



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

It is a great honor to again address this Assembly, especially at the first general debate ever opened by a woman. What an inspiration! This debate has already proven that the General Assembly can indeed play a central role in multilateral diplomacy – in particular at this time of great change and turmoil. I would like to express the solidarity of my country, Liechtenstein, with all the peoples in the world that have in recent months sought to attain freedom from oppression and tyranny. We admire the courage of all those, women and men, young and old, who have been standing up for their rights, often at great personal risk. We, the United Nations, must stand by them. I also wish to welcome South Sudan as the 193rd Member State of this organization. The United Nations has yet again proven its ability to settle complex and violent conflicts by peaceful means

Mr. President

The developments in northern Africa and the Middle East may have their roots mainly in the disconnect between governments and their people. They may be primarily internal in nature. But there is also an important international dimension to the rapid change that we are witnessing. The events since February have put this very organization to the test and more challenges are yet to come. In recent years, we have sharpened tools and concepts that are essential in helping us solve or prevent conflicts. So how did we apply them during these challenging times?

First, how did we do in our commitment to protect civilians? The United Nations has made much progress in developing the concept of the Responsibility to Protect. This concept has three pillars: in the first instance the primary responsibility of the affected States themselves and then, under the second pillar, responsibility for other States to assist in the protection of

civilians. In two recent instances, however, the international community had to become active under the last, third pillar. We commend the Security Council for taking swift action to protect civilians in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. In both instances, the Council authorized the use of force only as a last resort, but also without undue delay. Some have criticized the actions taken and argued that they are aimed at regime change. Let us not forget, however, that the regimes in question had a choice. It was them who chose to attack civilians. It was them who forced the international community to act. At the same time, we sympathize with those who perceive selectivity in the application of the responsibility to protect. As the stalemate in the Security Council on Syria shows, politics at times continue to trump principles. In response, however, we need more principled action, not more politics.

Second, have we lived up to our promise to ensure accountability for the worst crimes? Have we lived up to the promise of "never again", which we gave in the aftermath of Rwanda and Srebrenica? Once more, the international response to crimes committed in Libya provides a glimmer of hope. The Security Council's unanimous referral of the Libya situation to the International Criminal Court was a historic decision. The ICC responded appropriately with swift action. Furthermore, the Court is also undertaking preliminary investigations regarding Côte d'Ivoire. The central role the Court is playing in these and many other situations illustrates the profound paradigm shift that the Rome Statute has brought about. The core principle of this shift is now firmly entrenched in the fabric of international law: there must be accountability for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. But accountability has not yet arrived everywhere it is needed. Serious allegations of crimes committed in Sri Lanka and Syria, for instance, have not yet found an appropriate and transparent justice mechanism. Again, the primary responsibility to ensure that there is no impunity falls on the States concerned. International mechanisms, such as the ICC, can and must only become active where States fail to live up to this task.

Third, how effective have we been in using mediation as a tool of peaceful settlement of disputes? This topic, which you have rightfully chosen as the central theme of your Presidency, is at the very heart of the mandate of this organization. We support the Secretary-General's call to raise prevention from an abstract concept to a core operating principle. It is simply paradoxical that only a small fraction of the Secretariat's resources are dedicated to mediation, when we are spending 7 billion dollars a year on peacekeeping. In many situations, the good offices provided by neutral and trusted actors, such as envoys of the Secretary-General, can make a real difference on the ground. These are highly intense, often heroic efforts, which deserve much stronger support from us Member States.

Mediation efforts are increasingly influenced by accountability mechanisms. The General Assembly itself acknowledged this fact in its first ever resolution on strengthening mediation: it emphasized that "Justice is a fundamental building block of sustainable peace". In this new age of accountability, mediators can never offer amnesty from criminal prosecution or the withdrawal of arrest warrants issued by the ICC. This is not just a matter of principle, but also a matter of law. The ICC would never be bound by such promises. At times, the imperatives of peace and justice may compete with each other temporarily and make the mediator's job more difficult. Over the long run, however, they are not only compatible, they are mutually reinforcing. This is the message that each ratification of the Rome Statute sends around the globe. And we are particularly happy to note that this message has been sent 118 times so far, most recently by the Philippines and the Maldives.

Fourth, have we done enough to include women in conflict prevention and resolution – to make them agents of change, instead of bystanders? Have we done enough to protect them during conflict – protect them in particular from sexual violence? We have collectively sent

strong signals in this regard. Liechtenstein particularly supports the Security Council's work on women, peace and security. We welcome the new focus on the role of women that the creation of UN Women has brought about. Women have been a driving force in the Arab Spring. But as some countries are transitioning to a new era, women risk being left behind once again. The United Nations are often involved in transitional processes. If and where it is, it must ensure a strong role of women and apply a gender perspective. Most importantly, the UN must lead by example and appoint more women as leaders in mediation and other transitional processes. It was therefore with great pleasure that I signed the Joint Statement on Advancing Women's Political Participation earlier today.

Regarding protection of women and girls from sexual violence, we place high hopes in the new monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence. We trust that expert teams will help strengthen domestic accountability mechanisms. The greatest responsibility, however, lies with peacekeepers on the ground. They are mandated to go into harm's way and protect civilians. They must fulfill this mandate more effectively when faced with situations of sexual violence. Most importantly though, we must once and for all eradicate all instances of sexual abuse committed by peacekeepers themselves. It is not enough to simply repatriate blue helmet soldiers that have committed such crimes. "Zero tolerance" for sexual abuse must finally become a reality.

Fifth, have we done enough to address the root causes of the unrest in many countries: poverty, unemployment, corruption, lack of freedom and human rights? These root causes, and the strong popular opposition against them, remind us of a simple truth: economic and social development are inextricably linked with good governance, human rights and the rule of law. The international community has many tools at its disposal to assist countries in reforming their system of governance. We strongly support United Nations activities to promote the rule of law

and combat corruption, and make financial contributions to this end. There is no shortage of assistance and capacity-building programmes. What is needed is more political will to actually make use of them. It is, however, the task of the United Nations to improve the manner in which rule of law assistance programmes are delivered and coordinated. We would welcome a stronger role for the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group in this regard, and hope that progress can be made at next year's high-level meeting on the rule of law.

Mr. President

The events of recent months have shown us once again how irresistible the call for freedom can be. And they have shown us once more how indispensable this organization is when it comes to assisting peoples that aspire to such freedom through democracy. Despite all the criticism, I am convinced that the United Nations has in recent years become more effective in delivering its mandate. If we work together in this house, we will achieve results much more efficiently than through individual actions. Great opportunities lie ahead of us – let us accept the challenge.

I thank you.