



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**AGENDA ITEM 115 - REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

The world now lives with the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year. So many people here in NYC and at home have undergone strain, hardship, disease and bereavement. Our solidarity as a global community is put to the test, as is our organization's capacity to respond. From the early political response of the General Assembly in its resolution 74/270 to the UN's operational work led by the WHO, WFP and others, the UN system has set positive markers throughout the pandemic, while there is clearly an in-depth discussion to be had on lessons learnt, in particular on the early days of the pandemic. But the UN system has generally been a beacon of pragmatic and science-based action and a voice of reason and solidarity in times of mis- and disinformation, populism and nationalist tendencies. The Secretary-General deserves our praise as chief crisis manager and we welcome his outline today of priorities for 2021. This crisis with its deep societal rifts has made the world turn to the United Nations, not away. The UN is more relevant than ever and we must do everything we can to meet the huge expectations.

Mr. President,

The pandemic causes a broad variety of disruptions, with its severe health, social, economic, financial and human rights impacts. But there is also tremendous resilience, innovation and a

sense of community that can be tapped in overcoming this crisis. To respond to the challenges before us in a systematic and comprehensive manner, our efforts must be underpinned by a human rights perspective and guided by awareness of the ever-widening inequality gap. The international community has given itself the right tools to do that with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs - the most ambitious and comprehensive human rights implementation programme ever devised. The SDGs are the blueprint to address the unprecedented health crisis, to bring millions of children back to school, to support the poorest and most vulnerable first, and to stop the shadow pandemic – that is the increasing domestic violence, mostly against women and children. The pandemic has also been an important and at times painful lesson on the importance of the trust in institutions. The SDGs instruct us to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. In many places the world currently witnesses brave struggles for free speech, justice and political participation, and democratic uprisings against corruption, nepotism and authoritarian rule. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without freedom – this principle is firmly enshrined in the design and the substance of the SDGs and needs our collective support today, more than ever.

Mr. President,

The increasing tension between humankind and nature has led to today's climate emergency. It has also manifested itself in the heightened risk for zoonotic diseases, the loss of biodiversity and increasing desertification among others. We have to recalibrate our relationship with our planet in a sustainable manner, as promoted by the comprehensive "One Health" approach. This is as much a sustainable development and human rights matter as it is a security need. The Secretary-General shows strong leadership in calling for the world to change course, so do many others, devoted members of our societies. These calls must be heeded by those in particular that bear significant responsibilities, be it as major emitters of CO₂ or as permanent members of the Security Council. The Security Council has made tentative efforts to broaden its security paradigm beyond its traditional narrow politico-military dimension through regular debates on climate and the pandemic and an expert working group on climate. These efforts need to be mainstreamed

in the Council's mandates and a much more preventive approach is needed if the Council's actions are to remain relevant in light of future threats. At this stage, the Council has next to nothing to offer in response to the most pervasively felt sense of insecurity the world has seen for decades. It is high time it adapts its approach to the realities and needs of the day.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes your consistent and strong voice for multilateralism, alongside the Secretary-General, and for raising the ambition for collective action at the upcoming high-level meetings, from corruption to climate change and water. There is no viable alternative to multilateral approaches for problems that affect us all. The UN is the most noble manifestation of that principle – the 75 years history of the UN its most important corroboration. Ensuring that the UN's political organs are fully operational at all times is thus of paramount importance. The decision taken by the General Assembly to ensure business continuity also in times of crisis has been a necessary step in this respect. In particular, the General Assembly has a well-defined mandate to consider matters of international peace and security. With growing paralysis in the Security Council, often due to the casting or threat of a veto, that authority of the General Assembly should become front and center. For this reason, Liechtenstein will together with like-minded States seek to mandate a debate in the General Assembly in each and every case a veto blocks the Security Council from acting.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General has pointed to the lack of trust in institutions as the primary challenge to the rule of law and to progress towards our common sustainable development objectives. This was before the pandemic, and the challenge has likely become even more acute since. Trust needs to be built, often painstakingly and at the cost of great collective effort. But it can often vanish much more quickly. The key for the resilience of society's belief in the governing structures are participation and accountability. The UN needs to come to the people and ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in its work. There is a lot of need and potential for

improvement in that respect, in particular against the background of our recent experience during the pandemic. We need both an accountable UN and a UN that ensures accountability. Over the course of the last decades the UN has broken new ground in creating international justice mechanisms, thereby institutionalizing the primacy of the law over the rule of might. The work of these mechanisms needs the vocal and unequivocal support both by the UN leadership and by States. Liechtenstein continues to be committed to this cause as we believe it goes to the very heart of the purposes and principles of the UN and of the challenges we collectively face in the future.

Thank you.