



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

ITEMS 107 AND 108: CRIME PREVENTION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL
STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, SECOND SECRETARY

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Chairman,

Throughout this year, we have been witnessing major political developments in the Arab world. At their center is the quest of people for universal and fundamental freedoms, justice and criminal accountability for those who have stood in the way of these legitimate aspirations. All those individuals who have risen in the wake of the “Arab Spring” have impressively reminded us that governance without a fundamental commitment to justice and the rule of law cannot be sustainable. They have also reminded us that in the minds of people the commitment to justice and the rule of law does not stand at the end of political and social transformation, but at the very beginning. It is the bedrock on which a free, just and peaceful society can be built. The United Nations must stand ready to provide any needed assistance to interested States in this building process. Access to a strong and independent justice system is a human rights imperative, a precondition for sustainable development and a key stability factor – it is the basis on which the three pillars of the United Nations stand.

Mr. Chairman,

Liechtenstein is a long-standing supporter of the resolution on strengthening the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. The Programme's focus on capacity-building in domestic criminal justice systems and on the strengthening of international cooperation is more relevant than ever. In implementing its mandate, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime has a proven record of providing assistance to States in transition from armed conflict to peace and stability and from an arbitrary justice system to one based on the rule of law. Those efforts should be stepped up in the light of recent developments. A fundamental principle of a rule-based and independent justice system is equality before the law. Impunity for the most serious crimes under international law – genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity – is the most striking violation of this principle. The UNODC should therefore also respond to States requesting it to assist in strengthening the ability of their domestic criminal justice systems to investigate and prosecute those crimes. Such assistance is in line with UNODC's existing focus on States in post-conflict or transitional stages and would significantly contribute to the overall goal to eliminate impunity for the most serious crimes. It would also respond to the legitimate demand of the people that justice be done for all perpetrators domestically, where inability or a lack of will currently leave no choice but to have recourse to international accountability mechanisms like the International Criminal Court. We hope that recent developments have assured those who have previously expressed doubts about the usefulness of such assistance by the UNODC and we are ready to engage constructively with all delegations during the upcoming negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN must also strengthen its efforts to promote good governance, in particular in States in post-conflict and transitional stages. The fight against corruption will be central in this regard and we welcome the continued commitment of UNODC to that fight. As a party to the UN Convention against Corruption, Liechtenstein has undertaken the necessary domestic legal reforms to effectively address the problem of corruption from the demand side. Our UN-centered activities include support of the UNODC Global Programme against Money-Laundering

(GPML) and of the UNDP Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE). We complement these activities with our engagement in the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and in other relevant political initiatives in the OSCE, the FATF, the Egmont Group and other international institutions. Against this background, we are particularly aware of the harmful effect so-called "grand" corruption and the connected phenomenon of illegal capital flight can have on the budgetary situation of developing countries. We therefore support the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (STAR) of the World Bank and are among the main donors of the International Center for Asset Recovery (ICAR) of the Basel Institute on Governance. ICAR provides targeted capacity-building by training officials from developing countries and equipping them with effective information technology tools. States in transition are a natural partner in those initiatives.

We should, however, not forget to also address the phenomenon of so-called "petty" corruption, the scope and negative consequences of which are often underestimated. We would welcome a more systematic look at the intergovernmental level at this dimension of corruption. Millions of people are directly affected by corrupt practices in their everyday lives, leading to considerable financial costs. The compensation for these costs is often directly detrimental to their standard of living and thus negatively impacts on the corresponding development indicators. Equally important are the serious consequences of "petty" corruption to the full enjoyment of human rights, in particular for those already socially marginalized. "Petty" corruption seriously affects the enjoyment of many fundamental rights, among which, for example, the right to non-discrimination, to health, to full political participation, to name but a few. We therefore welcome that this Committee will, for the first time, have the occasion to systematically address the human rights dimension of the crime of corruption during its next session. We hope that this consideration will allow us to ultimately address the scourge of corruption in a comprehensive manner.