



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

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR. PETER MATT

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UN IN GENEVA

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Chair,

This year's high-level week was dominated by a discussion on the value of a rules-based international order. While sobering and alarming at times, it also brought a strong commitment by an overwhelming majority to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Not for a very long time, however, have positions on the very foundations of the UN so starkly diverged. Today that divergence penetrates all areas of multilateralism, all pillars of the United Nations and all agendas that we have set ourselves in this house. It has erosive effects on our collective security that can be felt most imminently when it comes to the subject matters of this Committee. The new arms race combined with increasing disrespect of legal norms and the unwillingness of a few to address the threats posed by new technologies puts us on a dangerous trajectory. Inaction has hardly ever come at a higher cost than today. The Secretary-General has recognized the signs and proposed a way forward. Liechtenstein supports his new disarmament agenda, which is ambitious given the current political environment, but in many respects sets a bare minimum standard for our collective response to today's threats. All the more, Liechtenstein will vigorously

support efforts to implement the Secretary-General's vision to secure our common future in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Chair,

The acquis of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements comes with tangible security gains and has proved time and again its potential to reduce tension. It goes without saying that compliance with obligations is essential to enjoy the full benefits of the rule of law. Unfortunately, we see this guiding principle of international relations more and more under pressure – with particularly grave consequences when such longstanding norms as the total prohibition of chemical weapons or the fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law are routinely violated. Our response should be to strengthen the agreements we have entered into and to increase accountability for non-compliance. The Security Council too often fails to live up to its responsibility in this regard. But the increasing willingness of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies to step up should be a reason for hope. With the IIMM we have a valuable tool to address the gravest violations of international law in Syria, including chemical weapons attacks. It is currently the only avenue to justice in Syria.

Mr. Chair,

Liechtenstein welcomes the détente in the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula and the prospect of increased security as a result. We hope that the political commitments soon translate into legal obligations and verifiable steps towards denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Tangible progress towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would be a very welcome and concrete first step toward a more comprehensive package of agreements. The way of multilateral diplomacy has been successful in other crises of non-proliferation. Liechtenstein continues to consider the JCPOA a landmark achievement in that respect. Security Council resolution 2231 is a reflection of the collective security gains that the international community as a whole associates with this agreement– and that we risk losing should the agreement be further undermined. Resolution 2231 remains binding on all States and we hence share a responsibility to comply with its provisions.

Mr. Chair,

The total elimination of nuclear weapons has guided the work of the UN since its very beginnings. Within the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) it has given effect to the “grand bargain” between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Without any doubt the world is a much safer place thanks to the safeguards regime of the NPT. Unfortunately, we have not come anywhere close to that level of implementation with respect to nuclear disarmament, quite to the contrary. The serious obligations for nuclear weapon States contained in the NPT are routinely mistaken for discretionary options or, worse, entitlements. Important agreements from NPT review conferences suffer from revisionism or are discarded altogether, including in this Committee. We will soon have a new opportunity to rectify this course of action with next NPT Review Conference. Liechtenstein is committed to work towards a substantive result that builds on past agreements.

Mr. Chair,

Liechtenstein is one of the initial signatories of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW helps restore the balance of the NPT and thereby strengthens it. It complements the CTBT and its verification machinery in establishing a clear legal norm against nuclear tests. Most importantly, however, the TPNW draws a clear legal line against any attempts to justify the use of nuclear weapons. There is simply no such justification in light of the horrendous and indiscriminate suffering these weapons infallibly inflict on civilians. The comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons enshrined in the TPNW represents the will of a large majority of States and will strengthen the rule of law at the international level. It is our firm hope that it will also provide the foundation for nuclear disarmament in the future. In the current circumstances the TPNW is our best reason for optimism in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

The Secretary-General has identified a number of serious emerging threats based on increased technical capacities and new developments in the areas of cyber and artificial intelligence. The

work of the Group of Governmental Experts on ICT has made an important contribution to our collective understanding of the scope of threats and the necessity for cooperation and risk reduction. There can be no question that the future of warfare will be significantly based on cyber weapons and, based on past experience, it is not difficult to assert that the rules regulating the use of force extends to cyber space. The UN Charter does not cease to apply in cyberspace, nor do many other legal agreements that regulate State behavior on the illegal use of force, the conduct during conflict, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as fundamental rights and freedoms. The applicability of existing legal obligations in cyberspace is thus an indispensable component of our future discussions, and indeed a precondition to identify possible legal gaps. Liechtenstein supports such a discussion in particular when it comes to the illegal use of force against the background of existing legal obligations, including the framework of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Given the relevance of this topic to all States discussions on cybersecurity should henceforth take place in a regular and inclusive format. Moreover, a number of technical developments clearly point to a need for new legal obligations, in particular in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Liechtenstein supports efforts to establish binding standards to ensure a human component in the decision making processes of such systems. The principled resistance of very few States should not prevent the large majority from establishing and benefitting from new standards in this area – as it did not on many other important disarmament questions in the past. Liechtenstein looks forward to stronger collective action in this area.

I thank you