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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND ITS LINK TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. AURELIA FRICK
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be back at the Commission on the Status of Women. This 60th session is of particular importance for Liechtenstein, since for the first time we are proud members of the CSW. The Commission has helped bring about much progress since its creation. It has inspired many women leaders to keep up the fight for what is right. We can look back at landmark achievements such as CEDAW, as well the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. And this year we can proudly point to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as another crucial step toward gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Agenda confirms that full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life is not a matter of political correctness. Much rather, it is an indispensable element of sustainable development. Today, nobody would seriously dispute this statement in principle. But to close the gap between aspiration and reality, we must also take a look from an individual perspective. As a mother of two small children, one boy, one girl, I ask myself: Why should my daughter not have the same opportunities as her brother? Why would anyone think that she could not be just as good a mechanical engineer, astrophysicist, politician or peacekeeper when she grows up? And why should she not take home the same salary as a man doing the same job?

We all know the answer to these questions: for no reason, except our old, hard-to-break habits. Yet our societies and economies continue to put obstacles in the way of women and girls. We do so at our own peril. A recent study suggests that implementing full gender equality would add up to \$28 trillion to the annual global GDP by 2025. As we struggle to find reliable sources to finance sustainable development, we surely must tap into this enormous potential. This was also rightfully reaffirmed by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted in July last year.

In order to do so, ensuring equal pay for equal work is only one element. We also must allow our girls to enjoy the same primary, secondary and tertiary education as our boys do. Women must be able to open bank accounts and make their own decisions on financial matters. We need to finally start recognizing and valuing unpaid domestic care work. Women's unequal outside responsibility

for unpaid care is a barrier to their greater involvement in the political, economic and social sphere. And it also limits their right to enjoy rest and leisure.

Liechtenstein has made significant progress in the past two decades in advancing gender equality. Yet we still have a long way to go. Equality before the law has largely been established, yet discrimination and disadvantages continue to exist in practice. We reduced the wage gap between men and women, but have not eliminated it. Women represent 40% of cabinet ministers, but the percentage is much lower in parliament and in political office in general. Clearly, we all need to work even harder to achieve full and equal participation of women.

The 2030 Agenda also acknowledges the indispensable role of women as agents of peace. The necessity of including women in peace processes, one would think, should be a matter of simple logic: we cannot exclude half the population when trying to shape a peaceful future for all. We also have statistics to support this logic: an analysis of 181 peace agreements shows that women's participation increases their chance of success by 35%. Yet women continue to struggle to get a seat at the negotiating table, such as in Syria, to name but one example.

Sustainable peace also requires justice. Every day, we receive harrowing reports of rape, sexual slavery and other grave violations of women's human rights in armed conflicts around the world. The culture of impunity for sexual and gender-based violence also manifests itself outside situations of conflict, for example through human trafficking and modern slavery, which affects women disproportionately. It is a daunting task, but we must do more to ensure that these crimes are properly prosecuted, through our domestic systems as well as through the International Criminal Court. This also means taking down the cultural, social or legal barriers that currently prevent women from enjoying full and equal access to justice.

Mr. Chair,

Many of our past political and legal commitments to gender equality have ended up on the graveyard of broken promises. One important reason for that was the lack of effective monitoring

and review. With many important gender commitments now forming part of the 2030 Agenda, we have a historic chance to do better! Let us set up strong mechanisms for accountability. We must do so nationally, as responsible governments accountable to our citizens. And we must do so globally, as a community of nations holding each other accountable for the universal goals we have set ourselves collectively. Let action follow our words. We owe it to the women and girls of our planet.

I thank you.