



LIECHTENSTEIN DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT

30 March 2021, 16:00h-18:00h (virtual format)

Introductory remarks by

H.E. Ms. Dominique Hasler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sports

Dear participants,

Dear guests and friends of the Liechtenstein Dialogue for Development,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Events like the “Liechtenstein Dialogue for Development” are very important for my country. Not only are they a great opportunity for me as Foreign Minister to speak about the values and priorities of Liechtenstein. They are also a chance for participants from all over the world, to see our impressive mountain scenery, to experience the famous Liechtenstein hospitality and to taste some of our delicious regional food. Unfortunately, times are not normal, and the pandemic does not allow to have a physical conference. However, I am very proud that we can continue the tradition of this event, even in a virtual format, and it is my great honour to deliver some introductory remarks.

Ladies and Gentleman,

As you all know, our planet is currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that affects all countries – it affects each and every one of us. At a first glance, people may think of the pandemic as a health crisis. Being at the same time Minister for Education, I can tell you from my personal experience: It is truly much more than just a health crisis. Back in March 2020, the pandemic forced us to shut down schools. From one day to the next, children had to switch to home schooling, and their parents had to fulfil multiple roles at the same time: They had to be teachers, sports instructors, playmates and much more. In many cases, this worked out surprisingly well. But there were also many children left in problematic family situations. They had to

experience tough weeks of social isolation and psychological pressure. The same is true for parents, especially for those without the possibility of doing home office. As the second wave of the pandemic hit us in October 2020, I was truly overwhelmed by the very many parents and children too, urging me personally not to close the schools again. I am extremely proud, that our country has managed to go through the second and third wave by keeping the schools open at all times.

As happy as I am about the successful management of the pandemic in our schools, I am even more concerned about the precarious situation in many less developed countries. Already for a long time before the pandemic, the number of crises and armed conflicts had been steadily growing. More than 86 Million people are currently living in displacement, half of the them being children. The COVID-19 pandemic comes on top to existing crises and further increases their urgency. More than 230 Million of people are in need of humanitarian assistance, with the financial requirements amounting to more than 35 billion US-Dollars. Children are amongst the most severely hit group: According to UNICEF, 463 Million children did or do not have any access to remote learning when schools are shuttered. 360 Million children are depending on school meals, which they miss due to various lockdowns.

The global situation is a strong proof that sustainable development is a global matter. The “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) are of crucial importance for all of us: States, private sector, civils society and individuals. As a State, Liechtenstein has invested a lot in the implementation of the SDGs through international solidarity. Every year, we provide more than 23 Million Swiss Francs for international solidarity. In doing so, we follow clear thematic priorities:

- Improve access to education and quality of education for all,
- Create income opportunities and decent jobs,
- Promoting sustainable agriculture and food security,
- Protection and promotion of human rights, and
- Prevention of irregular migration.

Our focussed activities contribute towards reducing poverty and improving perspectives and resilience of the most vulnerable. Responsible investment, which contributes towards improving perspectives and making our world more resilient, must also be a core interest of every private actor. It has always been the view of the Liechtenstein Government, that increased cooperation with the private sector and civil society is needed in order to really achieve sustainability. Several initiatives for public-private partnerships were launched in Liechtenstein in the past years. The “Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking” (in short: FAST) is one vivid example of such cooperation. Together with private companies and charitable foundations we have developed concrete tools for the financial sector in order to combat financial flows associated with modern slavery and human trafficking. By using these tools, financial sector actors can create a real and significant impact.

This landmark initiative is only one example of how private actors can create impact. We need to create more incentives for private actors to invest in projects with a positive social and ecologic impact. I very much appreciate the topic of this year’s “Liechtenstein Dialogue for Development”. I am personally convinced that private actors can be mobilised for projects that generate positive impact on sustainable development, if impact becomes countable and potentially tradeable.

Let me provide at least some food for thought for your discussion: Measuring and counting impact is closely connected to trust. New technologies, such as Distributed Ledger Technologies, have great potential in building up trust. Technologies like blockchain could provide ways to tokenise impacts from investments. Liechtenstein took up a pioneer role by implementing an innovative act on Tokens and Trusted Technologies services providers. I am very much looking forward to the future innovative ideas that will be presented by high-profile speakers during the following key note speech and the panel discussion.

I thank you.