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The Federal Council

Switzerland's priorities for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly

Federal Council report to the Foreign Affairs Committees

dated 18 June 2021

Switzerland's priorities for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly

Switzerland has set **three priorities** for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly (UN GA).

I. Promoting Switzerland's candidacy and preparing for a seat on the UN Security Council

Switzerland is seeking a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the first time, with the election taking place in June 2022 at the UN GA. By serving as a non-permanent member, Switzerland wishes to contribute to a more peaceful and secure world.

To be elected to the Security Council, Switzerland also needs to raise its profile by playing a proactive role within the UN GA. With this in mind, Switzerland is seeking to take up various leadership roles and mandates, e.g. in relation to humanitarian and budgetary areas as well as peace and security related processes (serving on the UN Peacebuilding Commission until the end of 2021). Switzerland continues to chair the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, which supports Burundi's efforts to build a peaceful future. Under the slogan 'Switzerland, a Plus for Peace', Switzerland is presenting its candidacy for the UN Security Council at events in New York and around the world, including an event to mark the 20th anniversary of the referendum on joining the UN in March 2022.

II. Sustainable development and dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda remains a key concern. At the same time, dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges worldwide. Addressing this challenge requires increased international cooperation and must be done in a sustainable and inclusive manner, in order to bring long-term benefits for economies, societies and the environment.

During the period under review, sustainable food systems are a particular area of focus. Sustainable food systems are essential to providing adequate, healthy nutrition to people around the globe over the long term. Switzerland is therefore participating in the high-level UN Food Systems Summit to take place in New York in September 2021, and will actively assist in any follow-up work. Implementing the 2030 Agenda requires reliable data and to this end Switzerland is organizing the next World Data Forum in Berne in October 2021. In June 2022, 50 years after the UN World Conference on the Environment took place in Stockholm, Sweden is hosting "Stockholm+50", an international meeting with a view to taking global environmental policy decisions. Switzerland will play a leading role both in the preparatory work and during the conference. Finally, Switzerland will present its second national country report on implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2022.

At the UN GA, Switzerland advocates for a sustainable, human rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic that is driven by scientific evidence. It supports the implementation of reforms to ensure the UN's continued ability to take action and make decisions, if necessary by adapting the working methods of certain UN bodies.

III. Promoting a free, open and secure digital space

Digital technologies create new opportunities, but also carry risks. The UN GA provides a platform for transparent and inclusive debate on this issue. Switzerland will play an active role in shaping these ongoing debates. It works to advance the recognition, observance and

enforcement of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights in cyberspace. It also promotes the implementation of voluntary standards to ensure that states behave responsibly in cyberspace, for example by working with the private sector through the Geneva Dialogue on Responsible Behaviour in Cyberspace. It raises relevant concerns through the UN processes on cybersecurity, cybercrime and digital governance. Switzerland also continues to advocate the protection of personal data in humanitarian contexts in order to ensure the privacy of those concerned. Finally, it supports the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. In carrying out these activities, Switzerland highlights the advantages of International Geneva, supports actors based in Geneva, and works to attract new ones.

Other activities to safeguard Switzerland's interests within UN processes

Switzerland continues to work across the entire range of issues. This includes in particular the commitment to international law and, especially, human rights as well as international humanitarian law, humanitarian affairs, sustainability and disarmament issues. Switzerland continues to advocate for an effective and efficient UN and supports reforms in the areas of conflict prevention, coherence of the UN development system, and modern management methods. In doing so, it also safeguards the interests of International Geneva in particular. Switzerland's activities are based on its Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23, International Cooperation Strategy 2021–24 and Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–24, the Dispatch on Measures to Strengthen Switzerland's Role as Host state for the 2020–23 period, the Federal Council's Voluntary Report on the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law, and the Guidelines on Human Rights 2021–24.