



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 78<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. DOMINIQUE HASLER  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President,

We gather this year under ever more daunting challenges: Our window to address climate change is narrowing rapidly. Progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is stagnating – in part, it is even being reversed. There have never been more conflicts, since the creation of the United Nations. The number of displaced persons is at record levels and food insecurity has doubled since 2020. Children are subject to more suffering than ever. And urgently needed political consensus on key agendas is becoming more challenging. The ability of the United Nations to function as the peace organization for our world is increasingly paralyzed. It is our joint responsibility to safeguard the international order for future generations. In doing so, we have an opportunity: to make the United Nations stronger, more equitable, more resilient. We are ready to tackle this task, together with you, with a sense of deep responsibility, but also with courage and confidence in our ability to succeed.

There is a common thread to the various challenges we are facing: the rule of law. Which means that relations between States are governed by the law. That this law is the result of international agreements. That it applies to everyone. And that there are consequences if it is violated. This was the spirit that guided those who gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to agree on the Charter of the United Nations – the most successful and most impactful treaty ever adopted.

At its very heart, the United Nations is a peace organization. It has risen from the ashes of two devastating world wars and makes a powerful promise to the future generations that the UN Charter addresses: That we, gathered in this Assembly, we will not allow unlawful war-making to bring devastation, human suffering and instability to the peoples that we represent.

As leaders we have to ask, self-critically: Are we truly trying hard enough to put these promises into action? Illegal warfare is the biggest challenge to this organization. And there is no doubt that the unprovoked and in its core colonizing war that Russia has been waging against its neighbor Ukraine, a founding member of the United Nations, is the most egregious, blatant and

manifest violation of the prohibition of the illegal use of force since the creation of the United Nations. For us to stand up together against this act of aggression means, most importantly, standing up for the international legal order. This order is certainly the only security guarantee – especially for us as a small state but also for the international community.

This Assembly is the bedrock of genuine multilateralism, based on the principle of sovereign equality. As such, it has lived up admirably to the challenge it was handed by the Security Council, paralyzed by the use of the veto. Together, we have called for the complete withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukrainian territory. We have together defined the parameters for a just peace that we all want to see as soon as possible. And we have made together the legal determination that the actions by Russia against Ukraine amount to an act of aggression. We yet have to take the next obvious step together: to ensure criminal accountability for this act of aggression for the individuals who have ordered it, in line with international law. We will continue our conversations with all of you to enable us to achieve this. This serves the goal of a just peace for Ukraine – in accordance with the terms defined by us, in this Assembly. But it will also have a catalytic effect of far wider reach.

In ensuring criminal accountability for the most manifest violations of the United Nations Charter, we will also protect ourselves, in particular the small States among us – our own sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our international order is founded on the prohibition of the illegal use of force. For this prohibition to be effective, it must be backed up by accountability – by the rule of law. This of course is the task of the International Criminal Court – established 25 years ago with competence over the most serious crimes under international law, the crime of aggression among them. We have to give the Court the competence to exercise full jurisdiction as quickly as possible, so it can fulfil its task with respect to the illegal use of force.

Mr. President,

Aggression is a fundamental challenge to all of us who have signed on to the UN Charter. At its core, the United Nations is and must continue to be a peace organization. For billions of individuals, this building embodies the promise that we will respond collectively to those who openly undermine peace and security. This is why Liechtenstein has joined this organization over three decades ago. This is the pledge made to future generations in San Francisco. And it is the expectation that our people have. The UN has evolved tremendously since its creation. It has been the crucial force in advancing international law. Its role as provider of humanitarian assistance has become irreplaceable. Its agencies and programs carry out functions of enormous importance to individuals around the globe. Yet, its core mission is and remains, the maintenance of peace and security. And this is the role that we are challenged to safeguard. This is a difficult task.

