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37th session of the Human Rights Council

High-level panel discussion on the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

28 February 2018

Intervention by H.E. Peter Matt
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein welcomes the convocation of today's celebration on the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Seventy years ago, the principle of the universality of human rights was established in the Declaration, and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirmed and expanded this concept. The full implementation of the principles adopted in both documents remains of utmost relevance. Sadly, many of these basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated with disturbing frequency.

2018 marks yet another decisive birthday we should not forget: the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Even though human rights defenders are entitled to the same rights as all persons, they too often face reprisals intended to prevent their cooperation with the United Nations and other international bodies in the field of human rights. During our celebrations we must also continue to recognise the human rights defenders' contributions they provide to the full implementation of our basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Today marks yet another good opportunity to reflect on our achievements, best practices and challenges with regard to the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. A key role in coordinating our international implementation efforts plays the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and we underline the importance that the Office is adequately funded.

Resolution 35/1 also encourages us, the States, to use these anniversaries as a tool to raise awareness of these two landmark documents and their role in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. We take this encouragement serious and have adopted a national strategy to celebrate these anniversaries throughout the year.