

## At Swiss Parliament, Ban extols country's dedication to UN ideals



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

11 September 2012 – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today lauded Switzerland's devotion to cooperation, compassion and the relief of poverty, noting that the country's commitment to human rights reflected the spirit and mission of the United Nations.

“Switzerland is the global home for health and human rights, for refugee assistance and disaster preparedness, for labour rights and fair trade and so much else,” Mr. Ban told the Swiss Parliament in an [address](#) – the first by any UN Secretary-General to the Swiss national legislature – marking the 10th anniversary of Switzerland's accession to the UN.

“Your devotion to the relief of poverty and suffering around the world is so powerful that it has been incorporated into the Federal Constitution,” he continued, adding that the Latin inscription

written on the Parliament's ceiling signifying 'One for all, and all for one' also encapsulated "the spirit of the United Nations."

The UN chief thanked the Swiss parliamentarians for their rapid approval of a financial donation for the renovation of the Palais des Nations – the UN headquarters in the country and the second largest UN centre after the Organization's Headquarters in New York.

"The Palais des Nations is itself a monument to the ideals that the United Nations and Switzerland share – a living monument where thousands of staff bring those ideals to life," the UN chief stated. "The United Nations highly values your commitment to preserving our history while making the complex a model of sustainability and energy use in serving new generations."

Shifting to a number of topical issues confronting the Organization – such as the situation in Syria and meeting sustainable development goals – the Secretary-General also urged the Swiss legislature to continue helping the UN tackle the world's most critical concerns.

"The bonds between Switzerland and the United Nations are strong and growing stronger," Mr. Ban said. "At this time of uncertainty and unease, it is good to know that the United Nations can count on your support, on your friendship, on your commitment and on your leadership of Switzerland."

During his visit, Mr. Ban also met with the President of the Swiss Confederation, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, to whom he expressed appreciation for Switzerland's significant contributions to the UN's work. At the same time, he underlined that much had yet to be done on a host of issues including the achievement of the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) by the 2015 deadline, the fight against climate change and ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

"I think we will have to go a long way to realize all of these goals and objectives, realizing sustainable political stability all around the world, particularly in the Arab countries that are in transition," the Secretary-General said in a joint press conference following his meeting with President Widmer-Schlumpf.

"I think these are a common commitment and I think these are a common collective responsibility that we can and we should work together [on] in the years to come," he added.

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