

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 55TH SESSION

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me join others in welcoming the establishment of UN Women. We look forward to an era of even stronger commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women under the strong leadership of USG Michelle Bachelet. It is clear that the success of UN Women will be measured on the ground. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central preconditions for the achievement of the MDGs in their entirety. As an active member of *Group of Friends of Women, Peace, and Security* we particularly appreciate the fact that strengthening the women, peace, and security agenda and ending violence against women are among the thematic priorities of UN Women. Another important priority is for the Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women to form an effective working relationship.

We further hope that the momentum generated by the creation of UN Women will contribute towards the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional Protocol and renew the commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Program of Action and its follow-up mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

Education and training are a human right and an essential tool for the empowerment of women, in particular their economic empowerment. It is worrying that women's educational gains have yet to be translated into equal access to full employment and decent work. Liechtenstein therefore welcomes this year's priority theme and underscores its value for achieving the MDGs. The gender divide in science and technology education and careers must be addressed through gender sensitive programs, which take into consideration the current under-representation of girls and women in these fields.

At the national level, the Government's Office of Equal Opportunity is playing a central role in the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Beijing+5 Conference. A central tool in that regard is our domestic Equal Opportunity Act. Progress has been made in the areas of

education and employment, in particular regarding the compatibility of family and work, and in providing assistance for female victims of criminal offenses. De iure equality has been largely achieved in Liechtenstein. But the realization of complete de facto equality remains a challenge. For instance, in recent years, Liechtenstein has seen some success in promoting better representation of women in political bodies. Women currently hold 40 percent of the cabinet-level seats in the Government. However, women remain underrepresented in Parliament and in the municipal councils. Therefore further efforts have to be made in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, harms the physical and mental health of women and violates their human rights. It also hampers productivity, reduces human capital and undermines economic growth. At the international level, Liechtenstein puts particular emphasis on the plight of women in armed conflict, who often suffer a disproportionate and unique impact. Liechtenstein and Switzerland are jointly financing a project that aims to promote the full implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. The project, which is executed by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, produced a Handbook and an accompanying iPhone App as a reference guide for progress made and action to be taken on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

We are encouraged by the progress made in the fight against impunity for gender-based crimes, thanks in particular to the activities of the International Criminal Court. These efforts must become an integral part our work in the area of women, peace and security. Taken together, the Rome Statute and the relevant Security Council resolutions provide a comprehensive framework for prevention, participation, relief, recovery and justice.

Another initiative worth mentioning is our membership in the Humanitarian Working Group of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. The Alliance was launched last September with a commitment to saving lives, improving livelihoods, empowering women, and combating climate change by creating a global market for clean cookstoves. In this context, we would like to

extend an invitation to all delegations to the side event which we are hosting in partnership with Canada and the Women's Refugee Commission on the role of education in preventing gender-based violence. The event is entitled "*Livelihoods in displacement settings: What does it mean for Women? What does it mean for Youth?*" and will take place on 3 March at 11:30 am at the Permanent Mission of Canada.

I thank you.