

**54TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
(1 MARCH – 12 MARCH 2010)**

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

NEW YORK, 8TH MARCH 2010

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairperson,

Fifteen years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Program of Action, the international community is still facing large gaps and challenges in their implementation within all twelve critical areas of concern. Despite some progress achieved around the world, resolute action is needed to ensure true gender equality. We fully concur with the Secretary-General that gender equality is not only “a basic human right, [but also] a fundamental value and an issue of social justice and essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and development effectiveness”.¹ Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are a central precondition for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in their entirety.

Institutional reform is one important means to achieve these goals. We must act swiftly to realize the agreed establishment of a new United Nations composite gender entity. We must translate the overwhelming support by Member States for strengthened gender equality architecture into decisive action. Strong and coherent leadership emanating from the new entity will support implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Program of Action.

The near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) represents further evidence of the international community’s commitment to gender equality. We hope that the 30th anniversary of its adoption can offer an additional incentive for the few States still outside of the Convention to make it universal.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me turn to measures taken by Liechtenstein at the national level. The Government’s Office of Equal Opportunity is playing a central role in the

¹ Report of the Secretary-General E/CN.6/2010/2

implementation of the Platform for Action of the Beijing+5 Conference as well as of the domestic Equal Opportunity Act.

In recent years, a central concern of the "Gender Equality Commission", an autonomous advisory body of the Government, has been the **representation of women in political bodies**, where they are still a minority. The Commission supports female candidates to parliamentary and municipal elections through training, technical assistance and advocacy.

Liechtenstein's **education** statistics show that significant progress has been made during the last decades with respect to the equality of girls and young women. Over 30 years ago, by far more boys than girls attended pre-university secondary school, while in 2005 the share of girls surpassed the share of boys. While only ten percent of university students were women in 1975, women represented almost half (43%) of university students in recent years. Compared to 1990, about 13% more women chose an academic career in 2000.

In the area of **employment**, the Liechtenstein Government continues to address existing discrimination that affects in particular women's salaries and career prospects. The Government has launched an information campaign for employees and employers and grants financial support for counseling and advancement programs relating to gender equality in employment. In 2007, the Labor Market Service of the Office of Economic Affairs developed a training program for **women seeking to re-enter the workforce** after childbirth. After a successful pilot project, the program has now been institutionalized.

With regard to **assistance for women that became victim of criminal offenses**, the Government of Liechtenstein concluded a three-part project in April 2008 that included an amendment of the substantive criminal code, a revision of the Code of Criminal Procedure with respect to victims' protection and the adoption of a

Victims' Assistance Act, providing medical, psychological, social, material, legal, and financial assistance.

At the international level, Liechtenstein has in recent years put particular emphasis on the plight of women in armed conflict, who often suffer a disproportionate and unique impact. Liechtenstein and Switzerland are jointly financing a project that aims to promote the full implementation of the Security Council's resolutions on **women, peace and security**. The project, which is executed by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, produces so-called "Monthly Action Points", a series of recommendations that show how each Security Council Presidency can provide leadership on this topic, and how the Security Council as a whole can systematically meet its responsibility toward women in armed conflict.

These are just a few examples of how the Liechtenstein Government is responding to the need for concrete action to protect women and girls from discrimination and violence and to promote gender equality.

I thank you.