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OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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GROUP OF FRIENDS ON E-GOVERNANCE AND CYBERSECURITY

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDES: THE DIGITAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19”

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. KATRIN EGGENBERGER

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Dear Colleagues,

Let me first thank our Co-Chairs Estonia and Singapore very dearly for this Conference. It is a topic of immense importance and one where strong commitment and bold action can still make all the difference. I therefore welcome that you have also put forward a “Global Declaration on the Digital Response to COVID-19”. Liechtenstein supports this Declaration and we hope it generates the dynamics we need, at the United Nations and nationally, for a digital transition that is a force for good.

Our response to the pandemic can serve as an accelerator of technical innovation, digital inclusion and infrastructure investment. The pandemic has certainly shown to all of us that there are deep gaps that need to be filled. The only way to do this is the multilateral way: the commitment to work together under the umbrella of the United Nations and our Sustainable Development Goals. Today can be a jump start in the right direction.

There are two specific issues that I believe are of particular relevance for our digital response to COVID-19. First, we cannot compromise on our fundamental human rights. They underpin every goal that we have collectively agreed to in our vision for a better future. And, we know very well by now how wide-spread misinformation and restrictions to the freedom of expression have impaired the response to the pandemic. The right to privacy is maybe most under pressure today. Ultimately, it will always be trust that a Government has to seek from its citizens to be effective and sustainable in its policies. That trust cannot be forced by means of mass surveillance, restricted information and indoctrination. The right to privacy is the pillar how to build that trust.

Second, we see very concerning indications about increased corruption, in the health sector and beyond. The massive economic support and stimulus packages certainly bear a high risk of

deviation and misuse of funds. Given where we stand in the achievement of the SDGs we cannot afford that. New technologies such as blockchain can dramatically increase financial transparency and inclusion, but only if the risks are properly managed. This is why we have enacted comprehensive national legislation to regulate that technology. While this is a learning process for all of us, we hope to set an example how to embrace the potential of digital technologies with the necessary legal certainty. We are eager to share our experiences with others and I am glad I can benefit myself today from so many of my colleagues' views. I thank you once again very much for bringing us together on this issue.