



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

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

THIRD COMMITTEE

ITEM 72: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

STATEMENT BY MR. MATTHEW EDBROOKE, POLITICAL COORDINATOR

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Madam Chair,

Liechtenstein is a strong supporter of the right to self-determination, which is a cornerstone of the UN Charter and a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of human rights, and appreciate the opportunity to continue our engagement in support of self-determination in this committee. Today we will focus on one of our long-standing initiatives, on how a broader understanding of self-determination can inform conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

Madam Chair,

Many States, including among those speaking today, associate the right to self-determination with Statehood through decolonization. This of course remains one of the UN's shining achievements. Self-determination, though, should also be considered relevant to any situation in which a community has the potential to freely determine its political status, as noted in the UN 'Friendly Relations Declaration'. The explicit references to self-determination in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples serve as one example of how the concept can and should apply beyond the decolonization paradigm. Liechtenstein has long noted that many conflicts around the world begin in the State response to communities, including minority groups, seeking a greater degree of internal self-determination, including autonomy, self-governance, or self-administration.

Madam Chair,

A fuller understanding of how calls for greater internal self-determination can lead to political tensions can therefore go a long way to preventing the deterioration of such situations into armed conflict and secession. Instead, a better understanding of the relationship between self-determination and conflict can assist in building sustainable peace. Studies such as the UN-World Bank Pathways for Peace report note that, “[s]elf-governance arrangements such as federalism have proven effective in many cases in reducing local violent conflict”. Forms of self-governance, decentralization and devolution of powers can contribute to upholding SDG 16.7 which aims at responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Madam Chair,

Understanding self-determination also helps us to highlight where relevant principles are abused. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Russian aggression against Ukraine, in which it has repeatedly imposed secession claims on communities without giving them the opportunity to “freely determine their political status” as required under international law, with the effect of undermining Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Political status for all of Ukraine’s peoples will be a key step in the achievement of a just peace.

Madam Chair,

Two years ago, Liechtenstein published a “Handbook on Self-Determination in Conflict Prevention and Resolution”. The handbook sets out a range of practices for States, mediators and other key actors interested in preventing and resolving ‘self-determination conflicts’, as well as case studies. It encourages relevant actors to uphold the human rights of minority communities as a means of conflict prevention, to seek inclusive and early dialogue, and where they take place outside of the contexts of decolonization and occupation, to consider forms of self-determination short of secession. To take one recent and prominent example, these principles are relevant and should be applied to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. We thank the Special Rapporteur on minority issues for citing the Handbook in his report on “Conflict

prevention through the protection of the human rights of minorities". Liechtenstein stands ready to further engage with Member States and all other interested parties on the Handbook.

I thank you.