



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

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NEW YORK, 18 MARCH 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER**

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Co-Chairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the role and authority of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the central and universal decision-making body of the United Nations. Today's discussion can make an important contribution to strengthening the General Assembly in exercising its authority, including where Security Council inaction calls for complementary action by the Assembly.

Co-chairs,

As a small State, Liechtenstein welcomes efforts aimed at helping to level the playing field in competitive elections, while we are at the same time realistic about the limitations of this exercise. The main challenges certainly relate to elections for the Security Council – which are often carried out with a financial investment that is difficult to match for small States. Resulting activities often relegate the substantive discussions, which should guide our voting behavior, to the background. The General Assembly should offer platforms for States to base their decision-making primarily on the track record and commitment of candidate countries. For membership in the Security Council, the UN Charter defines the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security as the central qualification. There are, of course, different ways

to make such a contribution. While regular timely and full payment of dues should be understood as the minimum engagement of aspiring Security Council members, the size of the financial contribution should not be a principal factor in assessing a State's contribution to peace and security. Rather the commitment of a candidate country to the purposes and principles of the Charter should be the overriding benchmark. On this basis, Liechtenstein has decided only to support candidates who subscribe to the ACT Code of Conduct on mass atrocities and we encourage others to do the same. For membership in the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly has also set out clear criteria. Unfortunately, the relevant provisions appear to be largely ignored in the voting behavior of States. Public hearings with candidate countries provide a much-needed platform to counter that trend. Given the positive experience with such platforms Liechtenstein supports formalizing this best practice to allow States to present themselves as candidates to the General Assembly membership on an equal footing. In addition, Liechtenstein welcomes discussing ideas on how candidates in elections should conduct themselves, and on a possible code of conduct that States can subscribe to, with a view to curbing excessive practices in a number of areas, including, but not limited to, travel activity and invitations.

Co-chairs,

One area in which the General Assembly has successfully asserted its role in the recent past is the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. As part of the ACT Group, Liechtenstein will continue to advocate for a process that ensures the best candidate for the position of Secretary-General will be appointed. The measures adopted at the last selection and appointment process should serve as minimum standard for the future, including in a case of re-election. In the broader context of senior leadership appointments at the United Nations, Liechtenstein recalls the proposal to adopt the practice of single, non-renewable terms aimed at increasing the independence of elected officials.

## Co-chairs

The General Assembly should continue to assert its role by acting in situations where the Security Council is unable to do so. It is thus reinforcing the complementary nature of Charter bodies as enshrined in the Charter. As the Security Council is often paralyzed, in particular in cases that demand the most urgent action, the General Assembly should step in more frequently and more systematically. The General Assembly decision to create the Syria Mechanism (IIIM) is a case in point. Following a recent decision by the General Assembly Liechtenstein looks forward to the first formal discussion on the reports of the IIIM in the General Assembly. More broadly, the General Assembly should always discuss a subject matter on which a veto was cast in the Security Council and Liechtenstein is interested in exploring options how the General Assembly could be seized automatically in such cases. It is in the interest of the UN membership as a whole – and in line with the spirit of the “Uniting for Peace” resolution – to deliberate on such a far-reaching incident as a cast veto and to take the necessary action if and when it considers it appropriate, without prejudice to the result of such a discussion. At the same time, the UN membership should continue to hold the Security Council to account whenever it fails to live up to its core mandate. The steadily growing support for the ACT Code of Conduct – now at 119 States – is an expression of the importance a large majority of States attaches to the prevention and effective ending of mass atrocity crimes, and a testament to the power of the General Assembly when it puts its political weight behind a cause. Signatory States have taken a commitment independently of whether they currently serve in the Security Council. Support for a stronger role of the General Assembly in cases where the Security Council violates the Code of Conduct is thus a natural extension of the Code.

I thank you.