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

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AGENDA ITEM 66: REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT BY MR. NOAH OEHRI**

FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

President,

We thank the President of the Human Rights Council for presenting a comprehensive and informative account of the Council's work. This year marks the 20th anniversary since the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Council, as the United Nations' central human rights body, has since played a crucial role in ensuring that States respect their obligations under international human rights law and in preventing and responding to violations thereof. Over two decades, it has become a critical forum not only for governments, but also for a range of non-governmental representatives and civil society actors. Earlier this year, the UN membership unanimously reaffirmed the status of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. And while we understand that many of us would have preferred an upgrade to this status, Liechtenstein welcomed these discussions as a timely opportunity to reaffirm our strong and principled support for the important work of the Council.

Unfortunately, the human rights pillar, including the work of the Council, has also been increasingly challenged and marginalized over recent years, inter alia due to the erosion of respect for international law, growing geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts, arising challenges due to climate change and new and emerging technologies, the overlapping of many

mandated activities and chronic underfunding. The ongoing UN80 reform process has so far engaged only lightly with human rights issues — even though this remains the least funded pillar of the Organization's work and, in the view of many Member States, the one most consistently overlooked in reform discussions. Liechtenstein believes this moment calls for more deliberate attention: reform processes that leave the human rights pillar as an afterthought risk undermining, rather than strengthening, the mutually reinforcing nature of the UN's three pillars. It is in this spirit that we have recently convened discussions to identify practical and politically viable pathways for strengthening the human rights system, both within the UN80 process and beyond. These conversations also addressed the relationship between New York and Geneva and what practical steps could be taken to increase coherence and coordination. In this regard, we also welcome the ongoing HRC rationalization and efficiency process, which has already delivered tangible results over the course of the last sessions. These efforts undertaken in Geneva constitute a significant step in line with the roadmap put forward by the HRC and 3C Bureaux.

President,

Along with the highest number of armed conflicts since the establishment of the United Nations, we are also facing an unprecedented human rights crisis. We were pleased that the Council, despite the challenges previously outlined, managed to respond to these crises in a timely manner and pass a number of important resolutions.

In light of the **worsening situation in Sudan**, the Human Rights Council held an urgent debate in July on the human rights situation in and around El Obeid, where around half a million civilians were at risk of large-scale atrocities. We reiterate our grave concern about external interference sustaining this conflict and underscore the need for accountability.

In the course of the year, the Human Rights Council has several times addressed the escalation of the situation in **Iran and the Middle East** where civilian lives are heavily impacted by ongoing wars and repression. We particularly deplore the violent crackdown of peaceful protests by the Iranian security forces at the beginning of the year, likely resulting in crimes against humanity,

including thousands of extrajudicial and arbitrary killings as well as the increased use of the death penalty as a punishment for the exercise of fundamental freedoms.

With the International Criminal Court, the international community has created an institution that responds to the gravest crimes under international law and ensures that those responsible can be held to account where national systems are unable or unwilling to act. As a cornerstone of the international legal order, the Court has an essential role to play in both situations: in Sudan, where it continues its work on crimes committed in Darfur, and in the Middle East, where accountability for atrocity crimes remains indispensable to a lasting peace. Liechtenstein reiterates its unwavering support for the Court and calls on all States to cooperate fully with it.

President,

The participation of civil society actors and human rights defenders is integral to advancing the work of the United Nations, in particular the Human Rights Council, and our collective commitments to uphold human rights and build more peaceful, equal and just societies. Following the most recent report by the Secretary-General, we are particularly concerned by the rise in transnational repression, further facilitated by digital technologies for the purpose of surveillance, intimidation and harassment of civil society actors and human rights defenders across borders. In this regard, we welcome the recent joint statement signed by over 130 Special Procedure mandate holders and members of Treaty Bodies and echo their call for coordinated, rights-based and victim-centered responses grounded in international law. At a time of heightened threat against civic space, Liechtenstein reiterates its commitment to protect, support and ensure the safe, meaningful and unhindered engagement of civil society representatives with the United Nations.

I thank you.