



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY – THIRD COMMITTEE

ITEM 62:

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

STATEMENT

BY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairperson,

Investing in gender equality means investing in progress. The empowerment of women is a precondition for development. This is also reflected in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No. 3. Nevertheless, due to ongoing discrimination and inequality, women remain disproportionately affected by poverty, hunger and food insecurity. We have to recall in this context that the achievement of the MDGs and the advancement of women are mutually reinforcing and immediate action needs to be taken accordingly. In this regard, we also look forward to an early establishment of the new composite gender entity that will help consolidate existing strengths and create synergy effects in order to improve the UN's contribution to gender equality and help eliminate all forms of violence against women.

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the UN efforts, campaigns and initiatives aimed at eliminating violence against women and its devastating social, economic and humanitarian consequences. Violence against women is an unacceptable violation of human rights that often remains unpunished. The Secretary-General concludes in his 2006 study on all forms of violence against women, "When the State fails to hold the perpetrators accountable, impunity not only intensifies the subordination and powerlessness of the targets of violence, but also sends the message to society that male violence against women is both acceptable and inevitable. As a result, patterns of violent behavior are normalized."¹ States therefore have an obligation to protect women from all forms of violence, hold perpetrators accountable and provide justice and remedies to the victims. The development of national and international legal norms, standards and policies is progressing. However, to become significant they must be fully implemented in all parts of the world.

¹ A/61/122/Add.1

Mr. Chairperson

We are deeply concerned about the shocking increase of sexual violence in conflicts around the world, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rape and other forms of sexual violence devastate the lives of many thousands of women and girls. The perpetrators – frequently soldiers, police officers, members of armed groups – routinely enjoy impunity. In many cases, sexual violence is not only a by-product of hostilities, but a method of warfare used systematically in order to achieve political and military goals. Even after the end of such conflicts, high levels of sexual violence can persist, due to a climate characterized by lack of social norms and economic opportunities. Furthermore, women remain excluded from formal decision-making processes and security issues in post conflict environments – a discriminatory constellation that reinforces and intensifies the perception that the marginalization of women is acceptable. It is therefore essential to increase the participation of women in leading positions in conflict resolution and peace processes. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to appoint more women to senior positions in general, in particular to field missions. We see those efforts as a personal commitment on his part.

Mr. Chairperson

We fully support Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) that emphasize the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for war crimes, including acts of gender violence. But formal justice systems often lack the required resources to prosecute perpetrators, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are frequently applied in a discriminatory manner leaving women with limited access to justice. We therefore welcome the call of Resolution 1888 on the Secretary-General to offer expertise to assist national authorities to strengthen the rule of law. This assistance is based on the principle of complementarity, one of the main pillars of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) whose jurisdiction only kicks in when States are unable or unwilling to prosecute at the national level.

Mr. Chairperson

While accountability is of paramount importance, the rights and needs of the victims of crimes must not be ignored. By providing protection and support to the victims, it must be ensured that they can testify freely and without fear of retaliation; the victims' trust fund of the ICC helps victims of atrocities move forward with their lives and restore their dignity by granting compensation or other forms of reparations. It can thus serve as a model for national practices that too often neglect the interests of victims.

We hope that the overall important role of the ICC in ending impunity will be reflected in this year's resolution on the "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women."

I thank you.

