

Speech at the 148th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

«Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building bridges for peace»

from Mr Albert Frick, President of the Landtag of Liechtenstein

Mister President and madame Secretary,

I thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union for their leadership and hospitality in convening the 148th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly.

Building bridges for peace

Worldwide, there are far too many conflicts raging. They are characterized by a widespread disregard for the human life. To counter this trend, national parliaments have an important role to play. They should be guided by the respect for the international obligations which bind us all. And, they should speak up much more often whenever serious human rights violations and atrocity crimes are committed.

The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies is a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is also dear to our parliament's heart. For example, every proposal to parliament includes an SDG impact section. By doing so, we put the SDGs front and center in our parliamentary debates. Another important parliamentary tool for building sustainable peace is our budget authority. In light of the far too many worrying conflicts around the world, the Liechtenstein Parliament has significantly increased the budget of Liechtenstein's International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development (IHCD). This reflects our Parliament's commitment to strengthen Liechtenstein's international solidarity. As a result, Liechtenstein spent last year more than CHF 7 million on projects related

to SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. By so doing, we ensure that there is less fertile ground for conflicts.

The promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are core values of the Council of Europe. During Liechtenstein's Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Liechtenstein is working tirelessly to strengthen these principles. They are also safeguarded and indeed adjudicated by the European Court for Human Rights, the crown jewel of the human rights system on the European continent. In so doing, the Court guarantees that Europe remains a continent of democratic societies, governed by the rule of law. We must therefore do our utmost that the member states of the Council of Europe ensure the full, effective and prompt execution of all judgements of the Court.

Liechtenstein is not only a strong supporter of the Council of Europe and its bodies but also of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Given the countless violations of international criminal law, it is of paramount importance that parliamentarians speak up much more often in favour of the ICC and advocate for ensuring that perpetrators of international criminal law are brought to justice. Let me assure you that Liechtenstein will continue conversations to achieve this goal which is vital for the sake of a just peace in international conflicts and for the sake of our international legal order.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Yet, we are time and again frustrated by its inability to do so. I am thus proud that Liechtenstein has spearheaded the so-called "Veto-Initiative", which activates the United Nations General Assembly, whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council. The "Veto-Initiative" is therefore a significant step towards protecting the role of the United Nations and maintaining international peace and security, which is of crucial importance, especially for small states.

Mister President,

Working towards building sustainable peace requires a comprehensive response from all of us. We should always put people first and strongly support initiatives that build bridges for peace, strengthen the rules-based order and ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law.

I thank you!