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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
65TH SESSION

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR KATRIN EGGENBERGER
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JUSTICE AND CULTURE

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

I am honored to speak before this Commission today as a longstanding advocate for gender equality. In the last two decades we have seen gradual progress in the areas of gender equality and women's participation and decision-making in public life in Liechtenstein. Our parliamentary elections earlier this year resulted in the highest number of elected female parliamentarians ever – and we hope this will set a positive trend.

Liechtenstein's story of gender equality, including the opportunity for me to address this Commission as the head of my country's delegation, is also the story of an active and vibrant civil society. For example, the Women's Network (Frauennetz), including various women's organizations, have been actively engaged in creating more diversity in public offices and politics. In addition, our National Human Rights Institution, with its dedicated work, has contributed to the promotion of human rights and gender equality. These voices are indispensable in our common endeavors for more gender equality. And much progress – both nationally and internationally – has been made thanks to women human rights defenders, women's organizations and feminist movements. I am therefore very concerned about the shrinking civic space in many parts of the world, a trend further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Any acts of discrimination, violence, intimidations and reprisals against women human rights defenders must be condemned by all of us in the clearest terms.

Gender-based violence has plagued humankind for as long as it has existed. This widespread human rights violation has been severely exacerbated by COVID-19. Therefore, this year in particular we must put action behind our pledge of zero tolerance to any kind of discrimination and violence against women and girls. Liechtenstein is committed to continue and strengthen activities in this regard. Thus, we are currently finalizing the preparatory work concerning the ratification of the Istanbul-Convention. With our "Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking" (FAST) initiative we have developed a Blueprint for financial institutions to do their part to prevent and end human trafficking and modern slavery by which women and girls are affected disproportionately.

Mr. President,

To enable women to fully enjoy their rights, we need to create an environment that is enabling, and free of discrimination, unfair social norms, attitudes, and corruptive practices. It also requires the creation of effective, accountable, transparent and gender-responsive institutions, and providing equal access to quality education and equal opportunities. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the 2030 Agenda, in particular with SDG 5 and SDG 16, reflect our clear collective commitment to this end. And only with equal participation and representation can we achieve the SDGs. Yet women all over the world remain significantly underrepresented in all aspects of decision-making. And many women and girls face structural inequalities, discrimination and limited access to justice. While the UN system has shown strong leadership on gender equality, there are also continued problems of equal participation. Some entities, such as the International Law Commission, continue to suffer from a massive inequality in gender representation. As a very positive counterexample, I applaud the system of minimum voting requirements established for the election of ICC judges which ensures good gender representation and offers an effective alternative to quota.

Ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation is critical also in conflict prevention and disarmament, peacekeeping and reconstruction. In order to better understand the impact of the participation of women in armed forces on the respect of international humanitarian law, Liechtenstein has launched a research project together with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. We hope that the results of this project will further the WPS agenda, and help us increase compliance with IHL and achieve more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Only if we fully and equally include women in all aspects of life can we solve global challenges of our times.

I thank you.