



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 124 – STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

DEBATE - VETO INITIATIVE – “NON-PROLIFERATION/ DEMOCRATIC PEOPLES’ REPUBLIC OF KOREA”

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein deplores the casting of a veto in the Security Council by two permanent members, China and the Russian Federation, on a draft resolution on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea considered by the Council on 26 May. This is the first draft Security Council resolution addressing non-proliferation that has been subjected to a veto. It sets a concerning precedent for the Council’s work, but also sends a problematic message for the internationally agreed non-proliferation architecture. The DPRK’s recent series of ballistic missile launches – including the launch of an ICBM – clearly violate numerous Security Council resolutions passed since Resolution 1718 in 2006. Most notably, the Council had decided in its most recent Resolution 2397 that, in the case of a launch of an ICBM, the Security Council “will take action to restrict further the export to the DPRK of petroleum” – a commitment that the Council was unable to fulfil because of the

use of the veto, and against the yes votes of 13 Council members.

Over the period since the passing of Resolution 1718, the DPRK has continued to pursue nuclear weapons technology, in violation of the NPT and the CTBT, as well as other weapons of mass destruction. The pursuit of such weapons does not make anybody safer – not anywhere, ever, and not in this particular situation. Instead, it raises the possibility of miscalculation and heightens the prospect of catastrophic effects for civilians. In the pursuit of these weapons, the DPRK has systematically diverted scant resources from a starving population, compounding a dire economic, humanitarian and human rights situation for its people, and exacerbating a crisis of human security. The draft resolution put forward would have broadened humanitarian exemptions at a critical time for the DPRK, given the COVID-19 situation, low vaccination rates and concerning levels of general health in the country.

Mr. President,

Only a few weeks ago, the casting of a veto in the Council would have been the end of the discussion. The UN membership, assembled in this hall, did not have an opportunity to express itself on situations where Council action was blocked by the veto with limited exceptions. Today, we mark the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the United Nations – by agreeing to the Veto Initiative at the end of April, by consensus, this Assembly has created a standing mechanism which serves both to empower the GA and to enhance accountability between the principal organs of

the UN. This means that the vetoing State no longer has the last word on issues of peace and security; instead it puts the General Assembly in place to carry out its own responsibilities in this regard. We were not looking forward to seeing a veto cast so soon after the adoption of the Veto Initiative. At the same time today's meeting illustrates the political value of this new mechanism. The strong participation today demonstrates the willingness of the membership to make the best possible use of this opportunity.

Mr. President

When the Security Council is unable to act, the General Assembly can be a constructive partner in finding potential ways forward, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. It can of course do so by taking its own decisions on the question before it, if it so chooses - resolution 76/262 is not prescriptive with regard to an outcome. We believe that today's debate should inform our collective reflections in this respect and look forward to following the thoughts and ideas that this debate will produce.

I thank you.