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28th Session of the HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

17th March 2015

Intervention by H.E. Mr. Peter Matt, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission of Inquiry,

The conflict in Syria is now four years old. In that time, the Commission of Inquiry has released nine reports and has thus become the Human Rights Council's longest-serving Commission of Inquiry. Public interest in the plight of the Syrian people has waned as the conflict itself continues unabated. We appreciate that the Commission has taken an innovative approach in its most recent report, providing an overview of the entire conflict. **We would like to ask whether the Commission is considering further innovations in their working methods, such as, for example, conducting public hearings?**

Mr. President

In its report, the commission made a number of recommendations to the General Assembly, including requesting the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC, to continue submitting the Commission's reports to the Security Council and to invite the Commission to periodic briefings. Since November 2014, Liechtenstein has been working with partners to give the Commission a chance to brief the General Assembly – so far, without success. **In this context we would like ask the following question: what are the Commission's expectations from the General Assembly in support of your mandate?**

Mr. President

Liechtenstein's strong desire to see all perpetrators of atrocity crimes in Syria brought to justice is well known, as is our preference for the ICC as the venue in which to achieve this. While last

year's veto on the ICC referral in the Security Council is certainly no reason to give up on this track, it is also necessary to consider other ways of holding perpetrators accountable.

In the Commission's report, both the principle of universal jurisdiction and an ad hoc international tribunal are mentioned as alternatives. We would like to add that States can also bring perpetrators of grave crimes in Syria to trial on the basis of the active and passive personality principles, if their nationals either commit crimes or are victims. National proceedings abroad will face challenges, however, among them the sheer distance to the site of the crime. **What tools are available to States to overcome these challenges? What sort of information could the Commission share with States that are conducting credible national proceedings?**

I thank you