



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 65TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE

*REAFFIRMING THE CENTRAL ROLE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN
GLOBAL GOVERNANCE*

ADDRESS

BY

H.E. MS. AURELIA FRICK
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

NEW YORK, 28 SEPTEMBER 2010

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

It is a great honor for me to speak to this Assembly today, twenty years after the admission of Liechtenstein to this organization. Membership in the United Nations is one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy and the central platform for global diplomatic contacts. A strong United Nations, and a strong General Assembly, is a matter of self-interest to us.

It is therefore a special pleasure to welcome you in the Presidency of this Assembly. We look forward to working under your leadership. You have already shown wise leadership by placing this general debate under the broad theme of global governance. Indeed, this is the discussion most urgently needed in this General Assembly, the main deliberative body of this organization. The very purpose of the UN Charter was in fact to establish a system of global governance, with the United Nations at its center. Today, we must ask ourselves: Is the UN still at the center of global governance? How does it relate to a number of other rising actors in the ever more crowded field of international relations? How can we improve global governance so that it better serves our peoples?

Mr. President

There can be no doubt to our mind that global governance can only be effective if it is truly global – that means global not only in reach, but also in participation. A system where a few make decisions that everyone else is expected to implement would not only be unjust, it would also be ineffective. Past experience has shown time and again that multilateral action can be very effective where it is based on a broad political consensus – which is not the same as giving everyone a right to veto. A strong fundamental agreement among States is the only way to ensure that decisions are effectively put into practice. The place where such decisions are possible, where genuine political consensus can be forged, is and remains the United Nations with its near universal membership. We therefore have to invest in the UN to make the improvements that are required, instead of looking for solutions outside.

Mr. President

It is with this general philosophy in mind that we view efforts by different groupings to discuss questions of global reach, most prominently the G-20. We certainly welcome the fact that the largest developed nations and the most powerful emerging powers gather to discuss matters that affect the global economic and financial architecture. The recent crisis has illustrated how important and indeed indispensable common action by the G-20 in such situations can be. And more is to be done to address the systemic issues that led to the crisis in the first place. We will continue to support these activities. At the same time, inclusion and participation should be placed higher on its agenda and its work should be better integrated with the UN system. The quality of the discussions within

the G-20 and the effectiveness of their outcomes would greatly benefit from an approach based on “variable geometry” – bringing in the views of all those who are directly affected by the subject matter under consideration. We are therefore an active member of the Global Governance Group (3G), coordinated by Singapore, which seeks to promote the principles of inclusion and participation. We are grateful to the hosts of the next two G-20 summits, Korea and France, for their constructive exchange with 3G Ministers yesterday here in New York. We look forward to continuing this dialogue.

Mr. President

We welcome the work of the G-20 and other groupings that seek to contribute to global solutions. At the same time, they can only deal with a limited number of issues. And more importantly, they can never be a substitute for genuine multilateralism, which must continue to take place inside the United Nations. But we can only safeguard this central place of the United Nations, if we can put it to use to find effective solutions to problems such as climate change, disarmament and other areas where results have been insufficient. If we continue to underachieve in the UN framework, we must not be surprised if solutions are sought elsewhere.

Mr. President

The United Nations continues to be the center of global governance in the area of peace and security, the domain of the Security Council. The Council has the power to make decisions that are binding upon Member States, including on the use of force. This is the strongest tool available in international law. Yet its effectiveness is increasingly undermined by the perception that decisions of the Council lack the required political legitimacy. A central ingredient of this perception is the Council’s composition. Everybody agrees that it no longer reflects today’s geopolitical realities. And yet, an agreement to change it has been elusive for well over a decade. We believe that there could be a middle ground in the negotiations: The creation of a new category of seats allowing States to serve permanently on the Council - if the wider membership elects them to do so, on a recurrent basis. It seems to us the only logical approach toward a compromise, given the various positions around the table. But the principal question may well be one of timing. If States increasingly believe that the Security Council can only be reformed in a climate of a serious institutional crisis – a view with which we disagree – then we must reconsider the wisdom of trying to find a negotiated solution at this time.

Of no less importance for the legitimacy of the Council’s work is the way in which it arrives at its decisions. Addressing the way in which the Council conducts its work is one of the biggest governance challenges we are facing in the UN system. If the Council is indeed to carry out its

functions on behalf of the entire membership, as mandated by the Charter, it must be ready to listen to those it represents - especially when they are directly affected by its work. The S-5 – of which we are a member – have over the last few years initiated a process of reflection and of gradual improvements that is very much in the interest of the Council itself. We look forward to continuing this process both with the permanent and the elected members of the Council.

Mr. President

The role of the United Nations in global governance does not only depend on the performance of its intergovernmental organs, but to a great degree also on the performance of the Secretariat. This is an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of all of our international civil servants, especially the Secretary-General himself. We have seen a few years ago how much damage this organization can suffer from management failures and system breakdowns in the areas of procurement and accountability. A number of important reforms have been undertaken since. Most notably we have strengthened internal oversight and accountability. But can we be confident that we have now appropriately managed the risk of another system breakdown in the future? Clearly, more needs to be done in this area, in particular to fully implement some of the management reform measures already taken.

Mr. President

The strongest emerging tool in our system of global governance is the dimension of justice. We have made tremendous normative and institutional progress in this area in the recent past. At the same time, we are struggling with the challenge to reconcile peace and justice in particular. How can we balance the dignity of victims and the justice owed to them with the likelihood of preventing further crimes? This is a choice nobody will want to face. But experience shows that there is no contradiction between peace and justice over the long run. And there is a broad international consensus that there can be no impunity for the worst crimes under international law and therefore no amnesties. Given the massive crimes committed against civilian populations all over the world, this common stance against impunity is more important than ever. It is embodied by the International Criminal Court, whose effects are felt across the globe. Most importantly though, it is also leading States to make greater efforts to fulfill their obligations to investigate and prosecute domestically. These are developments of truly historic dimensions. We are only at the beginning of our efforts to integrate the justice dimension in our overall governance structure. This integration will not be a quick or an easy process. But we must not shy away from these discussions, and we have to approach them both with an open mind and a determination to stand firmly on the principle to fight impunity.

Mr. President

The challenges in global governance are numerous and interlinked. The governance architecture reflected in the UN Charter gives us the possibility to address them. It is up to us to make the necessary political investments to make this system work for our peoples.

I thank you.