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## **Statement at the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

### **Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt**

**11 March 2024**

**Mr. Daniel Batliner**

**Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Thank you, President,

We thank the Independent Expert, Professor Waris, for the presentation of her report on her visit to Liechtenstein in June 2023. The visit took place within the framework of Liechtenstein's standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of this Council. We would like to first and foremost emphasize our ongoing full support of and cooperation with the UN special procedures.

Liechtenstein will thoroughly examine the recommendations made by the Independent Expert. Moreover, we will submit detailed comments to the report in the upcoming weeks. Today, we are grateful of the opportunity to share our preliminary views with you.

The promotion and protection of human rights is a longstanding top priority of Liechtenstein's foreign policy. In this regard, we are fully committed to our reporting obligations to the relevant human rights monitoring bodies. On the national level, we place significant importance to the received recommendations and are dedicated to continuously strengthening human rights in Liechtenstein. In doing so, the involvement of our national civil society has been of utmost importance. We thus conduct regular human rights dialogues with our civil society which serve not only as an exchange of information on such recommendations, but also foster our cooperation with them.

Mr. President,

During her visit, the Independent Expert held meetings with the Government, relevant authorities and other stakeholders concerned with the implementation of human rights as well as economic and financial policies.

As Professor Waris confirms in her report, Liechtenstein is strongly committed to the implementation of international standards in areas like tax cooperation, combatting of corruption, money-laundering, and financing of terrorism.

In this regard, we informed the Independent Expert about our latest UNCAC review, which recognizes Liechtenstein's far-reaching legal and regulatory framework for all the

Convention's prevention provisions. It also recognizes that Liechtenstein has well-established mechanisms for asset recovery in place.

Several forms of transnational crimes undermine all three pillars of the United Nations: international peace and security, sustainable development as well as human rights. They also undermine the values of the Council of Europe: democracy, rule of law and human rights.

Liechtenstein is a committed and active member of two relevant bodies of the Council of Europe: the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL).

The effective fight against money laundering, the predicate offences for money laundering, organised crime and terrorist financing is part of Liechtenstein's financial centre strategy and follows a comprehensive strategic approach based on cooperation, compliance and innovation. This also applies to established and emerging technological developments.

In this sense and to ensure legal certainty, compliance and to enable innovative and sustainable ways of human interaction, Liechtenstein has created the first Blockchain Act worldwide. This also facilitates the enforcement of international human rights standards as well as the implementation of the SDGs, such as for example in the area of humanitarian assistance. Sustainable development continues to be a key priority for us.

Liechtenstein's vision is a world in which stability and peace prevails. For this reason, Liechtenstein spends around CHF 9 million annually on projects related to the promotion of human rights and the rule of law as part of its International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development (IHCD). This is roughly one third of our total annual IHCD budget. As part of our humanitarian and development engagement, and in close cooperation with the private sector, we have launched the "Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking Initiative" (FAST) to combat the illicit financial flows generated by human trafficking. Furthermore, we support the Basel Institute on Governance's "Green Corruption Program". It applies the "follow-the-

money” approach to detect financial flows linked to corruption and environmentally destructive activities.

Mr. President,

As noted by the Independent Expert, our Parliament gave its approval to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) last November. We are pleased to add, that in the meantime, the Convention entered into force for Liechtenstein on 17 January 2024. For the implementation of the CPRD, the responsible coordinating unit (focal point) within the national administration was designated; Liechtenstein’s National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) was mandated with the independent monitoring function according to Art. 33 (2) of the CRPD; and additional financial resources were approved to this end. We are convinced that the CRPD will contribute to further advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Liechtenstein.

Finally, we support the Independent Expert’s recommendation, that Liechtenstein should share its experience, solutions and practices. Let me assure you, that we are fully committed and will continue to sharing our experiences and practices within the international community at all times. We also remain fully committed to the UN special procedures.

In conclusion, please let me express Liechtenstein’s gratitude for the excellent cooperation with the Independent Expert and her staff in the course of the preparation of her visit as well as the report.

I thank you.