



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

NEW YORK, 29 OCTOBER 2018

THIRD COMMITTEE

ITEM 73: SELF-DETERMINATION

STATEMENT BY MR. MATTHEW EDBROOKE, POLITICAL ADVISOR

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Chair,

The right of self-determination is a cornerstone of the UN Charter, as well as a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of individual human rights, as evidenced in Common Article 1 of the twin human rights covenants and General Comment 12 of the Human Rights Committee.

For many, however, the right of self-determination seems to be a thing that belongs to discussions from the past. This Committee's interpretation of self-determination, as expressed each year through its resolutions, is of limited relevance to the discussion of self-determination outside of these walls. Today, the majority of communities who invoke questions of self-determination do so not in the context of decolonization, but as part of their desire to change the relationship with the state of which they are part. In addition, the majority of self-determination situations do not find solutions in secession and independence, but in self-governance, minority rights, and reconciliation. In conducting a debate that passes over the majority of self-determination movements across the globe, we are missing an opportunity to demonstrate our understanding that self-determination is not a right that pertains once, at the moment of independence, but a right that belongs to all peoples at all times, and can be

expressed in various ways.

Mr. Chair,

Since joining the United Nations in 1990, Liechtenstein has explored innovative approaches to the implementation of the right of self-determination, particularly in the context of conflict. The proliferation of unresolved self-determination conflicts within States speaks to the need to have an open and honest debate about how to prevent and resolve contentious self-determination claims.

Liechtenstein does not recognise an unconditional right to secession outside the context of decolonization. Much rather, in addressing today's emerging self-determination conflicts, we want to find ways for self-determination to coexist with the principle of territorial integrity. In order to do this, we must harness the preventive capability of dialogue. We advocate engagement by the state with communities seeking a greater measure of self-governance on the basis of good faith between the parties, with the aim of preventing the escalation of these grievances into a violent self-determination conflict. Communities that seek greater self-governance are often labelled as threats to the state's territorial integrity: but rather than dismissing their needs, we should ensure that they are represented in a way that meets their needs as a community. We hope that a good faith dialogue will not only ensure better representation, but also promote peace. We commend the Secretary-General for the strong focus he places on conflict prevention, and hope that this approach can contribute to his efforts.

Mr. Chair,

Going forward, Liechtenstein will continue to work towards enhancing the prevention and successful resolution of self-determination conflicts. To this end, we will work closely with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination in Princeton, which seeks to create an apolitical environment for the discussion of the root causes of a people's desire for increased self-

governance. We will continue to update this committee on our work to realise the fulfillment of the right of self-determination in due course.

I thank you.