



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
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SECURITY COUNCIL - OPEN DEBATE

**MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY: HUMANITARIAN EFFECTS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND PEACE AND SECURITY
STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. President,

Thank you for using your presidency to again bring the issue of climate change to this Council's attention. Although climate change was discussed by this Council as recently as July, we consider it urgent to have an opportunity to speak to it again. Indeed, given the perilous situation in which we find ourselves, Liechtenstein must highlight the dire need for this Council to take drastic action on the key systemic security issue of our time.

The General Assembly first considered a report by the Secretary-General on the security impacts of climate change 11 years ago.¹ This debate's concept note also points out that the link between climate and security was first raised by the Council two years before that.² Yet, according to this year's United in Science report, States have not heeded the warnings: the five years since the Paris Agreement have been the hottest on record, and it is increasingly possible that the world will reach 1.5C degrees of warming in the next five years at least temporarily, a threshold deemed the point of no return during the Paris negotiations. Some may remember the call from our colleagues from the Republic of the Marshall Islands in Paris: "1.5 to stay alive". This Council –

¹ A/64/350

² S/2007/186

with a small number of its members combined responsible for more than half of the world's CO2 emissions – is confronted with the fact that without urgent action, their CO2 emissions will directly create mass insecurity on a hitherto unforeseen scale. Entire populations will die and States will become uninhabitable - a crime against our planet and against the climate vulnerable.

The violent and armed conflicts discussed in the concept note for today's debate are a portent of this death and destruction. We know that desertification, dwindling water resources, and food and water insecurity have already led to violent conflict, both in situations where the Council has addressed the issue, such as in the Lake Chad Basin and Somalia, and in those where it has not, notably in Syria and Yemen. Secondary impacts of climate change such as increased involuntary migration, poverty, the loss of livelihoods and social tensions between farmers and herders have themselves led to conflict, something that the Council readily accepts in some instances. But while it is important that the Council recognizes these proximate factors, it must also trace them back to their root causes. To fail to do so is to fail to exercise effective prevention or to sustain peace, and to disregard human security in favour of a paradigm that recognizes the salience of conflicts only in terms of armed origins and solutions.

Mr. President,

The Council is not short of recommendations for how it better engage with climate-related security risks. Fundamental to these is a reckoning with climate change as a root cause of insecurity, and related to this, the development of an understanding of human insecurity as worthy of addressing before those affected resort to armed violence. The Council can already tap into a wide range of expertise across the UN system, such as the DPPA-UNDP-UNEP Climate Security Mechanism, and in other specialized agencies. It should pursue a resolution on Climate and Security as a standalone topic, one that establishes a reporting mechanism that makes use of this considerable expertise. It may also wish to consider whether a task force of relevant UN agencies could strengthen the Council's engagement on the climate and security nexus through regular briefings and otherwise supplying relevant expertise and information. In the interim, more systematic references to the impact of global warming on situations on the Council's

agenda, particularly those outside of the African continent, are necessary and long overdue. But most importantly, Council members must take urgent actions to reduce their emissions and spare the brunt of the needless destruction that climate change is wreaking on vulnerable populations. It is not enough to better address the nexus between climate change and security when the policy decisions of Council members are themselves determinative of the scale of the security threat. The lives of billions around the world depend on decisions to avert climate disaster today.

I thank you.