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PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Joint Statement

Informal conversation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

delivered on 9 April 2020 by

Ambassador Peter Matt, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Thank you, Madam President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and my own country, Liechtenstein.

We would like to thank High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet for her update provided during this meeting on the impact the current COVID-19 crisis has on human rights.

We agree with the High Commissioner that the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic must be guided by solidarity, cooperation and the rule of law. The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be the basis on which measures to respond to the crisis are taken. Any limitation on these rights and freedoms must be consistent with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality and in accordance with international law obligations. Moreover, any restriction of rights and freedoms may only be taken in a temporary and supervised manner.

We would like to reiterate that any measures taken by States to address the COVID-19 pandemic should be holistic and aimed not only at ensuring essential public health functions and universal health coverage but also at protecting the most vulnerable without any form of discrimination. Strong democratic and accountable institutions are essential for an effective and equitable response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which cannot serve as a pretext to undermine the international and national rule of law or human rights standards.

We furthermore emphasize that the timely dissemination of accurate, clear and evidence-based information is essential for an effective response to the current crisis and helps to address and prevent discrimination and xenophobia, which feed on misinformation and fear.

We express our full support for the call by the Secretary-General for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. We furthermore commend the Secretary-General for calling for measures to address the horrifying global surge in domestic violence directed towards women and girls. It is important that States provide protection measures for victims and communicate about how those affected can get assistance.

We would also like to welcome that the UN General Assembly has sent a strong message of solidarity and cooperation on 2 April 2020 by adopting the resolution “Global Solidarity to Fight COVID-19”. This provides a sound basis for the General Assembly to take further decisions to address the operational needs of the United Nations.

We would like to conclude by thanking the many people working at the front lines in the health and social sector, particularly the women who account for up to 70 per cent of the workforce in this field, thereby crucially contributing to addressing COVID-19, often under very difficult conditions and under a high risk of getting infected with the virus.

Madam High Commissioner,

What would be, from your point of view, the best support that an institution such as the Human Rights Council could provide to your Office in the current situation?

I thank you.