



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ALBERT FRICK, PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Mr. President, Secretary-General,

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is a necessity – in fact it is one of the first topics on which the UN General Assembly passed a resolution. It must not be a lofty policy goal that can be routinely reaffirmed by those relying on the most destructive weapons of humankind. It is a moral imperative, a humanitarian necessity and an objective firmly enshrined in international law. Today, more than ever since the end of the Cold War, the world needs a clear path to finally eliminating all nuclear weapons.

Many of the current trends go in the wrong direction. Nuclear weapon States engage in costly efforts to modernize and upgrade their arsenals. This entails lowered thresholds for the intentional use of nuclear weapons and unknown new risks for their unintentional use. Both scenarios are neither abstract nor implausible. We only have to put ourselves in the position of the people of Guam who have been threatened by a nuclear attack or the inhabitants of Hawaii who were under the illusion of a ballistic missile attack for 38 long minutes – all within a year's time.

Mr. President,

The object of today's meeting – the total elimination of nuclear weapons – has guided States in the negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. The grand bargain between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation enshrined in that treaty has been a source of hope for many generations. The world is a much safer place thanks to the safeguards regime of the NPT. Unfortunately, we have not seen the decisive progress in nuclear disarmament that the overwhelming majority of the international community had rightfully expected. And today, we do not have much reason for optimism. Efforts to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force have stalled for over two decades. Concrete commitments to nuclear disarmament are absent and existing agreements risk falling apart. The one recent landmark achievement in multilateral diplomacy, the Iran Nuclear Agreement (JCPOA), and its concrete security gains are threatened. The détente in the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula is a welcome development, but verifiable steps towards denuclearization are missing.

Against this background, Liechtenstein continues to be a strong advocate for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and is among its initial signatories. The TPNW can and will make a real contribution to restore the balance that the grand bargain of the NPT represents. It complements the CTBT and its verification machinery in establishing a clear legal norm against nuclear tests. Most importantly, however, the TPNW draws a legal line against all attempts to justify the use of nuclear weapons. There is simply no such justification in light of the horrendous and indiscriminate suffering these weapons infallibly inflict on civilians. The comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons enshrined in the TPNW represents the will of a large majority of States and will strengthen the rule of law at the international level in the field of disarmament. It is our firm hope that it will also provide the foundation for nuclear disarmament in the future. On this International Day the best reason we have for optimism is really the potential of the TPNW to contribute to the eventual total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.