



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

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**STATEMENT BY STEFAN BARRIGA, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

ITEM 64: REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes President Henczel to the General Assembly and thanks him for his substantive report. His engagement to promote and improve the work of the Human Rights Council is exemplary and part of a tradition of strong leadership in the Council. The challenges the Council has faced this year have been particularly serious due to their potential to affect its future course. Liechtenstein is grateful to the President for his personal and successful engagement to preserve the integrity of the Council and its mechanisms, in particular the universality of the Universal Periodic Review. Universality is the basis for constructive engagement between Member States in the framework of the UPR. Liechtenstein sees in the participation in the UPR a first and necessary step towards a more substantive cooperation that every Member State should make on the basis of its sovereign equality – a principle enshrined in the Charter that is not negotiable. But even with its universality preserved the UPR has suffered from attempts at its politicization. Liechtenstein calls on all States to refrain from interfering in the carefully designed proceedings of the UPR in order to ensure its continued well-functioning and to safeguard the important role of the UPR in the United Nations human rights machinery.

Mr. President,

With its second round well under way the UPR continues to bring key value added to the Council compared to its predecessor body as it has developed into a cornerstone of the United Nations human

rights machinery, alongside the human rights treaty framework, the Special Procedures and the Office of the High Commissioner. The UPR has generated considerable momentum among States to examine and improve their domestic human rights situations. It continues to be an important driver to promote ratification of the United Nations core human rights instruments and thus contributes to the long-term goal of achieving universality. At the same time, the second cycle of the UPR has also shone a spotlight on the discrepancies between political commitment and implementation. This is where our emphasis should lie in the future. States should increasingly aim their recommendations at the implementation of international standards by focusing on concrete and actionable steps that help States in that regard. In parallel, the Office of the High Commissioner should be given the financial resources to assist States in following up to their commitments. By undergoing the second round of the UPR in January and June 2013 Liechtenstein has again benefitted from a wealth of recommendations of which it has accepted the large majority. Once implemented, we trust that these recommendations will considerably strengthen the human rights protection in Liechtenstein as is the case with other States that perceive the UPR as an opportunity.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council more and more lives up to its responsibility to address human rights emergencies with the tools at its disposal. Liechtenstein welcomes the repeated action by the Council to address the human rights emergency in Syria. At the same time it is sobering that the aspect of ending impunity has not been accorded the priority it deserves. Accountability is key to ending the cycles of violence that have caused so many civilian deaths in Syria. The Council and its mechanisms must therefore take a clear stance in ensuring that justice is served for the victims in Syria. The Commission of Inquiry on Syria continues to do valuable work in gathering evidence for mass atrocities. It is hardly comprehensible, however, that the Commission does not express itself more clearly on concrete options to ensure accountability. Failure to do so can be detrimental to the fulfillment of the mandate of the Commission to establish the facts of alleged mass atrocities and to identify those responsible with a view to holding them accountable. In addition, a clear position by the Commission on the judicial follow-up could help shape the current discussions on this subject in this Assembly and elsewhere. Liechtenstein continues to consider the International Criminal Court as the appropriate institution to deal with the situation in Syria in light of its gravity and repeats its calls on the Security Council to take action accordingly.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council has again contributed substantially to both longstanding and emerging human rights discussions. Liechtenstein welcomes the Council's more active role in the global discussion on the death penalty and its implications and looks forward to a more in depth and systematic look at this issue in the framework of the Council. The Council can make an important contribution to a better informed and less confrontational discussion aiming at concrete steps towards improved procedures, strengthened safeguards and the gradual elimination of this practice. Liechtenstein also welcomes the decision of the Council to act more decisively to address reprisals against persons who cooperate with its mechanisms and the United Nations Secretariat. The establishment of a high-level focal point will hopefully contribute to the better protection of human rights defenders and victims of human rights violations who have made the brave decision to contribute to the work of United Nations. Reprisals are amongst the most destructive ways in which States violate their obligation to cooperate with human rights procedures. The United Nations therefore has itself a particular responsibility to protect those who contribute to its work and should step up its efforts substantially in this regard.

Finally, Mr. President, Liechtenstein expresses its ongoing support for the Council as a forum in which emerging human rights problems find a place for discussion. Together with a number of States Liechtenstein has been pleased to initiate a broader dialog on the human rights implications of current surveillance practices with a view to bringing them in line with internationally agreed standards, such as the right to privacy as set out in the ICCPR. We look forward to following up to these discussions in the framework of the Council and in the General Assembly.