



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

NEW YORK, 14 OCTOBER 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR. PETER MATT

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UN IN GENEVA

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Chair,

The First Committee is fraught with procedural problems as a result of deep divisions in the membership on security and disarmament questions. It is regrettable that these divisions begin to constitute a serious systemic risk to intergovernmental disarmament discussions – a development that we believe runs counter to the interest of the broader membership. Liechtenstein consistently advocates for the best use of available resources and discussion formats, in particular in these times of heightened geopolitical tensions and an eroding international rules-based order. At the same time, the United Nations must be preserved as an inclusive forum for discussion that allows every delegation to meaningfully participate in line with well established practice and in full compliance with legal obligations under the host country agreement and under agreements governing diplomatic relations between States. Liechtenstein considers this to be a subject matter of legitimate concern to the entire UN membership.

Mr. Chair,

Over the past years many States expressed concern at the prospects of a new nuclear arms race. Today, unfortunately, we have to concede that it has become a reality. Key elements of our

nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture are lost or eroding: the INF treaty is defunct, visible efforts to extend the new START treaty are missing, the JCPOA is under intense pressure and the DPRK shows no signs to come into compliance with Security Council resolutions, let alone take verifiable steps towards nuclear disarmament. Europe's security is in decline as is the security in many other parts of the world. Liechtenstein strongly supports efforts to restore European security in the framework of the OSCE and other fora. As the continent that benefitted the most from the INF, Europe stands to lose the most from its demise, including States like Liechtenstein that have consistently called for more ambitious nuclear disarmament efforts. While the allegations of INF violations weigh heavily on the credibility of the Russian Federation, Liechtenstein considers abandoning the INF without any attempts at resolving disputes within its framework as inconsistent with article VI obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of both the Russian Federation and the United States.

Mr. Chair,

Today, the outlook to the upcoming Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not promising. Half a century into the NPT's existence the different pillars of the treaty suffer from unbalanced implementation, putting the overall achievements of the treaty at risk. The NPT's ultimate purpose – the total elimination of nuclear weapons – fades more into distance with every announcement of plans to stock-up and modernize nuclear arsenals and lower thresholds for the use of nuclear weapons. These developments run counter to article VI obligations of nuclear weapon States and constitute a serious risk to the other achievements of the NPT, including in the non-proliferation pillar. Against these odds, Liechtenstein will fully engage in efforts to reach a substantive result at the Review Conference – a result, however, that can only build on and not back-track from past agreements.

Mr. Chair,

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), to which Liechtenstein is an initial signatory, has been one of only few positive developments in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the past years. The TPNW is a political expression by a large majority of

non-nuclear weapons States that they take their obligations under article VI of the NPT seriously. The TPNW has the potential to restore the original balance enshrined in the NPT. Once in force it will also complement the CTBT and its verification machinery in establishing a clear legal norm against nuclear tests. Most importantly, it draws a clear legal line against any attempts to justify the use of nuclear weapons, given their horrendous humanitarian consequences. In a time of eroding international norms, the TPNW is a lesson in multilateralism and a reason for hope in a world increasingly suffering from unsustainable big power politics.

Mr. Chair,

Trends towards an increasingly militarized cyberspace, developments in artificial intelligence, pervasive data collection and manipulation, as well as cybercrime constitute real security risks to States and their citizens and point to the need to further spell out our common understanding that international law fully applies to cyber space. With the increasing digitization of warfare, Liechtenstein will specifically look into the extent to which the Rome Statute and other international legal frameworks apply to cyberattacks and cyber warfare. As part of the new Alliance for Multilateralism Liechtenstein supports the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace and the International Partnership for Information and Democracy. And we welcome the successful launch of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunication in the context of international security. Thanks to the able chairmanship of Switzerland we have witnessed fruitful discussions and could benefit from expert views despite an unduly restrictive mandate on civil society engagement. Cyber security is a top priority for many if not all Governments and a topic where the UN should lead. It is also a good example how leadership by the Secretary-General and the High Representative can translate into meaningful intergovernmental discussions. For the First Committee it is also an opportunity to overcome silos and reach out to other Committees or discussion formats dealing with the same issue from different angles such as the rule of law, sustainable development or human rights.

Mr. Chair,

The UN should more systematically address emerging security risks and challenges with a view to identifying the necessary political and legal steps to address them. Technical developments clearly point to a need for new regulation in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems, in the form of binding standards to legally ensure a human component in the decision-making processes of such systems. An element of meaningful human control across the entire life cycle of lethal autonomous weapons systems is essential and helps to ensure compliance with applicable law, including international humanitarian law. Liechtenstein supports the Declaration on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) as it defines important common ground to take this agenda forward. Bringing the discussions conducted by the Group of Governmental Experts to the General Assembly might be commensurate to the urgency the Secretary-General and many States attach to this issue.

I thank you