



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

NEW YORK, 20 NOVEMBER 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE OCCASION OF THE
THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
PERMANENT MISSION OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. President,

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a milestone agreement in every sense – and one of the more visionary moments in the history of treaty-making. The Convention enshrines nothing less than a paradigm shift in how we see children and their role in society. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history and it has helped transform children’s lives around the globe by empowering and protecting them. Since 1990, the death rate of children under five has been reduced by half, so has the proportion of undernourished children. More children and adolescents today are enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education than ever before. Most importantly perhaps, children are more and more finding their own voices and have turned into agents of change. At the same time, the Convention is still not universal, and it lacks implementation in too many areas. Millions of children continue to suffer violations of their rights every day – often girls are more severely affected than boys. One out of five children are out of school. Nearly one in five children live in conflict. And we remember with shivers the thousands of schoolbags in our UN garden symbolizing children lost to the senseless violence of war in just one year. There are nearly 50 million child refugees across the globe. And we may have never been further away from the spirit of the Convention than with discussions whether children are

legally entitled to toothbrushes, or can be separated from their parents without due process.

Depriving children of their rights often goes hand in hand with silencing them. This vicious cycle can be broken by giving children a voice and a right to complain that cannot be taken away from them. The Third Optional Protocol provides the mechanism that empowers children to be agents of change themselves – a reflection of the true spirit of the Convention. Liechtenstein has been among the few States to ratify the Protocol. Based on our own experience, we encourage all States to follow suit and see for themselves how empowering a step this can be both for the children and the societies they live in. We value the key role of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the implementation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

The Convention has all the essentials to also guide us into the future. Without children's rights there cannot be economic, social and environmental sustainability. The 2030 Agenda fully recognizes that perspective. Many of the most urgent measures for sustainable development must benefit the children first if we want to have fast and lasting impact. Children are often the most vulnerable to poverty, inequality, and violence. Climate change is the prime example why children should be in the driving seat. Today's children will reach adulthood when we are supposed to achieve the SDGs. We are accountable to them and they will hold us accountable for our failures to live up to our promises. This is also the true spirit of the Convention that we should honor today. Thinking in terms of intergenerational justice necessarily leads to child-centered policies that are sensitive to the needs and interests of children and youth, and that include them in our decision making. Only then can we ensure to act in the best interest of the child – the very core of the Convention we celebrate today.

I thank you.