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Summary of the «Message» concerning Switzerland's accession to the United Nations (UN)

Approval of the Proposal

The Federal Council passed the «Message» concerning Switzerland's accession to the United Nations (UN) on the 21st of December 1981. It proposes to Parliament that the latter should approve our country's entry into the world organization. The final decision rests with the people and the cantons who, according to the Federal Constitution, must vote on this question.

Importance of the Proposal

Accession to the UN is an important step for Switzerland which will enable her to normalize her relations with the world organization and thereby to consolidate and expand her relations with the international community.

The Federal Council is today proposing accession to the UN after mature consideration and after closely following developments in the matter. Not only did it set up advisory commissions in 1945 and 1976 to study thoroughly the question of entry; in 1969, 1971 and 1977 the Federal Council itself defined in three detailed reports to the Federal Assembly all aspects of our relationship with the United Nations and its specialized organs. By 1977 it had come to the conclusion that accession to the UN was desirable. Parliament agreed and the National Council even asked the Federal Council to lay the relevant «Message» before it «as soon as possible».

It is time for Switzerland to take this step; as a member of the international community our

country must, in the interests of its own security, take account of developments in world politics since 1945 and their consequences for the United Nations. The growing interdependence of nations and the universal nature of an ever increasing number of problems call for worldwide cooperation aimed at joint solutions. That is why there has been, during the last few years, an unprecedented upsurge in multilateral diplomacy. Its principal instrument and at the same time the focus where the nations' efforts converge is the United Nations, which constitutes the basis of international order in a world torn by conflicts and tensions.

The UN of Today

The UN of the 1980s is very different from what it was in 1945 at the time of its foundation. It has been greatly affected by developments in international politics, of which it is both the reflection and the instrument. Originally conceived as a coalition of the victorious powers of the Second World War, aimed at preserving world peace by collective enforcement measures, **the UN is today the centre of worldwide cooperation.** It became apparent during the Cold War that the system of sanctions provided for in the Charter was largely ineffective because of disagreement among the Great Powers. The UN has never used military sanctions. Moreover, the existence of nuclear weapons has transformed the nature of conflicts and that has led the UN to **develop new**