

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 62ND SESSION

COMMEMORATIVE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING

DEVOTED TO THE

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

ADDRESS

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

Without any doubt, the Special Session on Children in May 2002 was a historic occasion. This Assembly had gathered at the highest level to reappraise the situation of children and speed up progress towards a world truly fit for children. Today it is fair to say that some progress has been achieved to reach the goals and targets set five years ago. That progress, however, is mixed and accompanied by many remaining challenges. We are concerned by the stark discrepancy that continues to exist between the wide range of international norms and standards in respect of children's rights and their weak implementation. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has the highest number of State Parties of any international treaty at any time in history. Yet, this world remains largely unsafe for children. States fail to protect the most basic rights of children: The right to life and education continue to be widely violated because of a form of neglect. States and the international community are remiss in their fight against hunger and poverty of which children are the most helpless victims. More can and must be done for the education of children in order to give them a better chance for the future.

Going beyond neglect or lack of resolve, children's rights continue to be actively violated as children suffer physical and psychological cruelty at home, are dragged into armed conflicts, trafficked or sexually abused or economically exploited. 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 also one of the main messages contained in the UN study on violence against children. The preparatory process to that study has shown that regional organizations, such as the Council of Europe, can play an essential role in creating a favorable environment for political momentum and action by States, building on the active involvement of civil society. We welcome such regional activities which are aimed at the promotion of universal standards.

We are of the view 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.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein attaches great importance to the well-being of children and young people, locally, nationally and internationally. Its policy concerning young people follows the long-term guidelines of family policy, equal rights policy, and child and youth policy. These three areas influence themselves mutually. The Liechtenstein Government therefore sees the welfare of children and young people as an interdisciplinary task. In addition, it can be mentioned that the Liechtenstein child and youth policy observes as fundamental guiding principles the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and of other international human rights treaties to which Liechtenstein is a party. A number of topic areas are regarded as key for the long-term welfare of children and young people and are

treated as a priority. These include the support of families, including financial measures; work, especially with respect to the compatibility of career and family life; recreation; maintaining quality of life; taking into account aspects of the environment and mobility; and multiculturalism in society. These long-term pillars of child and youth policy are complemented by short-term and medium-term goals, which are formulated when specific new problems arise. The small size of the country makes it possible to react quickly and flexibly to new challenges.

Over the past few years, various efforts have been undertaken to increase the involvement of children and young people in topics that affect them directly, including the search for adequate opportunities of direct participation. The right to appropriate information is now better secured thanks to the Youth Information Center, which is eagerly used. A new Youth Act is under development with which the essential basic ideas and rights concerning children will be implemented at the local and national levels. The drafting of the Act was strongly influenced by the CRC, directly and indirectly, and developed in a broad participatory process with a low threshold, with the input of children, young people and adults.

Mr. President,

In order to achieve the full and timely implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action contained in "A world fit for Children", the international community needs to scale up its response to the remaining challenges. Liechtenstein is committed to further stepping up its support of international cooperation and partnerships in this respect. The financial means for the International Humanitarian Co-operation and Development (IHCD) of Liechtenstein increased considerably during recent years and amount to 25.5 million Swiss francs for 2008. With that amount the Government intends to reach an ODA-percentage of 0.6% next year. Some 60% of the overall resources for IHCD are spent on education and health programmes, including programmes against HIV/AIDS. Liechtenstein will continue to contribute to the combined efforts of governments, international organizations, civil society, local communities and the private sector in order to help deliver concrete results and a better life for the children of this world.

I thank you.