It is a fact that the Security Council is often unable to act. The deep political divisions among the Permanent Members are likely a reality for years to come. The pernicious effects of the veto are being mitigated, but they persist often to devastating effect for the people affected. Next year's Summit of the Future is an essential collective test for all of us. We must show our ability to find ways to ensure collective action when the Security Council fails in its tasks. This Assembly will therefore have to play a central role in a new agenda for peace. And we can do more to bring the Security Council's practice in line with the law we all have subscribed to when joining the United Nations.

We are proud to have presented to this Assembly the Veto Initiative, which ensures accountability and institutional balance. We should now focus on ensuring that those who are parties to a dispute do not participate in the decision-making on these disputes. This is simply the law in the UN Charter – and its application has been neglected so far.

Mr. President,

In recent years, climate change has occupied an increasingly central place in our discussions. This hall has seen summit meeting after summit meeting on this issue. This year again, we are urgently reminded of the limited window we have to address the climate crisis. From weather extremes to sea level rise, all regions of the world are affected by climate change. But those who have done the least to cause the crisis in the first place are the ones most affected. We certainly are in the fight of our lives, as Secretary General Guterres has said. However, as we are gathering here, we are not on track to win this fight. We hope to see significant progress at the COP meeting in Abu Dhabi later this year. But that alone will not be enough. For climate change as well, the law must be guiding us. This is why we have strongly supported the request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the question of climate change. We are confident that the Court will help us have clarity regarding the complex legal questions concerning climate change and thus assist in our common fight against this most existential threat.

Mr. President,

This initiative, led by Vanuatu was yet another example of leadership from small States, a testament to genuine and effective multilateralism. Small States like ourselves – and we are indeed a majority in this Assembly – need the United Nations. But the United Nations also needs us – and more so than ever. It is us small States who look automatically beyond our national interests. We understand that our success does not have to come at the cost of someone else's loss. We look for partnerships as a matter of course and as a way to success. And we work for the rule of law as a matter of enlightened self-interest. At a time of competitive alliance-building, our ability and willingness to forge common ground is indispensable for the future success of the United Nations. We can and we will play an important role in shaping the Summit of the Future.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda remains one of the most successful expressions of common ground from the past decade. It plays an ever more important role in shaping Government policies. And it is deeply embedded in the consciousness of our people. The SDGs may well be the most widely known agreement the UN has reached in the last decades. And yet, halfway through the implementation process, the picture is rather bleak: The number of people living in extreme poverty is higher than before the COVID pandemic. Hunger levels are back to 15 years ago. At the current pace, full gender equality is not just decades away, but in fact centuries. And the lack of progress across our countries is mirrored in the difficulty to find political consensus on the way forward. This negative trend needs to be reversed now! The 2030 Agenda is the only global roadmap we have to overcome the multiple crises we face today.

Liechtenstein's strong commitment to the SDGs is also reflected in its second Voluntary National Review I was honored to present earlier this year. Our Official Development Assistance spending has been increased by 22% in comparison to 2018. This is meant to help reverse the negative trends in the fields of poverty reduction, food security, access to education as well as climate protection. All Government bills are now evaluated against the Sustainable Development Goals. Our commitment to the 2030 Agenda is a genuine expression of multilateralism – of which we need to see more.

Mr. President

Gender equality is a central part of this agenda. We will not forget the countless women who suffer from violence and oppression worldwide. We will continue calling out situations of systematic gender persecution, from Afghanistan to Iran. And we will continue calling for the empowerment of women, to support the bravery of women, who stand up to demand political change, from Belarus to Myanmar. We need women's voices and active role in our national politics and in international leadership positions, in particular in peace operations.

Mr. President,

The international community faces major challenges that will shape the future of us all. As highlighted at the beginning: By signing the UN Charter, we have given future generations the promise of a prosperous future. We can no longer afford to remain inactive and divided on key issues. Therefore, we have to face difficult questions and different interests. Even if solving these problems is not easy, we must never lose sight of the UN's very main purpose, which is to ensure global peace. This requires the contribution of all states, large and small. Rule of law, democracy, social justice, tolerance and the ability to engage in dialogue are fundamental conditions for peace. In the spirit of San Francisco, Liechtenstein will continue to advocate strongly for these values within the international community.

I thank you.