



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

NEW YORK, 2 OCTOBER 2015

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 70TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. Ms. AURELIA FRICK
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and honor to be back in this Assembly – in particular as we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of our membership in the United Nations. We may not have been among the earliest countries to join the UN. But we certainly were – and remain – among those who did so with full conviction. Today, UN membership is a key platform for our Government's foreign policy. And it enjoys strong approval in our population, with over two-thirds expressing favorable views in recent polls.

For people to approve of the United Nations is important, of course: After all, its Charter is explicitly written on behalf of the peoples of this world. But what about people who are more directly affected by its work than the population of Liechtenstein? In celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we must ask ourselves: What would be the approval ratings among the people of Syria, of Haiti, of the Central African Republic? Or the Ukraine? Sri Lanka? Are we achieving the purposes of the Charter we fought so hard for, seventy years ago in San Francisco?

There is much to be proud of, even when just looking back at the recent past. The UN-led response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa saved thousands of lives, and it has prepared us to act with even more resolve in the future. The MDGs have had a catalytic effect on our development efforts. And they have paved the way for the 2030 Agenda – a visionary blueprint for sustainable development. The United Nations continues to provide emergency relief, education, health care and other services to millions of people around the globe. The UN is the strongest symbol for human rights and the rule of law, for gender equality and the protection of vulnerable populations.

People around the world place their faith in this organization. But too often, they are disappointed. True, the UN has a momentous task. Mistakes are unavoidable, and at times perhaps even failure. But there is no justification when the organization fails at the very core of its mission. There is no justification when the very people who should protect civilians, protect children, instead exploit them in the most abusive way possible. There is no justification for the failure of diplomacy in Syria, with civilians suffering from unspeakable violence, and terrorist extremism taking over an entire region. And we should not look for justifications. We need to look for solutions. We need to do better.

The maintenance of peace and security is at the heart of the UN Charter. Therefore, in the eyes of the world, the work of the Security Council decides whether the organization as a whole is a success or a failure. Like many others, we want the Security Council to act with resolve, efficiency and guided by a common sense of purpose. This is primarily the task of Council members themselves. But others must contribute as well. The Council works on our behalf, and we are bound to carry out its decisions. In other words: We are in this together, both in times of success, and in times of failure.

Some of the Council's most damaging failures occurred in the face of atrocity crimes: Rwanda, Srebrenica, and now Syria sadly stand out in this respect. We should clearly acknowledge this damage when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the organization in October. And, as a consequence, commit ourselves to taking decisive action in the future, where needed. To this end, Liechtenstein has led the discussion in the ACT Group,¹ which has resulted in a Code of Conduct on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

This Code of Conduct is a voluntary political commitment that any State can enter into. The pledge is twofold:

- First, to support timely and decisive action in the Security Council aimed at ending or preventing mass atrocity crimes – in other words, to be constructive.
- Second, not to oppose credible draft resolutions put forward to this end – in other words, not be obstructive.

60 States have already made this commitment. I hope that many more will be on the list when we launch the Code of Conduct on 23 October. And I hope that this will give impetus to efforts aimed at finding agreement among the veto-yielding members in pursuit of the same objective.

Mr. President

Preventing mass atrocities is so important because their effects are irreversible. They have no remedy. How can one possibly compensate the slaughter of civilians, the mass rape of women, the brutalizing of children? Our primary objective must be to prevent these crimes from happening. This is a complex and long-term task, involving all parts of the UN system. But when

¹ Accountability, Coherence, Transparency.

volatile situations move closer to escalation, preventive diplomacy remains a most powerful tool at our disposal. But clearly, we need to make much stronger investments in it – politically and financially.

As we consider how we can sharpen our tools for conflict prevention and resolution, one conclusion is already foregone: We must get better at including women and their perspectives in these processes. The 15th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (Security Council resolution 1325) is therefore a bittersweet moment. The agenda sets out a comprehensive vision of how to include women in peaceful solutions, and how to protect them from the effects of armed conflict – in itself a remarkable achievement. Yet we have largely been unable to fulfill the promise made fifteen years ago. Girls born into a post 1325-world still suffer from abuse, sexual violence, forced recruitment and displacement. Let us take decisive steps forward when we meet later this month in the Security Council.

Mr. President

These are turbulent times not just for the United Nations, but also for an institution closely affiliated with it: the International Criminal Court (ICC). As the first treaty-based international court with jurisdiction over the worst crimes under international law, it is shouldering a massive responsibility. In just over ten years, the Court has established itself as the world's central player in the fight against impunity. It is an independent judicial institution, and therefore does not engage in political calculations. Quite often though, it has to navigate a politically charged environment. We must therefore step up our support for the Court: More States should join the family of currently 123 parties to the Rome Statute. Consistent support should come from those who can, should or must cooperate with the Court – including the Security Council. And we must intensify and give greater assistance to national efforts to investigate and prosecute.

The link between the ICC and the United Nations will soon get stronger. Thanks to the Kampala Amendments on the crime of aggression, the ICC will help enforce a core provision of the UN Charter: the prohibition of the use of force. The most serious forms of the illegal use of force are no longer merely a breach of the Charter. They also entail criminal accountability for those responsible for such acts. We are now just over a year and a handful of ratifications away from activating the Court's jurisdiction over this crime. We look forward to more States ratifying the Kampala consensus. It will be a big step both for international criminal justice and for the United Nations.

Mr. President

Finally, let me offer some thoughts on the unprecedented levels of displacement in the world – which is quickly turning into one of the biggest challenges for the UN. Countries close to conflict have been grappling with this issue for quite some time already. More recently, Europe has been impacted in ways that test the fabric of our region. Even though we are not a member of the European Union, Liechtenstein feels strongly that Europe is not just a continent. It is also a symbol of common values and a promise to address challenges together, irrespective of our models of political and economic integration. We therefore want to contribute to a sustainable solution based on international law and human rights. Regional approaches will remain key to such solutions. But migration and refugee flows are not a regional phenomenon – and by far the largest share of people who have left their homes are in developing countries. So a truly global discussion is also required – the World Humanitarian Summit next year seems to offer a good and timely platform.

Mr. President,

We are confronting daunting challenges. Yet losing hope is no option. So in closing, I would like to share with you the perspective of a man whom I greatly admire and who has extensively collaborated with Liechtenstein. In 1944, he landed on the shores of Normandy, he participated in the liberation of concentration camps, and he led the prosecution in history's biggest murder case at the Nuremberg Trials. He is now 95 years old and continues to fight for "law not war" – as he has done all his life. His name is Benjamin Ferencz, and he has three pieces of advice for all of us:

Never give up.

Never give up.

Never give up.