



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 60 – USE OF THE VETO

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the ‘Veto initiative’, created by resolution 76/262 exactly a year ago. We continue to be proud to have led this process. And we are gratified by its strong and immediate political relevance, as well as the support it has received from Member States as well as from the Secretary-General.

The standing mandate for the General Assembly to meet whenever a veto has been cast has increased the reputational cost for the vetoing State. We appreciate that relevant Council members have answered the call to explain their veto at every opportunity so far. But we appreciate even more the decisions of relevant Council members against exercising their veto since the adoption of the Veto Initiative. The prospect of accountability will certainly not deter every use of the veto, but it is already showing positive results. We hope, in turn, that this will embolden penholders, in particular elected Members of the Council, to propose texts that meet the expectations of the membership as a whole.

Under the terms of the ‘Veto Initiative’, the Security Council is invited to produce a special report

on the use of the veto in question to the General Assembly, in line with Article 24(3) of the Charter. We were pleased to see that the Security Council has submitted such a special report each time a veto has been cast over the past year in accordance with the terms of the resolution. This practice contributes to the accountability of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Accordingly, we also expect that these Special Reports will be adequately reflected in the Council's Annual Report to the GA.

The Veto Initiative also contributes to a resetting of the power balance between the Security Council and General Assembly. This is an important change that we should develop further. Accountability is one important dimension of the Veto Initiative, enhancing the role of the Assembly on matters of peace and security the other. We are grateful to see that the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism has built upon this theme in its report "A Breakthrough for People and Planet" in which it proposes that "[i]f the Security Council cannot or will not act in the face of threats to international security, then the matter should immediately be placed before the General Assembly for action."

Mr. President,

It is unfortunately not realistic to expect more Security Council unity in the imminent future. A General Assembly that is active in the area of peace and security is therefore key to ensure the thriving multilateralism envisaged by the Charter. The veto initiative has of course also facilitated the possibility for action taken by the GA taken as the result of a veto. In light of the merits and needs of the situation, such products can contribute to effective multilateralism and to a dynamic complementary role of the General Assembly to that of the Council. The General Assembly has proven its ability to step in with the passing of resolutions on the creation of the IIIM in Syria, and condemning the military coup in Myanmar, preceding the Security Council by more than 18 months. And of course, it has played a strong and assertive role after the illegal invasion of Ukraine, in particular since the Security Council delegated its authority under the Uniting for

Peace formula of the General Assembly. Thanks to the ability of the GA to live up to the challenge, in combination with other tracks, such as the Secretary General's efforts on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the UN has proven far more effective in response to the aggression against Ukraine than many feared a year ago.

If the Veto Initiative is one essential element in addressing the pervasive effect of the veto in the UN system, it must not be the only one. We are committed in particular to consider the application of Article 27(3) of the Charter which should ensure that "a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting" in decisions taken under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. This provision has not been applied according to its substance, and its proper application is of direct relevance to the question of the use of the veto. In essence, the State whose behavior is meant to be governed by the law should not be in a position to decide upon how the law is applied. We look forward to further conversations in this regard, in order to ensure that key provisions of the Charter such as this are exercised in line with its overall object and purpose.

The veto is the most controversial and the most debated provision of the Charter of the United Nations. It is of course also a fact of life and very likely here to stay. We can collectively mitigate its use by taking it to a very different place in the practice of the Council than the one it has been occupying for many long years. The veto must no longer be a permanent threat and possible impediment to the effectiveness of our organization, but slowly fade away into obsolescence through a range of measures. The Veto Initiative certainly is an essential step on this path which we must take together.

I thank you.