

'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.