



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**UNITED NATIONS 2023 WATER CONFERENCE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER**

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Chair,

I am honored to speak today at the Water Conference – a timely opportunity to address a topic that requires urgent action by the international community. As the basis for all life on earth, the protection of water resources is an indispensable factor for sustainable development. SDG 6 on “ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” as well as SDG 14 on “conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources” are not only ends in themselves, but a precondition to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda as a whole and closely interlinked to other SDGs.

We are concerned that despite our joint commitments the world is off-track to meet water-related targets: Billions of people lack access to safe, clean and affordable drinking water and sanitation, in denial of their basic human rights. And estimates suggest that 700 million people could be displaced due to scarcity of potable water by 2030. Water-related disasters such as droughts, flooding and sea-level rise are worrying drivers for forced displacement and conflict, and they have not only increased over the past decades but also become more extreme. The global water crisis thus has major implications not only on sustainable development, but also on the respect for human rights as well as peace and security. With less than ten years to implement the SDGs, this Conference should be a wakeup call for all of us to take responsibility and, more

importantly, to take action.

Mr. Chair,

Liechtenstein remains strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and we attach high importance to resolutions by the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, most recently on a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. As part of our commitment, we support a multi-stakeholder partnership called “Waterfootprint Liechtenstein” since 2017. Its principle is simple: “Use tap water! Donate drinking water!” The amount of money that organizations and individuals save by not buying bottled water is donated to partner organizations which invest in clean water projects around the world. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to create awareness and fairness: awareness to value the precious commodity of water, fairness by providing access to drinking water to people around the world. I am especially proud that the Liechtenstein Government, all Municipalities and major private companies in Liechtenstein are part of this project, which has helped provide over 184’00 people with access to clean drinking water to date.

Mr. Chair,

Ensuring access to safe drinking water is only one of many pressing issues we must confront in relation to water. As we all know, Member States are far off track to avert the worst consequences of climate change. Liechtenstein is a proud member of the core group that drafted a resolution to request an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice on climate change and we hope that many more will join the already 119 cosponsors of the resolution. The successful conclusion of negotiations on a high seas treaty (BBNJ) just a few weeks ago is a big achievement and a beacon of hope in our otherwise frustrating record in our joint effort to save the planet.

We also continue to support ongoing efforts at the International Law Commission to clarify aspects of international law relevant to sea-level rise, including on issues related to statehood.

For low-lying atoll States, one of the first manifestations of rising sea-levels will be the intrusion of saltwater into groundwater, placing extreme pressure on those living there to migrate. In the medium-term, part of the assistance the international community can provide for those most affected is to recommit ourselves to the right to self-determination of peoples set forth in Common Article 1 of the twin Human Rights Covenants. The novel situation of full or partial inundation of the territory of a State or country, or the relocation of its people, should not change the presumption in international law more generally that only the relevant people should be able to determine the mode of expression of their right to self-determination, including through statehood.

I thank you.