



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

NEW YORK, 2 OCTOBER 2023

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

STATEMENT BY Ms. MYRIAM OEHRI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Chair,

We gather at a crucial time in need of urgent change of direction. There have never been more armed conflicts since the creation of the United Nations. The Doomsday Clock now stands at 90 seconds to midnight – the closest to global catastrophe it has ever been, with nuclear threats at an alarming new level. Global military spending is at a record high, and nuclear and other illegal missile tests continue to be conducted despite a robust international legal framework on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Liechtenstein is concerned about the growing divergence amongst countries on most existential threats to humanity, as reflected in the lack of an outcome that advances the goals of the NPT and agrees on necessary steps for implementation of the Tenth NPT Review Conference last year. The Non-Proliferation Treaty has been essential in preventing nuclear proliferation for over five decades, but its implementation gap, especially of Article VI, constitutes a serious risk to the treaty's normative strength and ultimately to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Rattling the nuclear saber especially in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine – a founding Member State of the United Nations that gave up its military nuclear capabilities decades ago – must be condemned in the strongest terms, as must Russia's decision to station nuclear weapons in Belarus which constitutes a clear violation of international law. The volatile

security situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant requires utmost caution by the conflict parties, and we fully support the work of the IAEA in ensuring nuclear safety and security.

Liechtenstein condemns all aspects of the nuclear arms race, both the qualitative and quantitative advancement and modernization of nuclear arsenals, as well as nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances. The risk of the use of nuclear weapons is indeed real, and it is crystal clear that as long as they exist, such weapons will never make the world a safer place. This understanding is the animating force behind the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which strengthens the NPT framework in defining new and concrete perspectives for nuclear disarmament and was also signed by Liechtenstein. In addition, last month, Liechtenstein participated in the Article XIV Conference, in support of the urgent entry into force and universalization of the CTBT, in line with our common goal of ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

According to Article 2 of the UN Charter, the use of force is strictly prohibited unless authorized by the Security Council or used in legitimate self-defense. Illegal war, such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, must be prevented at all times, and perpetrators must be held to account. At the same time, States have the right to self-defense if an armed attack occurs against them. By choosing war against Ukraine, Russia has further undermined the disarmament agenda and sets it back by decades.

The UN Charter's cornerstone prohibition of the use of force must be enforced everywhere, including when conducted in cyberspace. Liechtenstein welcomes the First Committee's consideration of cybersecurity. Despite a common understanding that international law, in particular the UN Charter, fully applies to cyberspace, activities by States and other actors to move the domain of warfare to cyberspace require the international community to articulate clearly how international law applies to cyberwarfare. In this regard, we welcome the announcement of the ICC Prosecutor that his Office will begin to investigate cybercrimes and produce a cyber policy paper. The application of the ICC Rome Statute to cyberwarfare has been

an area that Liechtenstein has explored together with our partners, resulting in a comprehensive report on this issue in 2021.

Mr. Chair,

At this time of great uncertainty over issues of disarmament, this committee must work closely with the UN's other organs in charge to ensure peace and security. The General Assembly's primary role in the field of disarmament is reflected in the UN Charter and reiterated in the New Agenda for Peace, including through the recommendation to establish an intergovernmental process leading up to a special session of the GA on disarmament. It has stepped in when the Security Council was unable to take action on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, such as the illegal missile testing by the DPRK or the arms transfer to Myanmar.

Only through respect for international law and effective and inclusive multilateralism will we find our way back to conflict prevention and sustaining peace and thus to disarmament. Decrease in military expenditure will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda more broadly. Military spending comes at a high opportunity cost, for example for the mitigation of climate change – the most existential threat to human security. Warfare itself negatively affects the environment, contributes to pollution and biodiversity loss. And militarization remains a major impediment to gender equality, including through the disproportionate effect of armed conflicts on women and girls, their limited access to education and economic opportunities, as well as by nourishing patriarchal systems with weapons as expressions of harmful masculinity and dominance. We applaud the important work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and echo its founder Jane Addams, the second woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, who said that "true peace is not merely the absence of war, it is the presence of justice."

I thank you.