhouse gases, recognising the United States decision to leave it, but adding that “the door will always be open” for the US to return.

Turning to the nuclear threats facing the world, he called for negotiations and a political solution in the Democratic Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) “furious” race for nuclear weapons, while praising the 2015 accord limiting Iran’s nuclear capabilities. It would be “a grave error” to renounce or fail to respect it, he said, adding he told both US and Iranian leaders that yesterday.

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)

[Upcoming elections will signal Liberia on ‘irreversible course’ towards democracy, President Sirleaf tells UN](#)

19 September 2017 – Addressing the United Nations General Assembly just 22 days ahead of historic elections in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf today said the polls will signal the “irreversible course” that the country has embarked upon to consolidate its young, post-conflict democracy.

As she recalled that 11 years ago, in September of 2006, she had addressed the Assembly as the newly elected President of Liberia and the first woman to be democratically elected as head of State on the African continent, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf said the coming elections, which will mark the end of her time in office, will pave the way for the next generations of Liberians to lead the country in to the future.

“The [legislative and presidential polls] will mark the first time in 73 years that political power will be handed over peacefully, and democratically, from one elected leader to another,” she said, adding: Democracy is on the march in Liberia and, I believe, on an irreversible path forward on the African continent.”

She said she had assumed office after 25 years of development reversal which was further compounded by a 15-year civil war. “We have made great progress and laid the foundation for the next democratic government. We have reshaped the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberia National Police, professionalized our customs and immigration services and small Liberian Coast Guard.”

Further, previously dysfunctional public institutions now have the capacity to respond to the needs of our citizens through decentralized county service centers with ownership by strong local governments. “And from the tragedy of the health crisis, we are strengthening our healthcare systems, prioritizing prevention and delivering capacity at the community level,” said Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, underscoring that Liberia has enjoyed the benefit of multilateralism through full support provided by the UN, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States ([ECOWAS](#)).

“Liberia’s transformation was powered by a world community that made a shared commitment to deliver peace to a country, and a subregion, beset by civil conflict and cross border destabilization,” she said, noting that the UN and its partner nations were of “one mind,” and from that global unity, a new Liberian democratic state was born.

“Liberia is a post conflict success story. It is your post conflict success story,” stated Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, urging the UN and its Member States to continue to lead, to spread the values of democracy, human rights, and good governance while strengthening solidarity for economic transformation and social resilience. Such leadership should extend to full implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), as well as on UN reform, including of the Security Council.

[Full statement available here](#)

[All nations should embrace their sovereignty, US President tells world leaders at UN Assembly](#)

19 September 2017 – Noting that the present world is one that offers both immense promise and great peril, the President of the United States told global leaders at the United Nations that it was “entirely up to us” to either lift the world to new heights, or let it fall into a valley of

disrepair.

“To overcome the perils of the present and to achieve the promise of the future, we must begin with the wisdom of the past,” Donald Trump said today at the general debate of the 72nd session of General Assembly.

“Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty to promote security, prosperity, and peace for themselves and for the world.”

Noting that the US would remain a “great friend” to the world, and especially to its allies, the President underscored that his country can no longer be taken advantage of, and that he would defend US interests above all else.

“But in fulfilling our obligations to our own nations, we also realize that it’s in everyone’s interest to seek a future where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous, and secure,” he noted.

He also called for greater reforms at the UN, urging the Organization to focus more on results, rather than bureaucracy and processes. He also called for more fair cost sharing among UN Member States.

Turning to the crisis emanating from the nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Mr. Trump underscored if the US is forced to defend itself or its allies, “we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.” Recalling recent resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council, he urged that country to pursue the path of denuclearization.

In his remarks, he also criticized the Iranian Government and called on the country’s leadership to halt its support of terrorists, begin serving its people, and respect the sovereign rights of its neighbours. He also noted the need for de-escalation of the conflict in Syria, as well as on sanctions imposed by the US on Cuba and Venezuela.

Also in his remarks, the President spoke of economic progress made by the United States since his election as well as the progress it has made in terms of healthcare, women’s empowerment and military strength.