

75 years signing of UN Charter, Statement HBM, 26.06.2020

Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Thank you, Director-General,
for your initiative to commemorate
the signing of the United Nations Charter 75 years ago.

I am pleased to represent the host country, Austria, and
convey to you the warmest greetings of the Federal Chancellor and
the Austrian Federal Government.

Especially in this challenging year,
this anniversary takes on a very special significance.

We are all in a unique situation:
for the first time all nations on this planet are facing the same challenge:
The fight against the COVID 19 pandemic.

Seen from a global perspective we are still in the midst of this health crisis.

We all know that the pandemic is far from over.

But it has made us all again aware:

- How deeply interdependent we all are
- And that we have to work together to overcome this crisis

To this end, we need a strong UN more than ever.

Austria is an active member of the United Nations and the proud host of one of the UN's four headquarters in Vienna.

Indeed, we are deeply committed to effective multilateralism.

Austria had its first experience with the United Nations 75 years ago, even before joining it.

When Austria faced a famine after the Second World War,
the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
provided food and other essential goods.

This was life saving for many Austrians.

65 years ago, immediately after regaining our full sovereignty, Austria joined the then still young Organisation.

Since 1960, we have continuously contributed to UN peace missions.

We have served the international community three times as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

We are fully prepared to do so again in 2027/2028.

Also, we are again a member of the Human Rights Council and we are proud that an Austrian diplomat is presiding the Council this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations can look back on a great history.

It has successfully worked for the progress of humanity and the advancement of mankind.

It has made our planet safer by setting new global standards on human rights, the rule of law, conflict prevention, peace-keeping, the fight against poverty, disarmament and climate change.

However, we all have to acknowledge that these standards are being constantly threatened.

Our generation is facing a range of strongly interrelated challenges, ranging from armed conflicts to climate change and from political repression to extreme poverty.

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated these challenges even further.

And what is more:

Even the very notion of international cooperation, of multilateral diplomacy is being put into question.

But Austria, like many other small and medium-sized countries, depends on negotiated solutions for addressing global problems.

If the question is “rule of law” or the “law of the jungle” for Austria the answer is clear:

There needs to be
a rules-based international order,
where good governance, open markets and
the notion of “pacta sunt servanda” prevail.

The global challenges we are facing require a strong United Nations!

This is in the interest of every one of us.

I believe, that the Family of the United Nations in Vienna

is well equipped to provide the perfect framework for advancing multilateralism.

It is an indispensable hub for many pressing issues of our times,

Including, among others,

nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;

energy; sustainable development; the peaceful use of outer space and fighting corruption, crime and drugs –

the latter an immensely important topic, you will be discussing in depth today.

Especially under your new leadership, Director-General,

I see a lot of potential for the UN in Vienna to become more visible and to tackle the challenges of the future

Ladies and gentlemen,

We deeply honour the founding fathers – and mothers – of the United Nations.

The UN Charter, as written 75 years ago, remain of utmost and lasting relevance.

My country has always been and will remain
strongly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

We, the “peoples of the United Nations” need each other - and we need a strong and functioning United Nations.

Because it is this organisation that tirelessly works every day to make our planet a better place.

Thank you