



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 56TH SESSION

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Chairperson,

We welcome the focus of this year's session on the situation of rural women. Their particular needs as well as the risks and challenges they face, including multiple forms of discrimination, must to be addressed urgently as they cause ongoing poverty, marginalization and violence. Rural women encounter numerous challenges, for instance deprivation from access to economic, legal and political services in areas such as education, health systems and the judiciary. As gender equality and women's rights are fundamental human rights, States have an obligation to end all forms of discrimination and address all human rights violations against women and girls. Therefore, empowering rural women and girls is a key challenge on the agenda for the advancement of women. Gender equality is a key enabler of sustainable and equitable economic growth and the overall development of a country. Studies have shown that the participation and active engagement of women in agriculture, politics, health and other sectors are directly linked to the economic performance, stability and well-being of a country. With their talent and productive potential rural women are important agents of development. For too long has their potential gone unacknowledged and untapped. Therefore, the empowerment of rural women and girls, their participation in societal processes and decision-making, their access and control of resources, need to be strengthened with a view to eliminate discrimination and inequalities between genders.

In order to increase the economic empowerment and independence of rural women, the Liechtenstein Development Agency supports projects such as the Lupane Women's Centre for sustainable livelihoods for rural women in Zimbabwe. The Center gains 50% of its yearly budget from own earnings and helps rural women to get an income, support their families and decrease their dependence from subsistence economy through the manufacturing of baskets, goat breeding or creating vegetable gardens.

Chairperson,

Gender-based violence, in particular domestic and sexual violence as well as harmful practices for example Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, violates fundamental human rights and is a major obstacle to development. Ending discrimination and violence against women continue to be a priority for Liechtenstein and we remind States of their obligations under international law to end impunity for such violations and to ensure redress for victims. States have a legal and moral obligation to protect the human rights of all their citizens and to prevent especially the most vulnerable groups from violations of their basic rights. Rural women are particularly vulnerable in this regard. They often face even more restrictions in their access to judicial services than their urban counterparts. Ending impunity is crucial to avoid revictimization and future acts of violence and therefore necessary to end an ongoing vicious circle impacting many women on a daily basis. The collection of relevant data in this regard can support accountability and tailored protection policies. In order to address the current lack of data on violence against women in rural areas, access to remote areas should to be improved. Women's representation in judiciary bodies has to be strengthened and gender-sensitive law reforms need to be promoted. Liechtenstein welcomes pioneer projects in this field, such as the UN Police Vulnerable Persons Unit in Timor-Leste.

Chairperson,

In order to achieve peace, stability, and sustainable development, rural women should get every chance to fully participate in decision-making at all levels and in all contexts. Rural women continue to be marginalized from the political sphere, particularly in political processes at the national level. Active at grassroots level, they face discriminatory practices that exclude them when laws are codified and constitutions are written. States must do more to ensure that rural women's voices are carried to capitals. They should also be obliged to protect the rights of women to participate on equal terms throughout all phases of political transition, to guarantee their right to speak their minds, and to assemble freely. The UN must support these efforts and, in this regard, we welcome UN Women's focus in 2012 on women's political participation.

Despite the significant normative progress made in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda of the Security Council's over the last years, mainstreaming the agenda in the country-specific work of the Council remains a challenge. Women continue to be underrepresented as stakeholders in peace processes in various conflict affected regions

throughout the globe, leading to a neglect of their rights in peace accords and institutional arrangements. Women have to be involved in peace processes from the beginning or their interests and protection needs risk being unaddressed at later stages. In addition, sexual violence must be addressed throughout all stages of conflict resolution processes, starting with ceasefire agreements, and the presence of adequate gender expertise at the peace table. Here, we believe that the Security Council has a crucial responsibility. To support the Council's efforts in mainstreaming its thematic agenda on Women, Peace and Security, the Liechtenstein delegation held a workshop, from 28 to 30 January 2012 in Schaan/Liechtenstein, hosted by H.E. Foreign Minister Aurelia Frick, on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Afghanistan. The workshop has been organized in close partnership with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University (LISD) and was supported by the delegations of Afghanistan and Germany. Along with our Afghan partners we invite all delegation to a presentation of the main findings of the workshop on 29 March at 3:00 PM in Conference room 5.

Thank you.

