

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT
GENERAL DEBATE

**IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED GOALS AND COMMITMENTS IN
REGARD TO GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes the focus of this year's substantive ECOSOC session on gender equality and the empowerment of women. They are a prerequisite and an enabler for achieving all the MDGs in their entirety and a precondition for development. Nevertheless, due to ongoing discrimination and inequality, many women often face manifold violations of their human rights: they suffer violence or are subject to harmful traditional practices; they do not have access to adequate health services, they cannot participate in the decisions that affect their lives or claim fair political representation; they are subject to discrimination in employment; denied entitlement to land and property; and many girls are prevented from going to school. Women are disproportionately affected by violence, crises, poverty, illiteracy, diseases, hunger, food insecurity and unemployment. Immediate and strong action by the international community is needed to reverse course.

Mr. President,

We look forward to the establishment of the UN's new gender entity that will help consolidate existing capacities and create synergy effects for the UN's contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women. We also welcome the organization's efforts, campaigns and initiatives aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls and its devastating social, economic and humanitarian consequences. States have an obligation to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, hold perpetrators accountable and provide justice and remedies to the victims. Impunity not only intensifies the vulnerability of the targets of violence, but also sends the message to society that male violence against women is inevitable and acceptable. The development of national and international legal norms, standards and policies is progressing. For them to make a real difference, however, they must be fully implemented in all parts of the world.

In October 2010 we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, which stressed the importance of women's equal

participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. Nevertheless, ten years later the participation of women in conflict resolution, in particular in formal peace processes, is still a distant goal. Even more disturbingly, we have witnessed an alarming increase in sexual violence in various conflict and post-conflict settings around the world. Gender-based violence is often exacerbated by impunity due to the lack of an effective judiciary. We call on Member-States to intensify efforts to fully and effectively implement all relevant mandates on women, peace and security. This would strengthen the role of women as stakeholders and have a catalytic effect on the empowerment of women affected by armed conflict.

Mr. President,

The Beijing Platform for Action called for the elimination of disparities between women and men in access to education at all levels; Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 also draw considerable attention to girls' education. There is a large body of evidence on the benefits of educating women and girls, including lower infant and maternal mortality, improved nutrition and health, and better protection against the spread of HIV/AIDS, and improved productivity at the workplace.

The education targets contained in the MDG's have yet to be met. Access to education at all levels has increased globally, but these gains have been uneven. A number of gaps and challenges continue to prevent women and girls from exercising their right to education, which in turn confines their access to full employment and decent work. The unequal share of family responsibilities borne by women further contributes to their disproportionate representation in unpaid, low-paid and part-time work with little security and limited access to decision-making. We therefore call on States to develop and strengthen policies, strategies and programmes to address inequality affecting women and girls in access to education at all levels, in order to enhance the employability of women.

Promoting education of women and girls also strengthens their personal autonomy and improves their social and economic status. Empowered women understand their value to society and can demand their right to access to quality health services, including their right to sexual and reproductive health. Women's health in turn affects the health of their children. WHO studies prove that there is a direct correlation between improving women's access to education and lower child mortality rates.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, let me briefly refer to the ongoing efforts to conclude the negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration. Our delegation, which is entering its third and final year on this term of our ECOSOC membership, has actively participated in these consultations. I am confident we will be able to agree on a text that takes into account the views and contributions of all partners, and that will do full justice to the important and multi-sectoral issues at stake for gender equality and empowerment

I thank you.