



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

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**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
31ST SPECIAL SESSION**

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

ADDRESS BY

**H.E. DR. KATRIN EGGENBERGER
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JUSTICE AND CULTURE
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

Mr. President,

The General Assembly convenes today for a Special Session in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, millions suffer from its severe health impacts. Our economies and societies witness deep disruptions. Prosperity, equality and human rights are on the decline. This is a time when the world needs the United Nations and its promise of joint action under the common purposes of the Charter and the rule of law, and States should lend it their full political and financial support. The UN has shown leadership under Secretary-General Guterres. The specialized agencies, in particular the World Health Organization, are a force for good, while far from perfect as we well know. But they are delivering and help to mitigate this crisis of unprecedented proportion. Of course, as governments we have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of our citizens. But unless we coordinate our efforts and work together we cannot be effective. This is the true and proven value of multilateralism – it is more effective than nationalist approaches and the pandemic illustrates that very distinctly. There is no trade-off between targeted domestic policies and international cooperation when fighting a pandemic. They are both essential to succeed in this fight, as is the need for firm scientific knowledge to underpin them. To suggest otherwise is delusional.

Mr. President,

No doubt, there are important lessons-learnt when we look at our responses so far. Not all measures have proven to be effective to contain the spread of the virus. Restrictions on our fundamental rights and freedoms are severe for all of us, and in some cases clearly excessive. Hunger and poverty, gender-based violence and systemic racism have increased. School closures and isolation in care facilities have disenfranchised our youngest and oldest. Democracy has come under additional threat by authoritarian tendencies and conspiracy theories. The infodemic has taken a heavy toll on our cohesion and State institutions. But we can also have

confidence that our societal and economic systems work. Persistent disinformation has not proven to be a winning strategy, at least in the long run. People are demanding their fundamental rights with renewed energy and purpose all over the world. Free markets, state sponsored and private research have delivered a multitude of promising vaccine candidates in record time. The capacity of free societies and economies to innovate has rarely found a more impactful expression. Now, we need to provide equal and efficient access to the vaccines, as the public goods that they are. Nobody can be safe until everybody is safe - that is a very evident truth in a pandemic.

Mr. President,

We all have a huge task ahead of us to overcome COVID-19 and we all thirst to go back to our normal lives. In doing so, we must seize the opportunities that present themselves to bring our societies and economies in line with our generational promise to achieve a more sustainable, equal and peaceful world by 2030. The pandemic has caused severe set-backs in our progress towards the SDGs, so we must redouble our efforts. It is also evident that these 17 goals are the recipe for the world to prepare better for the next challenges ahead, be it on health, climate or other issues. In overcoming this crisis our aspirations must be broad. We need a new form of sustainable coexistence between humankind and nature as promoted by the One Health approach and we need to strengthen the trust of the people in their governing institutions. The UN must lead the way to a better future and Liechtenstein will contribute to that effort as best we can.

Thank you, Mr. President.