



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FOURTH COMMITTEE

JOINT GENERAL DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEMS 50-61

STATEMENT BY MR. GEORG SPARBER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Chairperson,

Let me begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to you and your bureau for your dedicated work to ensure that this Committee can function effectively in truly unprecedented circumstances. The painstaking work of finding working methods has no doubt been difficult, but is truly much appreciated. Please be assured of our full confidence in your leadership to guide us to a successful conclusion of our work.

Chairperson,

As we have heard over the past few weeks, both the UN's 75th anniversary and the ongoing pandemic provide ample reason to reevaluate our work and its impact. In this committee, we have a particular responsibility to those who do not find themselves represented amongst the Membership – chiefly, the 1.7 million people living in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is unfortunate that this year we have not been able to find a way to allow petitioners and representatives to speak on their behalf, and look forward to welcoming them back next year.

Liechtenstein has a long-standing commitment to upholding the right of self-determination, which was the topic of our first initiative at the UN. It is for this reason that we speak on the agenda item on self-determination allocated to the Third Committee, in recognition of the fact that self-determination is a prerequisite for peoples to freely determine their political status, fully enjoy their human rights and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. This year, when NSGT representatives are absent, it is perhaps even more incumbent on us to consider how we can best assist in their realization of the right to self-determination – as the Friendly Relations Declaration states, through “[t]he establishment of a sovereign and independent State, the free association or integration with an independent State or the emergence into *any other political status* freely determined by a people.”

The fact that we are now in the final year of our third international decade for the eradication of colonialism is a reason for concern. The NSGTs that remain are inevitably those in the most difficult situations to address, both due to practical and political sensitivities. But, given this situation, the free and informed decision-making of the peoples concerned must be our lodestar. In some cases, free and informed consultations with relevant peoples may include a decision over whether they should remain on the list of NSGTs. We particularly appreciate steps being taken to hold referenda on independence, which provides a public expression of self-determination, as well as the ongoing engagement of NSGTs in regional intergovernmental organizations. In no situation should the fact that populations formally remain colonial possessions in the UN system be the result of broader geopolitical or strategic military prerogatives. In other cases, States should work with the UN in good faith to realize existing promises of self-determination. It is not acceptable, for example, that there has been no Personal Envoy on Western Sahara for over a year – least of all for the Sahrawi people themselves. Liechtenstein appreciates the difficulty and sensitivity around these topics, and remains ready to work with any and all states seeking sustainable conflict resolution, an end to colonialism, and the realization of self-determination.

Chairperson,

Liechtenstein remains committed to upholding the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, as evidenced by our co-sponsoring of the resolution on this subject in the Third Committee along with the majority of the UN membership, as well as the resolution on the same topic adopted by the Human Rights Council. We reiterate our long-held position that the annexation of territory, or any decision to change or amend the border between Israel and Palestine without the explicit consent of both parties, is in violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, as is the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories. We urge progress toward a two-state solution that is based in international law and in the right to self-determination, as the only viable avenue to sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians and for the entire region.

Chairperson,

Liechtenstein is a consistent co-sponsor of this committee's annual resolution on Special Political Missions. SPMs play an important role in sustainable conflict prevention and resolution, in coordination with national actors and other UN actors on the ground, and their involvement across the conflict cycle is an important contribution to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In particular, we recognize the importance of increased gender balance and geographical representation within SPMs, as well as the need for engagement with young people in peacebuilding. The SPMs can make an important contribution to strengthen institutions and the rule of law, in accordance with SDG16. More consistent and effective mandates to that end would send an important signal that all UN bodies are fully dedicated to this generational agenda.

I thank you.