



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

HIGH-LEVEL WEEK

**HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT:
THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN: INVISIBLE VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT
AND COVID-19**

**REMARKS BY H.E. DOMINIQUE HASLER
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EDUCATION AND SPORT**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to speak to you today, on a topic that is particularly dear to me as Liechtenstein's Foreign Minister *and* Minister of Education.

The past one and a half year has put unprecedented burden on many children around the globe. School closures, loss of access to essential services and increased vulnerability to exploitation and domestic violence have hurt children deeply. Girls have been disproportionately affected by limited or no access to education and deprived of their right to education, and I am particularly concerned by the situation in Afghanistan in this regard. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated preexisting inequalities, with the worst consequences on children in the poorest countries and countries affected by conflict, and on those children already disadvantaged.

The rising risk of child trafficking caused by the pandemic and armed conflict is of particular concern. With the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking Initiative Liechtenstein has spearheaded efforts to mobilize and better equip the financial sector in our common fight against these crimes. We welcome interested States to join efforts in this regard.

My government has furthermore provided a total of 100'000 Swiss Francs to COVAX, as an expression of our solidarity with those left behind which all too often are children. We continue our support of the work of the Liechtenstein based NGO All Survivor Projects which conducts important advocacy and research on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against girls and boys alike. We remain committed to the international justice system to strengthen accountability for crimes also against children, and I call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute with its pioneering child-sensitive approach.

Finally, we all must ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and empower children as agents of change themselves, also in line with our commitment to the Sustainable Development

Goals. The third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines that principle by giving children a voice and providing them access to justice, and I call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention and all its Protocols. We need to know what children want and need and to deliver in their best interest to achieve intergenerational justice and a more peaceful, inclusive and sustainable world.

I thank you.