



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

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT BY MR. CHRISTIAN WENAWESER, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**ITEMS 72 B, C: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Iceland and my own country, Liechtenstein.

When we adopted the 2030 Agenda in September, we significantly advanced the human rights agenda: The links between development and human rights are thus no longer just a conceptual commitment, but we are finally putting into practice what we have been saying for long years. Just as the declaration on the right to development did almost 30 years ago, the 2030 Agenda places the individual at the center of development, which in itself guarantees a central place for human rights in the agenda. In addition, some of the goals have a very clear human rights focus, most notably goals 5 and 16. Full gender equality, the empowerment and full participation of women as well as the key ingredients of the rule of law – accountable institutions, equal access to justice, the need to fight corruption among them – are clearly spelled out as indispensable parts of the agenda. And there are crucial human rights elements in other parts of the agenda, from access to drinking water to the need to fight human trafficking – in short, this Agenda has a genuine rights-based approach. This is a big step forward, in particular if we will also remedy one of the key deficiencies of the MDG – measuring and ensuring implementation. The coming months will be decisive for our efforts to set up an effective follow-up and review mechanism. Without this, the 2030 Agenda may well suffer a huge implementation gap, which we know only too well from our human rights work.

Mr. Chairman

But let us reflect for a moment on what the 2030 agenda means in concrete terms for our human rights work. Of course, this is a holistic and comprehensive agenda that can only be implemented with the full involvement of the UN system. But it also requires concrete action in the bodies dealing with human rights, including this Committee. First, it gives us an opportunity to advance the discussion on certain topics – for example women’s access to economic resources, human trafficking, ensuring legal identity to just pick a few. Policy work on some of these targets is still necessary, and both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council are called to task in this respect.

Second, we must recognize all human rights work as development work. We have said no less when adopting the 2030 agenda. In order to be serious on implementation, we have to translate this into concrete action. We welcome the proposal of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to shape the presence of his office in such a way that it offers global coverage. This reflects the fact that human rights work is needed in every country, irrespective of political system and level of development. And, of course, it reflects the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda. In order for the office to offer capacity-building and technical assistance available to all, however, the funding situation of the Office has to be addressed. Having human rights activities funded very largely from voluntary contributions is simply not sustainable – and certainly not conducive to sustainable development in the places where the Office can be helpful. This is compounded by the fact that voluntary contributions tend to dry up when the Office directs criticism at all the places where he identifies human rights concerns. Adjusting the budget situation of the Office requires bold decisions, but it certainly is an achievable goal that we should all commit to. The conversation should start now, so we can make a decision during the next session of the Assembly. We are happy to discuss flexible and effective mechanisms to enhance the dialogue and accountability between the High Commissioner and the membership, without creating new mechanisms or other bureaucratic obstacles.

Mr. Chairman

An important area for action is the strengthening of national judiciaries – in line with the commitment under the 2030 Agenda to ensure equal access to justice. National courts always have primacy, irrespective of the crime committed. When it comes to the most serious crimes under international law – genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes - the International Criminal Court plays a complementary role in the countries where it has jurisdiction. It can thus function as a catalyst to enhance the capacity of national judiciaries to investigate and prosecute such crimes. Recent efforts in the Central African Republic and in Sri Lanka in particular illustrate that there is a lot of room for creative accountability models with an international dimension. Such hybrid or other models can not only ensure accountability, but also help strengthen national judiciaries in a sustainable manner.

Mr. Chairman

We are also nearing the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights Council. In looking at its history, we have reason to be satisfied: Even though it was established by vote and against the opposition of a small number of States, the Council has quickly been able to create a political consensus. The most obvious expression of this consensus is the success of the Universal Periodic Review, which against all the odds has indeed included a review of record of the entire membership. Not unexpectedly though, the Council is increasingly suffocated by the ever increasing number of resolutions and decisions. A clear division of work between the Council and the Assembly could certainly help the situation both in this Committee and the Council, but the time for this discussion may not have come yet. But subjecting the Councils decisions to review in this Assembly is not only highly inefficient, but also contrary to the institutional balance we agreed on when setting up the Council. It can be in nobody's interest that a decision of the Council awaits implementation for almost two years. We hope that the Councils decision on the creation of a focal point in cases of reprisals against individuals cooperating with human rights procedures can be implemented swiftly now.

Thank you.