



**PERMANENT MISSION
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SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN VTC ON IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO GEORG SPARBER, CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES A.I.

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes this open debate and thanks Foreign Minister Heiko Maas for his leadership in bringing urgent attention to the COVID-19 pandemic – a crisis of enormous proportions that will continue to significantly shape our domestic and international policies for the foreseeable future. Never in the history of the United Nations have more people felt more insecure than today, faced with the immense health, economic, and social fallout of this global pandemic. It is high time that the Security Council addresses the security implications of the pandemic, after months of self-inflicted oblivion. Liechtenstein welcomes the Security Council resolution on COVID-19, finally adopted yesterday after painstaking negotiations. The Security Council’s call for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and its support for the Secretary-General’s efforts in this respect, as well as its call for a 90 days humanitarian pause are important political signals. They would have been more impactful had they been sent with fewer caveats and closer to the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire which is supported by an overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership. Liechtenstein has, together with other States, pursued early action on the pandemic in the General Assembly and is encouraged that General Assembly resolution 74/270 has ultimately also helped the Security Council overcome its deep divisions for the sake of a common position on COVID-19.

Mr. President,

Today’s debate is an important contribution to a much needed effort in the Security Council to broaden its overly narrow security paradigm. That paradigm has proved insufficient to embrace the full spectrum of security dimensions that determines international relations and domestic policy today and to deliver on the expectation of the membership that the Council act

preventively against threats to international peace and security. The so-called thematic agendas of the Council are an essential contribution to implement the Council's mandate and they obviously must include global health emergencies such as the current pandemic. The pandemic has significant and visible security impacts, from wide-ranging human rights restrictions and an increased risks of mass poverty and hunger, to deferrals of important political processes and heightened social tensions. It has also highlighted the interlinkages between global health and developments in climate change, biodiversity, cyber-security among others. A proactive approach by the Council to these developments could significantly increase the efficiency of its work, in particular in its preventive dimension. There is strong indication that the number of situations of concern before the Council that are driven by climate change, health emergencies, economic tensions and other external shocks will only increase in the future.

Mr. President,

In addressing the drivers of conflict the Security Council should display openness to embrace and build on the work of other organs of the United Nations to address global challenges to our common security. The extent to which the Council succeeds in that respect will also decide how relevant its work will be in the eyes of the membership and the general public over the next 75 years. With the 17 Sustainable Development Goals the international community has agreed on the most ambitious and most comprehensive human development programme ever devised. The SDGs include a clear acknowledgement of the security dimension of sustainable development and constitute a human security programme based on international law, in particular human rights, cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism. The SDGs provide a model not only for how to overcome the crisis of the current pandemic. They are our blueprint how to better prepare for future crises of this dimension, by comprehensively addressing climate change, poverty, hunger, health, education gaps and inequalities, among others.

Mr. President,

While the pandemic affects all countries and impairs human activity at all levels, the challenges are by no means evenly distributed. Past experience points to complex interlinkages between health emergencies and conflict situations. On the one hand, health emergencies such as the Ebola outbreak have had very severe security impacts, on the other hand conflicts have created increased vulnerability to disease as, for example, in South Sudan. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates already fragile security situations in Yemen, where it overwhelms an already fragile health system, and in Syria, where cases continue to rise, adding to the plight of the many civilians in need of humanitarian assistance in both countries. People on the move are particularly vulnerable, as the Secretary General's call for a ceasefire acknowledges and the High Commissioner for Refugees has recently reconfirmed before the Council. Women face higher exposure to the virus in their essential roles as frontline workers and they may face greater economic hardship as they are overrepresented in the informal sectors. Women in

lockdown also suffer increased risk of physical and psychological abuse. Children across the world are missing out on education, and are under increased risk to suffer abuse and violence, and in case of armed conflict, forced conscription. The pandemic and its ripple effects exacerbate the problem of modern slavery and human trafficking, which requires renewed determination to implement bold solutions, including those promoted by Liechtenstein's Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) initiative.

Mr. President,

All this points to a clear need for a better understanding of the links between pandemics and security. The Security Council should significantly increase its efforts to analyze these links with a view to improve early and preventive action. Today's debate is a good start into that discussion and Liechtenstein expresses its hope that the Council will sustain its engagement.

I thank you.