

New York, 18 December 2019

**Presentation of Liechtenstein's 1st Voluntary National Review on the implementation of
the SDGs**

High-Level Political Forum

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Introductory Statement by H.E. Ambassador Christian Wenaweser

**Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in
New York**

Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to present Liechtenstein's first Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the SDGs. I am very proud to head a delegation bringing together government, civil society and our first ever Youth Delegate. This underscores the need to unite all stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which was also reflected in the process leading to our implementation report.

There could not be a better moment for our first Voluntary National Review. The focus Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17 of this year's HLPF are key priorities for my country. In addition, Liechtenstein is also celebrating its 300th anniversary in 2019 – an ideal moment for us to reflect on the economic, social and environmental sustainability in our country as a key fac-

tor in our ability to preserve our sovereignty for three centuries. As also highlighted in the report, Liechtenstein has been heavily reliant on the sustainable use of natural resources, good neighbourly relations, strong global partnerships and the force of international law to protect its sovereignty. Sustainable development continues to be a key priority for us and we are pleased to participate for the first time in the VNR today.

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One key finding of our report is that Liechtenstein has achieved a high level of implementation with respect to a good number of SDGs – in particular SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 16.

Second, we have identified areas, where the trend goes in the right direction, but gaps persist. This is particularly the case for

- SDG 5: De facto gender equality, especially in politics and professional life;
- SDG 7: Reduction of dependency on fossil fuels;
- SDG 12: Consumption and production patterns
- SDG 13: Achieving our Nationally Determined contribution to the Paris Agreement

Finally, the report highlights the two areas, where we are facing major challenges: The sustainability of mobility is not yet on track (SDG 9 and 11), and the conservation of biodiversity is endangered (SDG 15).

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We are proud to present two specific success stories, which can perhaps serve as a model for others and small countries in particular.

- Since many years, Liechtenstein has been leading in organic agricultural production. Almost 40 % of our agricultural land is farmed organically. This is 2.5 times higher than in our neighbouring countries and even 5.4 times higher than in our region.
- Since 2015 Liechtenstein has been the “solar world champion”. With a cumulative installed photovoltaic capacity of 620 Watts per person, Liechtenstein is well ahead of

other states in first place in the world and has won the SolarSuperState Prize three times in a row.

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Finally, I would like to mention two concrete Liechtenstein public-private initiatives that contribute to the SDGs significantly.

The Government and a number of major private companies and charitable foundations have come together to help end modern slavery and human trafficking (SDG 8.7, SDG 5.2, SDG 16.2). To this end, we have set up a Financial Sector Commission, under the “Liechtenstein Initiative” – developed in cooperation with the United Nations University, Australia and the Netherlands – which elaborates a Blueprint that places financial institutions at the centre of the global effort to end these crimes. The Blueprint will be launched during high-level week on 27 September, followed by a multi-stakeholder dissemination and implementation phase.

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The “Waterfootprint Liechtenstein” is also a public private partnership. As tap water in Liechtenstein is of excellent quality, the Waterfootprint-project aims at raising awareness of sustainable water consumption. The principle is simple: “Drink tap water. Donate drinking water.” By donating 55 Swiss Francs to the project, any person in Liechtenstein can commit to refraining from using bottled water and instead providing one person in a developing country with access to safe water. In addition, significant amounts of emissions and plastic waste can be avoided. Our goal is to achieve the same number of Waterfootprints as the number of inhabitants of Liechtenstein, corresponding to about 38’000. Until today, we have reached more than 22’000. 3’000 people in Tanzania alone have been given access to safe drinking water since the launch of the project.

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I would like to give the floor to Panagiotis Potolidis-Beck, Head of Division, Economic Affairs and Development, Office for Foreign Affairs, who coordinated the process of developing Liechtenstein’s first VNR.

PP:

I am honoured to provide you with a brief overview of Liechtenstein's SDG-implementation structure and the preparation process of the VNR. Following the adoption of the 2030 back in 2015, the government established an inter-ministerial working group under the lead of the Office for Foreign Affairs. Four main tasks were assigned to the working group:

- First, the compilation of available statistics to measure SDG-progress
- Second, the elaboration of a gap analysis;
- Third, the preparation of recommendations to the government for possible priorities
- Finally, information to the public and exchange with private actors and civil society

In an in-depth analysis and in regular exchange with relevant stakeholders the working group prepared concrete recommendations to the government and informed the public on various occasions.

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In February 2018, the government adopted a detailed SDG implementation strategy. It declared the SDGs as an integral part of the "2017-2021 Government Programme". While recognising that all SDGs are interconnected and equally important, the government decided to put particular focus on the SDGs 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 13. More concretely, the government decided to implement four strategic SDG-related projects:

- **2030 Energy Strategy** to further enhance energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources;
- **2030 Mobility Concept** to tackle key challenges in the mobility sector;
- **2025 Education Strategy** to align education with long-term sustainability;
- Further improve **compatibility of family and career**.

The VNR we are presenting today was prepared in a broad and inclusive process. It compiles comprehensive information from all ministries, and all available statistics related to the SDGs. The availability of statistics proved to be a particular challenge. Nevertheless, 62 national indicators could be collected and assigned to the respective SDGs.

In parallel, we performed a consultation process of the private sector and civil society through a survey. All interested stakeholders were invited to participate in an open survey, which aimed at collecting information from private actors on

- knowledge about the SDGs,
- importance of the SDGs for business or association activities,
- assessment of the implementation status of all the SDGs,
- priorities for implementation,
- relevant private activities,
- suggestions on further involvement of stakeholders.

More than 40 institutions participated in this survey. The results show that knowledge about the SDGs is still very limited. Only very few private actors have explicitly included them in their strategy, so far. Private actors largely share the views of the government with regards to focus SDGs and existing challenges. They also expressed their wish for a more systematic approach to public-private cooperation.

Finally, the survey revealed that Liechtenstein charitable foundations alone provide more than 200 Million Swiss Francs to SDG-related projects abroad, exceeding public funding for development cooperation by almost ten times. In order to value the private engagement, a specific chapter in the VNR was dedicated to this topic.

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This VNR is not the end but part of a long-term implementation process. The government formulated three main conclusions for the future:

- Collaboration with the private sector and civil society will be further intensified and institutionalised;
- Measures to ensure policy coherence with all the SDGs will be considered;
- National indicators for sustainable development will be reviewed and aligned more closely with the SDG-indicators.

Thank you.

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I now give the floor to Claudia Fritsche, Vice-President of the Liechtenstein Human Rights Association – our national human rights institution which was founded in 2017 in accordance with the UN Paris Principles.

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Finally, I would like to hand over to our youth delegate Valerie Nigg who has assumed the very important role of representing Liechtenstein's youth abroad and promoting the work of the UN among youth nationally.