



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children

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LIECHTENSTEIN

Statement by
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Five years ago the General Assembly called for a comprehensive, global study on violence against children. It did so in acknowledgement of the fact that children are among the most vulnerable groups of society. There is no such thing as partial human rights for human beings in growth. The full respect for the physical and psychological integrity of children must be a universally applied rule of civilization. This is one of the main messages contained in the in-depth study on violence against children before us. We wish to join others in congratulating Professor Pinheiro and all the contributors on the result of their immense efforts and commitment.. Particularly, we welcome the highly participatory and consultative approach adopted in the preparation of the study and the unprecedented level and quality of participation by children. This study and its preparatory work can significantly contribute to enhancing political commitment, accelerating momentum and strengthening concerted action at all levels to genuinely address violence against children. It should provide the necessary knowledge base with regard to the extent and prevalence of different types and manifestations of violence in order to formulate targeted counter-measures.

While we generally appreciate the broad approach taken in the study, we are somewhat concerned that this broadness may cause difficulties for its follow-up, due to a possible lack of focus and priorities. Efforts and resources to ensure an effective follow-up to the study could also be overstretched if there is no clear division of tasks among the different actors within the UN system which are already promoting the rights of children. Creating a new mechanism, as recommended by the study, would not *per se* solve this problem since that mechanism would be in charge of addressing all forms of violence against children without distinction. Such a broad mandate bears, however, the risk of blurring the differences between various forms of violence against children and putting them all at the same level in terms of seriousness. For this reason, we are of the view that any mandate that may be created or complemented to ensure proper follow-up to the study would have to be based on clear criteria as to the situations and issues in which concrete action is desired and needed.

We think that situations in which children are particularly vulnerable should be given continued special attention by the international community. This is especially true for armed conflicts, and we would like to stress that, despite the promising progress recently made under the leadership of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, much more needs to be done in order to bridge the particularly large implementation gap in this field. Establishing a new UN mechanism with a primary focus on alternative discipline in school and at home would, in our view, not be commensurate with the seriousness of violations of children's integrity in a number of situations outside armed conflict. At the same time, we can see merit in the argument that the follow-up to the study should be promoted in a way that is also accessible and visible to children. Such visibility of the follow-up process could be facilitated through the involvement of the Human Rights Council, which has been created to address the human rights challenges of our time in a prominent manner. The Human Rights Council would in fact be well placed to also build its monitoring activities in the field of children's rights on the unique momentum which has been created by the elaboration of the study on violence against children. In addition, we suggest that enhanced use be made of the system of Goodwill Ambassadors in order to give to the follow-up process high visibility and public advocacy.

In order for the follow-up to be successful, it will be important to take the necessary measures at all levels. The preparatory process has shown that regional organizations can play an essential role in creating a favorable environment for political momentum and action by States. At the national level, it will be important to cooperate with national human rights institutions, while the follow-up at the local level will particularly benefit from an active civil society that is engaged in the promotion and protection of children's rights. With the full involvement of all these actors in the follow-up process relevant decisions taken at the UN level will have the greatest chance of making a real difference to the life of children who are victims of everyday violence.