

## Latvia and Switzerland press the case for UN reform



President Andris Berzinš of Latvia

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The United Nations needs to adapt quickly to new global realities so it can better serve the world's peoples, starting with the “long overdue” reform of the Security Council, Latvia's President Andris Berzinš said today.

[Speaking](#) on the opening day of the General Assembly's annual general debate, where dozens of heads of State or government have gathered, Mr. Berzinš underlined that the UN is “the only truly global, universal international organization.”

But he said the UN “must change and adapt to the new realities in order to deliver the best results and sustain its influence. The revitalization of the General Assembly and reforming of other principal organs is essential for the UN in order to keep pace with the modern realities in the world and to make the whole work of the UN more effective.”

The President said reform of the 15-member Council, where five countries have a permanent right of veto, is much needed.

Mr. Berzinš also said overall reform would allow for better budgetary discipline within the Organization and for a fairer distribution of contributions and expenses among the UN’s 193 Member States.

“In the context of the global economic slowdown, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to cut the UN budget for 2012-2013 by 3 per cent,” he added.

Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, for her part, [told](#) the Assembly debate that the Council’s composition has to alter “to better reflect the political balance of power in the 21st century.”

The panel should also become more transparent and more accountable to other UN Member States, she added, given that its decisions affect all countries directly and are legally binding.

Ms. Calmy-Rey said practical and concrete steps could be taken in the short-term to enhance the working methods of the Council.

“A genuine improvement in the way the UN operates can only come about, however, when the nations which rigidly insist on a greater say in decision-making show themselves ready at the same time to accept greater responsibility for the Organization’s proper functioning as well as its financial situation.”

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