



**Special Session of the General Assembly
on Challenges and Measures to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Strengthen International Cooperation**

2 June 2021

H.E. Dominique Hasler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Principality of Liechtenstein

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening today's Special Session of the General Assembly on corruption. The Special Session serves as a unique opportunity to strengthen our collective efforts to fight corruption. Corruption has slowed progress as long as we can think and it is a complex crime with devastating effects on people and planet.

Liechtenstein welcomes the adoption of the political declaration on corruption which defines the international community's anti-corruption agenda for the upcoming years. I commend Peru and the United Arab Emirates for their leadership in building consensus on the outcome of this meeting. I also wish to commend the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime for their invaluable support.

Mr. President,

Fighting corruption is of highest priority to Liechtenstein. Corruption undermines the rule of law and democracy. It erodes trust in public institutions. Practices involving corruption far too often constitute human rights violations, particularly against the most marginalized and vulnerable members of society. We are concerned of the negative effects corruption can have on the environment and sustainable development in general. There is no doubt that corruption is one of the biggest impediments of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. At

the same time, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development itself provides the necessary guidance to reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

Effective, accountable and transparent institutions are a key preventive measure and all the more relevant in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accentuated the negative consequences of corruption. Addressing corruption during our COVID-19 responses is essential and transparency in decision-making is of particular importance. In our response to the pandemic we must not forget to also fight small-scale corruption.

Mr. President,

Today, we make a step forward in implementing our legal obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) – the cornerstone of the international legal framework against corruption. We particularly welcome the achievements of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Liechtenstein was the first country to be reviewed in the second cycle under the Mechanism, in the year 2017. I am proud that the review concluded that Liechtenstein has in place a far-reaching legal and regulatory framework for prevention and a well-established regime for asset recovery. In fact, Liechtenstein has successfully engaged in the recovery and return of stolen assets and returned more than USD 230 million. In this area, we have maintained a close and longstanding partnership with the International Center for Asset Recovery (ICAR).

Liechtenstein has contributed significantly to United Nations, regional organizations as well as non-governmental projects that foster good governance and tackle corruption. In the year 2020, we have made a per capita contribution of CHF 38 to such projects. Rest assured that we will continue to place good governance and anti-corruption at the heart and center of our development cooperation.

It is often those involved in unveiling corrupt practices who far too often risk serious retaliation and reprisals. We are concerned that our commitments towards ensuring a free, safe and enabling environment for civil society, human rights defenders, the media and journalists lag behind. Let me assure you that Liechtenstein will continue to stand by those who identify, detect and report on corruption.

Mr. President,

The engagement of the private and financial sector is key in an effective response to corruption. Together with our partners from Australia, the Netherlands, Norway as well as the United Nations University we have created a public-private partnership. The so called "Liechtenstein Initiative on Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking" equips the global financial sector with concrete tools to respond to these crimes that often involve corruption.

In fact, too little attention has been paid to exploring, let alone prosecuting slavery-related corruption. According to a forthcoming United Nations Development Program study - commissioned by Liechtenstein - corruption is a root cause and facilitator of exploitation, leading millions of people into contemporary forms of slavery. To raise awareness about this challenge, our side-event on the sidelines of the Special Session will discuss the role of the financial sector in addressing the links between modern slavery and corruption. I would be pleased if many of you could join us.

To conclude, let me assure you Liechtenstein's commitment to implementing this political declaration.

I thank you!