



STÄNDIGE MISSION
DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN

MISSION PERMANENTE
DE LA PRINCIPAUTÉ DE LIECHTENSTEIN

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Aurelia Frick,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein,
at the high-level segment of the 2009 substantive ECOSOC session
(Geneva, 8 July 2009)**

Madame President

I wish to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Economic and Social Council and thank you for the strong leadership that you have been displaying in carrying out this function.

The main topic of this year's high-level segment is both an essential element of our individual well-being and a prerequisite for a well functioning, productive society and for socio-economic development. Health has therefore become a core issue for the Millennium Development Goals, as MDG 4 (reducing child mortality), MDG 5 (improving maternal health) and MDG 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) are all health related. Progress in the implementation of these MDGs is indispensable for sustainable progress in the other MDGs, including those on poverty reduction, hunger, gender equality or education.

The recent past has brought substantial progress on central health concerns, in particular with regard to the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. These gains have been realized because of an exemplary engagement by the international community in terms of partnerships and resources as well as a coherent involvement of UN programs and funds and of those directly affected by the disease. We hope that this commitment will prove to be sustainable and that it can be translated to other MDG areas where less to no progress has been achieved. In this connection, I wish to add that Liechtenstein has been particularly supportive of UNAIDS and the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis for a number of years and that we intend to continue this engagement.

At the same time of course, we are in the midst of a world economic crisis with negative consequences on the most vulnerable countries and communities, and in particular on women and children. In the current economic circumstances, holding the gains and moving forward on the MDGs are objectives that are in jeopardy. In many parts of the world, health programmes were already underfunded before the economic crisis broke, and the crisis is making domestic and international funding more difficult. Leadership by the Secretary General and from Governments is therefore needed to keep us on track to meet the MDGs.

Let me briefly focus on MDG 5, maternal health, which has also been given particular attention by the Secretary-General. In this regard, progress is at best very modest, stagnating or sometimes even retracting. The UN Forum on Health, recently organized by the Secretary General, made maternal health a core question of debate. The Human Rights Council, at its last session, called for action by adopting a resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity. This resolution, which Liechtenstein has cosponsored, highlights that there are human rights implications to be taken into account in addressing maternal mortality. The ministerial declaration to be adopted at the end of this segment will also give the issue a prominent place. In addition, the UN-led initiatives of Health 4 and the International Health Partnership (IHP+) aim at making headways on this issue. We hope that these political and practical initiatives will galvanize our joint efforts to make decisive and sustainable progress on MDG 5.

The Liechtenstein development service has also become involved in the field of maternal health by supporting specific projects on a bilateral basis. One prominent project, implemented by "terre des hommes", aims at reducing child and maternal mortality in Afghanistan. Another project, implemented by SolidarMed in Sub-Saharan Africa, addresses the issue of training and retaining medical staff for rural hospitals to improve access to basic medical care. The project aims at assisting in particular women of reproductive age. The total financial commitment for these two projects amounts to more than 4 million Swiss francs.

In conclusion, let me underline that the present economic crisis has not affected the Liechtenstein's commitment to achieve the agreed Official Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7%. Liechtenstein has consistently scaled up its ODA activities since 2002. Our goal for the year 2009 is to exceed an ODA of 0.6 % of GNI and to reach the official 0.7% target as soon as possible. Let me also add that our ODA commitment does not entail any debt cancellation, export subsidies or loans.

More than ever, the current global economic crisis requires international solidarity, and ECOSOC is a useful global platform for galvanizing interest and cooperation. Under your leadership, Madame President, ECOSOC is in a good position to assist us in our common endeavors. I hope that our further deliberations will be productive and lead to a number of helpful conclusions.

I thank you.