



GOVERNMENT  
PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

MINISTRY OF  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND FINANCE

# Speech by Prime Minister

## Dr. Daniel Risch

Minister of General Government Affairs and Finance

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Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

When Liechtenstein applied for membership of the United Nations in 1990, safeguarding our sovereignty was a key incentive. We have certainly greatly benefitted from over three decades of membership. At the same time, there is also a sense of frustration, occasionally also disappointment among the people of Liechtenstein.

They expect the United Nations to be the guardian of peace and security – as the organization that stands up for the sovereign equality of all States, large and small. The guarantor of the rule of law and the protection against those who believe that might makes right. Too often, these expectations have been thwarted.

We do not agree with those who are resigned to the dictates of realpolitik. Instead, we promote the view that the United Nations can do valuable work in many areas – to address the challenges of climate change, humanitarian disasters and global health crises amongst others.

The United Nations symbol on this podium, reminds us of the overreaching goal of this organization. We see the earth in the center – and olive branches - as the universal symbol of peace – embracing it.

And I ask you: is there anything more we should understand about the United Nations being a peace organization – created to “save future generations from the scourge of war”?

This mission that we are realizing also in Europe is of more urgent relevance than we had hoped. Of course, the drafters of the UN Charter have entrusted the Security Council of the United Nations with the primary responsibility over peace and security.

The body in which five States hold the veto power and can block any decision, even when supported by an overwhelming majority of the international community. This is taken to a level of absurdity by the fact that one veto-wielding member – the Russian Federation – far from acting as a guardian of the international order, has engaged in a blatant and far-reaching aggression against another State, violating the core principles of our common organization.

We are thus collectively facing an enormous challenge to the core mission of the United Nations. We in Liechtenstein strongly believe that this is a moment to stand up for what this organization represents, and a moment to fight back against those who are trying to roll back history. We believe that small and medium sized States, which make up the majority of this organization, can shape our own fate and stand up for our interests.

If the Security Council cannot uphold its responsibility, we must find alternatives. And indeed, they do exist. The General Assembly has a strong constitutional role on peace issues, and it should step in where the Council is silent. By presenting the Veto Initiative, Liechtenstein has ensured that a veto in the Council is no longer the last

word. We can now use the power given to the General Assembly by taking decisions when the Council is unable to do so.

We also encourage the Secretary-General to play a more proactive role and to use the unique authority of the UN, grounded in international law, to mediate, prevent and address conflicts.

And we remind each Council Member to observe all relevant Charter provisions, including those requiring them to abstain from voting on resolutions regarding disputes to which they are a party. The Charter is not a menu to pick and choose from, but a set of clear ground rules for the conduct of multilateralism.

The many complex and diverse challenges we are facing today – from climate change to nuclear threats, from impunity for international crimes, to sea-level rise – have one thing in common: They all require responses based on international law.

Liechtenstein is well-known for its consistent and principled engagement for the rule of law at the United Nations. This engagement will persist, on the basis of enlightened self-interest, as our contribution to the international order which enables us to live in prosperity and in solidarity with our partners around the world. The world that – as shown in the UN symbol above me – should be embraced by peace.

I thank you.