



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF MEDIATION IN THE PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION**

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President

We welcome today's meeting of the General Assembly. The developments in Ukraine go to the core of the work of the United Nations and pose a challenge to the organization as such. It is therefore essential that the membership as a whole is given an opportunity to express itself on it. This is even more relevant in light of the inability of the Security Council to respond, due to a veto cast on a decision which otherwise enjoyed very strong support from Council members.

Mr. President

The recent events in Ukraine and the current situation in the country are a significant challenge to the rule of law: All Members of the United Nations are bound by the provisions of the Charter, including the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State. The annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation is therefore a **very serious violation of international law**, which is of grave concern to the Government of Liechtenstein. We consider this action nil and void and will not recognize it, nor its consequences. The annexation was preceded by an illegitimate declaration of independence based on a referendum held in Crimea on 16 March. This referendum was held in violation of the constitution of Ukraine and conducted in circumstances that violate the basic tenets of international law, including Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. The events also starkly illustrated the **continued relevance of an internationally agreed definition of aggression**. Such a definition

was agreed by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference of the International Criminal Court in Kampala. We hope that States will continue ratifying the amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the crime of aggression expeditiously.

Mr. President

The UN Charter commits us both to the principle of **territorial integrity** and to the **right of self-determination** of peoples. The two were thus designed to be compatible, and the relationship between them was further elaborated in subsequent texts. Common article 1 of the 1966 International Covenants on Human Rights established the right of self-determination as the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all human rights. In adopting the Friendly Relations Declaration (resolution 2625) in 1970, the General Assembly struck a careful balance between the right of self-determination and the principle of territorial integrity, as reflected in the resolution before us today. Some twenty years ago, Liechtenstein presented an initiative to help operationalize the right of self-determination, through various degrees of self-administration. The initiative was aimed at encouraging States to provide appropriate levels of self-administration to entities within their borders, based on consultation and negotiation, where necessary with third-party assistance. These ideas were designed to prevent dissatisfaction of communities within States that may lead to claims of independence, without at the same time excluding independence as an option. Under this model, the different stages of self-governance, as well as the independence option, are the result of an agreement between the parties concerned. **Liechtenstein is fully committed to the right to self-determination, exercised in conformity with international law.** And it is this very commitment that leads us to the conclusion that the draft resolution before us is a balanced and faithful reflection of current international law. We therefore support it without any reservation.

Mr. President

The failed adoption of the draft resolution in the Security Council earlier this month raises important governance questions for the organization. There has been a worrisome increase in the use of the veto and the threat thereof in the recent past, sometimes in a manner that prevented the United Nations from fulfilling its core functions. But the vote in the Council on 15 March gave rise to an additional concern, which requires further consideration. According to Article 27(3) of the Charter, Council members that are **parties to the dispute shall abstain from voting on decisions under Chapter VI** of the Charter. It seems to us that rule should have been applied – a perception that has been only strengthened by the events since. It is important that this question finds the attention of the wider membership, together with other urgent issues concerning the use of the veto.

Mr. President

In looking forward, **we support all efforts that will help prevent a further escalation of the situation in Ukraine**, which remains volatile. We welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General, whose personal engagement underlines the seriousness of the situation, and the efforts undertaken by the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), under the Chairmanship of Switzerland. We applaud in particular the agreement to deploy a Special Monitoring Mission. We are confident that these international and regional efforts can greatly contribute to de-escalating the situation on the ground.

Mr. President

Before the events discussed in the resolution as well as thereafter, the situation in Ukraine has been fueled by a serious human rights crisis and at least a partial breakdown of the rule of law. The strong and early engagement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights has therefore been crucial, and we support the deployment of a mission by her office throughout Ukraine. We believe that a **return to the rule of law and effective protection of the rights of all persons belonging to minorities** in the country are indispensable prerequisites for the inclusive political dialogue required to improve the situation in the country.

Thank you.