

**MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA SUISSE  
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

**59<sup>ème</sup> session de l'Assemblée générale**

**Points 52 et 54 de l'ordre du jour**

**Revitalisation des travaux de l'Assemblée générale  
Renforcement des Nations Unies**

**Déclaration**

**de**

**S.E. M. Peter Maurer  
Représentant permanent de la Suisse  
auprès des Nations Unies**

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Check against delivery

**59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

**Items 52 and 54**

**Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly  
Strengthening of the United Nations system**

**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer  
Permanent Representative of Switzerland  
to the United Nations**

**New York, le 4 octobre 2004**

Mr President,

There is no need to dwell here on the importance that Switzerland attaches to a strong and effective United Nations that is capable of taking up the challenges presented by the modern world, especially in the fields of security, human rights and of sustainable development in all its aspects. The continuing reform process of the UN is one of the keys to achieving this objective.

The Secretary General wishes to revitalise this process of reflection on reform by establishing two Panels of high level experts. Switzerland welcomes this innovative approach and is looking forward to studying the report of the Panel on threats, challenges and changes in December. We are pleased today to be able to respond to the Panel's report on UN-Civil Society relations.

Mr President,

Switzerland noted with great interest the content of the Cardoso report and it supports the thrust of the Secretary General's proposals. My country is one of those which pursues an open policy vis-à-vis participation of civil society and it believes that the UN would strengthen its legitimacy by involving more civil society in its work.

Encouraging partnerships is undoubtedly one way of strengthening the UN : partnerships between the UN and regional organisations, as well as parliaments, non-governmental organisations and private companies.

Within the framework of specific measures to strengthen the interaction between civil society and the United Nations, Switzerland supports the proposal by the Secretary General to organize interactive meetings with NGOs and parliamentarians before important events are held. We therefore support the idea of trying out meetings of this kind before the High Level Meeting on HIV/Aids on 2 June 2005.

Relations with civil society should not be restricted by a bureaucratic and centralising approach. The room for manoeuvre and initiative of Specialised Organisations,

Funds and Programmes should be preserved, while maintaining positive existing practices. In this context Switzerland would like to stress that such initiatives have been developed in Geneva for some time now, in some cases over a period of several decades. My country is therefore willing to study the formal and informal modes of interaction that take place in Geneva between civil society and NGOs and the UN, and to select good practice and lessons learnt in these areas and to share them with interested actors.

As for the establishment of a Partnership Office, we would appreciate it if the concept of such an Office could be presented in greater detail by the Secretariat.

Moreover Switzerland believes that the "Global Compact" – which it has supported since its inception – must remain completely autonomous. Admittedly, this pact does not conform to the traditional partnership model. However, specific nature of its activity vis-à-vis companies, whom it tries to convince of the UN's fundamental values in the fields of human rights, social rights, protection of the environment and the fight against corruption, requires that it should retain the maximum independence. In contrast to traditional partnership approaches, the Global Compact does not seek to mobilise additional resources for the development activities supported by the United Nations.

Mr President,

For Switzerland, the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly is a cornerstone of the UN reform process. The Assembly needs to recover its central role and should operate more effectively and more efficiently.

A very important step in this direction was taken in July when resolution A/58/316 on the improvement of the Assembly's working methods was adopted. We are pleased that the majority of the measures proposed are now being implemented.

At this point I would like to pay tribute, Mr President, to the work of your predecessor Mr. Julian Hunte, without whom we would probably not have achieved such results. We have every confidence that you will continue his efforts in the same direction and with the same success, in particular on the central issue which still remains open for the 59<sup>th</sup> session – that of the General Assembly calendar.

Mr President, I would like to make some observations on this last point :

Switzerland is not convinced of the added-value of distributing the work of the technical committees throughout the session. Such a dispersal could encourage the postponement of decisions and could lead to a prolongation of sessions or even to a need for more plenary sessions, which would involve additional costs. Moreover, the question of synchronisation with the budgetary cycle has not yet been resolved.

Switzerland wishes to stress that it advocates the holding of six successive committees from the beginning of September to the end of December, by reducing if necessary the number of days of meetings and by imposing on commissions strict deadlines for the completion of their work. Such a solution would secure to all Committee the same weight and importance and encourage the synergies between themselves.

In the course of this 59<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, Switzerland intends to continue to support and to make its contribution to the revitalisation of the General Assembly and to the strengthening of the United Nations in general.

Thank you, Mr President