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**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL  
HIGH-LEVEL OPEN DEBATE ON CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY**

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Madam President,

Liechtenstein welcomes you to the United Nations and to the Presidency of the Security Council this month. I applaud you for your decision to focus the Council's attention on the complex interplay between conflict and hunger, and I am grateful for the invitation to participate in this debate. While we eagerly wait for the Security Council to restore established levels of transparency, inclusion and accountability – as other Charter bodies are making strides to – we also hope that in the meantime contributions like these will help inform the Council's deliberations and decisions on a topic that is of concern to all of us. Resolution 2417 is a landmark decision in the Security Council's overall approach to prevent and resolve conflict. It is a strong case in point that the Council must adopt a comprehensive concept of security to implement its mandate effectively. It also shows that the Security Council is part of an overall UN system aspiring to realize the generational promise enshrined in the SDGs – a perspective that the Council would benefit from adopting more comprehensively. The potential for the Security Council to address food insecurity as a root cause of conflicts is vast and mostly untapped. At the same time, the Security Council is ultimately responsible to address conflict-induced food crises by ensuring humanitarian access to those in need. The Council's track record in that respect is unfortunately also very limited.

Madam President,

Only two weeks ago, the Security Council was briefed about the harrowing fact that 60% of the population of Syria do not have regular access to enough safe and nutritious food – 12.4 million people. In Syria's North-West children suffer from hunger and its grave health consequences at unprecedented levels. Ten years of war by the Syrian authorities against its own population also represent ten years of the Security Council failing the Syrian people – a singular and lasting stain on the Council's legacy. While a direct consequence of the armed conflict, the current humanitarian crisis in Syria no doubt has complex causes. They need to be addressed in a comprehensive political solution to bring Syria on a path to peace, prosperity and justice. At the

same time, it is evident that hunger continues to be used as an instrument of warfare and those responsible are relentless in their efforts to sustain the suffering, in a climate of pervasive impunity. Humanitarian access continues to be restricted or blocked arbitrarily by the Syrian authorities in a systematic abuse of the consent principle for cross-line aid deliveries. Therefore, the remaining cross-border humanitarian channel is a life-line for 3 million people that the Security Council must preserve, ideally complemented by further cross-border channels in accordance with the humanitarian needs on the ground. Should the Council fail in its responsibility to ensure that assistance can be provided to all those who need it, the General Assembly should be prepared to take complementary action. The arbitrary denial of humanitarian access is a war crime, as is the starvation of a population, which has been included into the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In the past ten years, the Security Council has consistently failed to hold perpetrators of atrocity crimes in Syria to account, with devastating effects in terms of civilian suffering. The work of the General Assembly mandated IIIM is thus of key importance and today provides the most direct pathway to justice, in addition to national prosecutions such as recently in Germany. In light of the far-reaching legal tools the Security Council has at its disposal, it should urgently revisit its hostile stance against international justice efforts and use its authority to ensure that conflict parties respect international humanitarian law.

Madam President,

The conflict in Yemen stands out as one of the most massive food security crises. The UN has tirelessly stressed the need for compliance by all sides with the fundamental rules of war, as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Instead, the war has been characterized by the utmost disregard for international law. Hostilities continue to be fueled by foreign intervention, their consequences are borne by the Yemeni people, 80% of whom are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Two-thirds of all districts are pre-famine, an unconscionable state of affairs. Time and again we have seen the politicization of humanitarian access. To break the cycle of the conflict-induced food insecurity in Yemen the Security Council

must make humanitarian access its highest priority and not accept restrictions for UN and other humanitarian actors to safely and efficiently deliver assistance. The Council is only credible in doing so, if it is ready to enforce its position. This is also a responsibility the Council has vis-à-vis the humanitarian actors on the ground, including the many dedicated UN staff.

Madam President,

The reports on the conflict in the Ethiopian Tigray region are extremely concerning, both from a humanitarian and an accountability perspective. The Security Council must ensure urgent access to the region for humanitarian actors, an end to the communications blackout and an investigation into the reports about atrocities. Liechtenstein welcomes the agreement between the World Food Programme and the government of Ethiopia on humanitarian access as well as the leadership shown by Ireland in the Council's discussions. It should be the primary interest of the Security Council to ensure its terms are fully honored to prevent a worsening of the humanitarian crisis, and the worst-case scenario of a famine in the region. While the Security Council's support for regional mediation efforts will hopefully soon lead to political progress towards the resolution of the crisis, the Council has also a responsibility to take the necessary steps to reduce human suffering and increase the prospects for a political solution wherever possible. It is regrettable that the Security Council so far fails to express itself clearly in this sense, but today's debate should provide additional impetus for a Council product.

Thank you.