



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

NEW YORK, 28 SEPTEMBER 2013

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 68TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. AURELIA FRICK
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

At the outset, let me convey the sincere condolences of the people and Government of Liechtenstein to all those affected by the abhorrent terrorist attack in Kenya. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.

Mr. President

For the second time in a row, this Assembly meets under the shadow of the crisis in **Syria**. It is the challenge of our time. No other situation in the recent past has so dramatically tested the United Nations' ability to respond. And none has so starkly illustrated the limitations and the weaknesses of our multilateral system. Thousands of people have been killed in a brutal, protracted war – many of them women and children, and many the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Regional stability has been eroded. Millions of people depend on humanitarian assistance, which is often impossible to carry out. Humanitarian access to those most in need, including the sick and wounded, is systematically denied due to cynical political calculations. The humanitarian agencies have become a pawn in this perverted game.

Sadly, it took a particularly outrageous act to generate **action in the Security Council**: the use of chemical weapons, with hundreds of victims, including countless children. We are encouraged to see that the Council has decided to ensure the destruction of all chemical weapons in Syria. This should also provide new momentum to ensure that all remaining States join the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indeed it should be a step towards the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction worldwide.

The use of **chemical weapons** in Syria has marked a watershed in the conflict. Nevertheless, this issue must not divert our attention away from the **core problem**: the fighting in Syria continues unabated, with blatant disregard for the civilian population and international humanitarian law. Weapons and ammunition cross the borders more easily than humanitarian assistance.

The recent breakthrough on the issue of chemical weapons shows that political progress is possible. Hopefully, this will create the momentum for the Council to finally live up to its responsibility: to **end the supply of weapons**, pressure the conflict parties to accept a **cease-fire**, work towards a **political solution**, and prepare the ground for **accountability** for past crimes.

Mr. President

There may be different views on who has used chemical weapons in Syria. But everyone agrees that this use constitutes a crime against humanity and a war crime that must not go unpunished. It must therefore be put before a court of law, together with the countless other crimes committed, for an independent and impartial investigation. Syria is our biggest collective **accountability failure** in recent history. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been operational for more than a decade now. During this time, we have not witnessed any other situation in which crimes have been committed so systematically, at such a scale, and for such a long time – without any adequate response from the international community. It is well documented that crimes have been and continue to be committed by all sides. This is precisely the type of crisis for which we have established the ICC. And it is precisely the type of situation which led us to give the Security Council the competence to refer situations to the Court. In its recent resolution, the Council has made a limited statement on accountability. More determined and more concrete action must follow. A **referral to the ICC** will not only ensure that there is no impunity for the atrocious crimes committed in Syria. It will ultimately also contribute to a viable political future for the country: it will isolate those who have committed the most serious crimes, it will provide redress for victims, and it will establish the truth.

Mr. President

The establishment of the **International Criminal Court** was the most significant development in international law in the past decades. Only the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty earlier this year has come even close in significance. With 122 States Parties to the Rome Statute, the

Court has attracted a strong following. But the emergence of an effective international justice mechanism also poses challenges. We have mandated the Court to investigate and prosecute the most serious crimes under international law. And we have asked it to focus on those perpetrators who bear the greatest responsibility. It can therefore be no surprise to anyone that the Court is dealing with individuals in leadership positions. We are satisfied that the Court follows the evidence, and that it does not shy away from investigating and prosecuting those holding powerful positions. It is therefore implementing its mandate and precisely not politicizing its work.

Mr. President

Recent events in Syria have reminded us of the importance of the **Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute** adopted in 2010. We added provisions that criminalize the use of poisonous and other gases, no matter whether they are used in international or in internal armed conflict. It is troubling that these provisions have so quickly gained relevance. But the biggest step forward are the amendments on the crime of aggression. They complement the prohibition of the illegal use of force enshrined in the UN Charter. The most serious forms of the illegal use of force by one State against another will become a punishable offence before the ICC. The ICC will thereby help enforce the core principle of the rule of law at the international level. With the ratifications by Andorra, Cyprus, Slovenia and Uruguay earlier this week, we have come an important step closer to our common goal: the activation of the Court's regime over the crime of aggression in 2017. Liechtenstein was the first country to ratify the amendments. And we will continue assisting in the ratification process.

Mr. President

Liechtenstein firmly believes in the responsibility to protect populations from atrocity crimes (**R2P**). Clearly, we have much work to do to put this norm into practice. Our inability to respond to the crisis in Syria demonstrates a crucial weakness in the system: the use of the veto, or its threat, in a manner incompatible with the purposes of the United Nations. This can make the

Security Council irrelevant at times when it is most urgently needed. During this general debate, the President of France has suggested a common **code of conduct** for Permanent Members of the Security Council. We strongly agree with this proposal. All five Permanent Members should be able to give the world one public commitment: that they will **not use their veto to block action aimed at ending or preventing atrocity crimes**. This would be crucial to enhance the Council's effectiveness – and its credibility.

Unfortunately, we have not yet reached the point where we are able to bring the **composition of the Security Council** in line with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. But the Council is also struggling to adjust its **working methods** to new challenges and to better include the perspective of non-members in its decisions – which is a crucial ingredient for effective leadership. We will therefore continue our efforts to promote accountability and transparency in the Council's operations.

Mr. President

The rule of law and accountability have made steady progress in the work of the United Nations. Nevertheless, this progress remains abstract for countless individuals who are vulnerable to atrocities. **Sexual violence in conflict** has become a rampant phenomenon – with women and girls at particular risk of becoming victims. The ICC has made the fight against this scourge a priority. Most importantly though, we must do our part as States. Liechtenstein fully supports the United Kingdom's initiative to take greater action to end sexual violence in conflict. The fight against sexual violence must also play a central role in the larger context of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. All of this requires a stronger emphasis on the need to **empower women**. Many of our stated goals, from sustainable development to lasting peace, require the full participation of women. Otherwise, they are simply not achievable. I am grateful for the leadership of the Secretary-General in this regard. We should all rally behind his call to make the twenty-first century the century of women.

Mr. President

The upcoming negotiations on the **post-2015 agenda** will be a crucial test for our ability to tackle challenges that will define the lives of future generations. We look forward to your leadership in this process. It is of course too early to offer a final assessment of the Millennium Development Goals. But we know that important unfinished business will be carried over into the **Sustainable Development Goals**. These new goals must be much more than just an extension of past efforts. They must aim at eradicating poverty and hunger once and for all, and finally ensure full equality of women and men. They must therefore be firmly rooted in human rights, respect for the rule of law and principles of good governance. The SDG's will only ensure sustainability if they approach development in a holistic way. Most importantly, once we have agreed on our new goals, we need to become more serious in our commitment to achieve them. Let us therefore develop and apply an effective monitoring mechanism to show to the world that we are indeed serious.

Mr. President

The post-2015 process will also be decisive in moving this Assembly back to the center of multilateral policy-making. Only the G-193 provides the legitimacy and universality required for decisions of global impact and for setting standards that apply to all.

This is our General Assembly. Let's use it.

I thank you.