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OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
59TH SESSION

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND TO THE
23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ENTITLED
“WOMEN 2000: GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR THE TWENTY-
FIRST CENTURY” BEIJING+20**

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. AURELIA FRICK
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be back at the Commission on the Status of Women and to celebrate with you the 20th anniversary of one of the biggest achievements for women's rights: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Until today, Beijing remains *the* most comprehensive and actionable document for advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and their human rights.

Not a single country in the world has truly achieved gender equality. The fight continues. And while we all know that men must be on board to achieve gender equality, women must lead the charge. Change is possible if we stand up for what is right.

Let's stand up for equality and full participation of women in public life.

The fact that you are here today means that you are acutely aware of the challenges women face in this regard – they are your own challenges. Women continue to be underrepresented in leading positions – in politics, the civil service, the private sector and academia. Some women manage to break through the glass ceiling, but what we need is structural change – which can in turn deeply affect the mindsets.

Let me share with you my own experience, and that of my country. I am proud to be here as Liechtenstein's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Culture, as a woman, and as a mother of two little children. Yet when I was a child, women in Liechtenstein were not allowed to vote. I was only nine years old, but I still remember fierce discussions at the dinner table over this issue. I remember how my aunt spoke up, courageously. She was also the one who inspired me to make my contribution through politics. In 1984, a referendum finally brought about women's right to vote. Since then, the involvement of women in politics in Liechtenstein has constantly increased. As a matter of law, equality between women and men has been realized. Gender equality in access to education is excellent.

I have thus personally experienced that change is possible, and that change can be catalyzed by the voices of women who stand up for what is right. That is not to say that in our country, the struggle for equality is over – far from it. Gender stereotypes persist, as does wage inequality. Much more needs to be done to create a level playing field between men and women. In this regard I particularly value the work of civil society – their demands can force governments into action, which is what we need.

Let's stand up for human rights.

“Women’s rights are human rights”, states the Beijing Declaration. This powerful statement reminds us that women’s rights are deeply rooted in longstanding commitments made by all of us. They stem from the UN Charter itself, in which we reaffirmed “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small”. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Human Rights Covenants, and CEDAW confirmed and elaborated these commitments further. These instruments are not up for re-negotiation – they are up for implementation.

Let's stand up to eliminate violence against women

Violence against women is the single most prevalent human rights violation around the globe. It affects every society around the world, every country. Its effects go far beyond the immediate physical and mental consequences. Violence against women slows down economic development. It is often strategically used as a tactic of war. For countless women and girls all over the world, violence is the greatest obstacle to full and effective equality. We must be united in our determination to put an end to this global scourge. We must use all the levers we have, including the post-2015 development agenda, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as the International Criminal Court.

Madam Chair,

The 20th anniversary of Beijing is cause for celebration, but more importantly, for action. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, “change towards gender equality has not been deep enough, nor has it been irreversible.” We therefore cannot relent. Let us continue to work together and seek progress. Judging by the enthusiasm and competence I have encountered at this session I feel I have every reason to be optimistic – and every reason to believe in the time-tested battle cry of women worldwide:

“We can do it!”