

Speech at the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

Mr. President,

I thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Bahrain, the host, for their leadership and hospitality in convening the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly.

Intolerance and discrimination are on the rise around the world. It is high time to change this trend. To do so, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play a significant role. A key principle of the SDGs is the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Liechtenstein has been constantly advocating for this principle on the international level and at home. This holds also true for the Liechtenstein Parliament. Each proposal to parliament includes an SDG impact section. Thereby, we put the SDGs front and centre in our parliamentary debates.

Liechtenstein's total expenditure on official development assistance (ODA) rose by 13%. This reflects our Parliament's dedication to strengthen Liechtenstein's international solidarity.

Our Parliament not only increased the International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development budget, but also approved supplementary budgets in light of the staggering increase in demand for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, be it due to the COVID-19 pandemic or due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are core values of the Council of Europe. During its upcoming Council of Europe presidency [from November 2023 to May 2024] Liechtenstein will do its utmost to uphold and strengthen these principles.

Liechtenstein is not only a strong supporter of the Council of Europe but also of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In this regard, we call on Parliamentarians around the world to speak up much more often in favour of the ICC and advocate for ensuring accountability for the most serious crimes under international law.

Just like most members of the international community, Liechtenstein is strongly dependent on the validity and observance of the international rules-based order. Respecting it must remain our highest priority.

Liechtenstein therefore calls for the end of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the withdrawal of all Russian armed forces from the sovereign territory of Ukraine and full accountability for the most serious crimes under international law.

Let me re-affirm to you Liechtenstein's unwavering solidarity with Ukraine. Liechtenstein will continue its political and financial support to the people of Ukraine. This support is deeply rooted in our traditional advocacy for democracy, justice and the rule of law as the only ways to prevent the use of force and atrocity crimes.

Modern slavery is a defining human rights crisis of our time. And, it is often fuelled by discrimination and intolerance. Sadly, this crime also constitutes one of the most profitable illegal business models generating USD 150 billion each year in to the pockets of criminals.

According to the latest statistics, the number of people living in modern slavery has increased by over 10 million over the last decade. These concerning developments clearly run counter to our commitment to end modern slavery and human trafficking in line with the SDGs. Let me assure you that this goal will remain a core priority for Liechtenstein.

Mr. President,

Working towards overcoming intolerance and promoting inclusive societies requires a comprehensive response from all of us. In doing so, we should always put people first and strongly advocate for initiatives that counter intolerance and discrimination, strengthen the rules-based order and ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law.

I thank you!