



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

NEW YORK, 29 MARCH 2023

GENERAL ASSEMBLY – AGENDA ITEM 70, REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE
REQUEST FOR AN ADVISORY OPINION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE ON THE OBLIGATIONS
OF STATES IN RESPECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. In this important role, the “World’s Court” is able to give advisory opinions when requested by the main UN organs authorized to do so, including this Assembly. This is key for the General Assembly to promote the rule of law and to help provide the international community with clearer legal understandings.

Mr. President,

The importance of the ICJ’s advisory role is mirrored in the relevance of its engagement with pressing issues of global concern. Indeed, the historic resolution adopted today begins by “Recognizing that climate change is an unprecedented challenge of civilizational proportions, and that the well-being of present and future generations of humankind depends on our immediate and urgent response to it.” There is no issue of more pressing global concern than climate change – which is in many ways the defining crisis of our time. Last week's climate report from the IPCC is an urgent reminder of the limited window we have to deal with the climate crisis. From weather

extremes to sea level rise, all regions of the world are affected by the devastating consequences of climate change. In the words of the UN Secretary-General: “We are in the fight of our lives.” The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides us with a blueprint for the prosperity of our planet and recognizes the interlinkage between the fight against climate change and tackling poverty, hunger and other shortfalls. Recent COP meetings have fallen short of the promise to build on the Paris Agreement. It is clear that an exclusive focus on this path, indispensable as it is, will nevertheless not be enough. We therefore need to pursue other avenues as well. In this respect, many stakeholders have already chosen different legal avenues at the national, regional and international levels to move forward in the fight against climate change. Today, we have opened a new legal avenue together. This is why Liechtenstein was proud to be a member of Vanuatu’s core group on this initiative. It was responding to a global youth movement for the UN, in particular, to act and to act ambitiously. We commend the youth for calling on all of us to take up this issue and thank Vanuatu for their leadership in mobilizing support for this initiative. The Core Group is, in many ways, a testament to effective multilateralism. It was small enough to be effective but nevertheless representative of the UN membership: both cross regional and inclusive in terms of national perspectives, but also deliberative and thorough in its approach. The engaged negotiations within the Core Group and with the broader UN membership should be a model to follow for similar international initiatives. And last but not least, the initiative is further testament to the ability of small States to place crucially important initiatives before this Assembly.

Mr. President,

We are confident that the International Court of Justice will provide us with clarity regarding the complex questions of international law pertaining to climate change through its advisory function. The advisory opinion from the ICJ will provide important authoritative guidance, including on questions at the intersection of climate change and human rights. Climate change is indeed one of the greatest threats to human rights of our generation, posing a serious risk to the fundamental rights to life, health, food and an adequate standard of living of individuals and

communities across the world. And, we are encouraged that resolution adopted today referenced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prominently and recalled the relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council on Climate Change and Human Rights. It is in this vein that Liechtenstein strongly supports this resolution, which we hope will result in one of the landmark decisions in the long and rich history of the International Court of Justice.

Thank you.