

**ITEM 101:**  
**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman

This year Liechtenstein submitted its second national report on the implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In the last five years, since the issuance of the first report, clear progress has been made in different areas.

Liechtenstein improved the protection of children from sexual abuse by making the necessary adjustments in domestic law and setting up prevention and support mechanisms. Criminal law has been tightened with respect to sexual offenses. The penalty for sexual abuse of minors has been increased, and child pornography and abuse abroad have been criminalized. The Liechtenstein Parliament just recently adopted a revision of the *Code of Criminal Procedure* which improves the protection of victims in criminal proceedings and especially takes the interests of young victims and victims of sexual offenses better into account. Key points of the Victims' Protection Act are sensitive questioning, once-only testimony, and questioning by an expert.

In 1999 an interdisciplinary expert group was founded which serves primarily as contact point for professionals who are confronted with cases of sexual abuse. The expert group is also engaged in linking existing assistance systems such as counseling centers and therapists and is currently elaborating guidelines on the effective cooperation of these services.

Mr. Chairman,

As further positive development we want to highlight the current revision of the *Youth Act*. On the basis of participation, as foreseen by the final document of the Special Session on Children in 2002, civil society and in particular children and young people were directly involved in the elaboration of this law. The participation of young people will also be firmly enshrined in the revised Youth Act. At the same time discussions on new forms of participation are taking place, as a result of which

the Government has decided to delegate more young people to international and European conferences.

Mr. Chairman,

One year ago, in the discussion of this item, Liechtenstein pointed out the discrepancy between existing norms and standards and their implementation. Today we have to repeat that this discrepancy is sobering. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* enjoys almost universal support with a total number of 192 ratifications. Yet Member States and the international community fail to live up to protect and promote the most fundamental right of the child which is the right to life. UNICEF published only two weeks ago a child survival report, giving a review of the progress achieved on this matter since the UN Special Session on Children in 2002. According to the study, 30'000 children die every day of preventable causes. Over the year this is an estimated number of 11 million children. The number itself is shocking, but what is even more appalling is the fact that those deaths are preventable. Supply of basic life-saving services and in particular adequate assistance to pregnant women and to mothers and their newborn child could save millions of lives. Despite of the many positive developments and improvements made, we cannot but remain concerned about the situation of children in the world. We have to finally transform our commitments into true action.

Mr. Chairman,

The spread of armed conflict is another factor increasing the number of child deaths. The assessment made by the Secretary General shows that the UN system response to children affected by armed conflict is less than satisfying and contains many shortcomings. Now that these inadequacies have been identified, we have to react and implement the recommendations resulting from the assessment. Above all there has to be more institutional clarity regarding the responsibilities of different actors involved at UN headquarter and in the field.

We agree with the Secretary General and those Member States who have mentioned this in their speech that it is beneficial to have an independent advocate for children and armed conflict. The advocacy efforts undertaken by the special representative have helped to place the topic high on the international agenda. However, we believe that the mandate has to be reformulated, giving a clearer indication of the tasks to be fulfilled by the office.

I thank you.