



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

NEW YORK, 29 SEPTEMBER 2014

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 69TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. Ms. AURELIA FRICK
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This has been an enormously difficult year for the United Nations. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, we are living in an era of unprecedented level of crises. I echo his call for leaders to unite. At a time when the world seems to be breaking apart, it will serve us well to remember what unites us. We need to look no further than the United Nations Charter. Its preamble offers the vision that seems so difficult for us to fulfill:

We are determined “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”

This organization was created to prevent war, more than anything else. Indeed, it offers a system of collective security that is far more effective than anything that had existed before. And yet, events over the past year have shaken its very foundations. At times, it seems that we are taken back to the habits of past centuries. We are disturbed by the acts of aggression perpetrated against Ukraine and by the illegal annexation of parts of its territory. These are massive violations of the principles upon which this organization is built. They are a major setback for collective security. As a small country situated in the heart of Europe, and as an OSCE member, we hope that we can quickly reestablish a consensus on security issues in Europe.

The events in Ukraine also underline the need to ensure the enforcement of international law, if necessary in a court of law. We now have the historic opportunity to criminalize the most serious forms of the illegal use of force in an international court – for the first time since the Nuremberg Tribunals. Jurisdiction for the crime of aggression before the International Criminal Court (ICC) is possible as early as 2017. The ratification process of the Kampala amendments is well on track. I welcome the ratifications by Latvia, Poland and Spain just a few days ago. We look forward to achieving this goal together with the largest possible number of partners.

For truly collective work to maintain peace and security, we need a collective sense of purpose. That is difficult to reconcile with the notion that a single Security Council member should be able to block action required for the UN to fulfill its purposes and principles – with no questions asked, no matter how large the majority in favor of such action. We do of course accept the veto as a reality of the Charter – as we did when we joined this organization. But we do not accept that the veto should be used in a manner that contradicts the very purposes of the United Nations. We have witnessed too many such instances in recent times. Change is urgently needed. We therefore look for a commitment from States serving on the Council not to vote against action necessary to prevent or end atrocity crimes. And indeed, we are looking in particular at the Permanent Members to give a clear commitment to this end.

We are determined “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person”

The United Nations, created as a family of nations, has the rights and dignity of the individual at the center of its efforts. This is a human rights organization. And this General Assembly, which we have entrusted to your leadership during this session, Mr. President, is also a human rights organ. The world is changing at ever-increasing speed. This requires our continued commitment for human rights.

The right to privacy, for example, is at risk of being uprooted. The digital era makes large-scale data collection both easy to undertake and difficult to detect. Discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity, religion, disability or other status remains rampant in many parts of the world.

The rise of religious intolerance is especially alarming: conflicts around the world are characterized by persecution of religious minorities – be they Shia, Yazidis, Christians or other – and we are witnessing a disturbing rise of anti-Semitism. This Assembly should respond by uniting in a call against the persecution of any religious minority, carried out anywhere in the world. I am also particularly alarmed at the rising violence against human rights defenders, such as the recent murder of Samira Saleh al-Nuaimi, an Iraqi activist and mother of three. There is nothing Islamic about this barbaric act committed by ISIS.

In times of conflict, international humanitarian law represents our hope for at least the bare minimum of human dignity. The Geneva Conventions are not only among the biggest achievements in the history of international law. They are also among the most successful treaties, with near universal acceptance. Nevertheless, their core principles, the proportionality of the use of force and the distinction between civilians and combatants, are violated on a daily basis. The recent conflict in Gaza was carried out at the expense of civilians by both conflict parties. The civilian population of Syria has gone through enormous suffering for over three years now. Atrocities have been committed against men, women and children, by the regime and increasingly by other actors. Humanitarian access has been blocked systematically as a method of warfare. And civilians in both Syria and Iraq are left at the mercy of the sickening brutality of ISIS. There has rarely been a time when civilians were at stronger risk of being victimized by atrocity crimes. We are not living up to our promise made some ten years ago to collectively ensure protection against these crimes.

We are determined “to reaffirm faith [...] in the equal rights of men and women”

Equality between men and women was one of the first things on the minds of the drafters of the UN Charter – just after the end of World War II. Is that not striking? We have certainly achieved much since then. The 1995 Beijing Conference in particular was a watershed moment in this regard. The commemoration of its 20th anniversary is the best opportunity for us to show that we remain fully committed to its outcome.

Next year, we will also reflect on our progress in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, fifteen years after it was established by Security Council resolution 1325. Clearly, we will have to find new strategies to protect women in conflict from violence, in particular sexual violence. And clearly, we are still far from using the full potential of women as agents of peace. Men have always been in charge of making war, and men have been in charge of making peace. Their record is not impressive. Women must get their seat at the negotiation table – where they belong, and where they are needed. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for taking the lead on this issue and increasingly appointing women to high positions in mediation and conflict resolution.

We are determined “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained”

Justice and the rule of law are areas where we have made important progress. International courts and other judicial mechanisms are gaining greater acceptance. Calls for accountability are becoming louder. And we can look at an impressive body of international jurisprudence.

This is particularly true for the International Criminal Court (ICC). Victims of the gravest crimes around the world are placing their hopes for justice into the Rome Statute system. This is a great responsibility for the Court, an institution which frequently works in a politically charged context. Those who support the Court must make their support felt. It is for this reason that I have initiated an informal network of ministers who support the ICC – who do so personally, as politicians. Our network has grown to 26 members. We stand ready to defend the Court and the integrity of the Rome Statute. We do so because we know that political attacks against the ICC are easy to launch, but difficult to respond to. The fact that the Court is an entirely independent institution that follows the law, not politics, does not grab headlines. And the fact that the ICC has jurisdiction in some places, but not in others, is easily misrepresented as selectivity. Our goal therefore remains for the Rome Statute to become a universal treaty. Victims of crimes in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and North Korea – to cite just a few examples – deserve their day in court as much as victims in other parts of the world.

We are “determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”

There could not be a bigger challenge for this Assembly than setting the global agenda for sustainable development for the next generation. And there could not be a greater opportunity to show its relevance.

The Millennium Development Goals were a success. They set the agenda for over a decade, galvanized tremendous efforts for development and led to very significant advances. But they were also a learning process. We must be honest about where we have failed and do better where we can. Three areas stand out in this respect:

1. Accountable institutions, access to justice, and the effective fight against corruption are key ingredients of development that is truly transformative and truly sustainable. This is amply illustrated by national experiences around the world and well documented by research. Placing the rule of law at the heart of the SDG agenda will thus be one key of success.
2. There is no sustainable development without the full empowerment of women. Nothing short of full equality between men and women will be required for development to be sustainable. We must therefore fully recognize the empowerment of women as key ingredient of sustainable development.
3. Implementation of international commitments cannot be left to chance. We need accountability. We must establish a system to monitor progress in the implementation of the post-2015 agenda – carried out by us States, but involving all stakeholders. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is the best anchor for such a system.

Our work so far in developing the post-2015 agenda gives us cause to be optimistic. Let us make the best use of the upcoming months to produce an agenda we can be truly proud of – as a platform for collective action and an inspiration for future generations.

I thank you.