



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

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NEW YORK, 13 OCTOBER 2014  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE  
ITEM 28 (A) AND (B): ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN  
**STATEMENT BY Mr. RENÉ HOLBACH, ADVISOR**

Madam Chairperson,

At the UN's very inception, just after World War II, equality between men and women was one of the first things on the minds of the drafters of the UN Charter and has hence become one of the founding principles of this organization. Nevertheless, until today, not a single country in the world has actually achieved full gender equality. Every year as I consider this unchanging fact, I ask myself why it should be so.

Madam Chairperson,

One of the main reasons generally given for the slow progress toward the realization of gender equality has long been the lack of priority attached to the issue; the lack of political will; the lack of engagement by those in power. Ultimately, this usually means the lack of awareness and engagement by the *men* in power. It was thus with great pleasure that Liechtenstein witnessed the launch of the “**he for she**” campaign. Women's human rights, gender equality, empowerment as well as the Women, Peace and Security agenda, have long been a strong focus of Liechtenstein's foreign policy. These are not “women's issues,” they are human rights issues. The men of Liechtenstein's foreign service have been actively working towards this goal for many years now and have expressed their full support for the campaign. I am very proud to

say that we *are* “he for she’s”. We recognize that there can be no peace or sustainable development without the full and equal participation and empowerment of women. Nothing short of full equality between men and women will be required for development to be sustainable. It is crucial that we fully recognize the empowerment of women as key ingredient of sustainable development. Liechtenstein has long been advocating for a stand-alone gender goal and comprehensive gender mainstreaming of the **post-2015 development agenda** and we were happy to see both reflected in the outcome document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. We hope that, as we approach the final stage of negotiations on the SDG agenda, the momentum that led to these successes can be maintained.

Madam Chairperson,

As we work on the SDG agenda, let us learn from the mistakes we made when drafting the MDGs. I would particularly like to underscore one crucial element that was completely omitted in the MDG framework and has since proved to pose significant obstacles to development; an element that has often been referred to as the “missing MDG”: **ending violence against women**. While it is difficult to collect reliable data in this regard, studies estimate that as many as 2 out of 3 women worldwide experience gender based violence at least once in their lifetime. We must remind ourselves that this is not a problem solely in developing countries. It is important that we recognize that physical violence against women affects every society around the globe. In fact, take a look around in this room today: we are sure to be surrounded by women who have experienced violence. My own colleague forcefully reminded us of the pervasiveness of this evil when she spoke of her own experiences from this seat at this debate at the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly. Domestic violence against women is a scourge *everywhere* and has been described as “perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation known today” by UNDP. Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria combined. However, only a fraction of incidents, in particular of sexual violence, are reported to the police and of those reported, only few lead to convictions. Most perpetrators simply walk free. The clear majority of women who report being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked have been victimized by a current or former

husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or acquaintance. Having a personal relationship with the offender makes it all the more difficult to testify against him. This has led to a culture of impunity. The systematic lack of **accountability** will always be conducive to new violence. Violence against women simply cannot continue to be treated as a trivial offense that many even consider the victim/survivor is partially to blame for. We welcome the focus on accountability in this year's resolution on ending violence against women and look forward to working with Member States to achieve a strong outcome. As the Secretary-General's campaign has put it: we have to "UNiTE" to end violence against women.

Madam Chairperson,

2015 will be a big year for the advancement of women at the UN. Not only will we witness the High-Level Review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we will also celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most comprehensive and progressive document in the field of women's rights and women's empowerment to date. Coincidentally, the **anniversaries of these two milestone achievements** will be commemorated just when we will be in the final stages of negotiations on and on the cusp of the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. It is my sincere hope that this timing of events, and the increased awareness and impetus women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment will see in 2015, will contribute to these issues receiving the attention they require in the new development agenda.

I thank you.