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Chair: Mr. Milano (Vice-Chair) (Italy)

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In the absence of Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand), Mr. Milano (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 83: The rule of law at the national and international levels (continued) (A/78/184)

1. **Mr. Ndoye** (Senegal) said that, in his report (A/78/184), the Secretary-General had noted that the reporting period had seen a global decline in the rule of law around the world. At a time of interconnected crises, it was important to further strengthen the rule of law in order to achieve the goal of a fairer, more peaceful and safe world. It was therefore heartening to note the progress made in national criminal accountability and access to justice in post-conflict situations. His delegation welcomed the Organization's activities to promote the rule of law in all Member States, a vital condition for achieving sustainable development. Indeed, strong, independent judicial institutions capable of protecting the people were essential for economic and social development of States.

2. In that connection, his Government had focused its public governance on the fight against corruption, on accountability and on transparency. Senegal had also ratified the related international legal instruments and had transposed them into its positive law and strengthened its institutions combating corruption and fraud. The overarching goal was to create an environment conducive to a better use of national resources and local and foreign investment. However, at the national level, the rule of law was more than laws and courts. It entailed the existence of accessible, independent and competent courts to settle disputes between legal persons on the basis of fairness.

3. Promoting the rule of law at the international level required strict respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. An international order governed by those norms was essential for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States. Given that some countries, notably the developing countries, faced real challenges in establishing effective national institutions to strengthen the rule of law, the United Nations should place more emphasis on technical assistance and capacity-building for those countries, taking into account the specific characteristics of each.

4. Lastly, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court played important roles in promoting the rule of law. The universality of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court would help to end impunity at the international level.

5. **Ms. Bhat** (India) said that the rule of law was essential, at the international level, for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States and, at the national level, for the advancement of democracy and sustainable development and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Indian Constitution was firmly rooted in the rule of law. It guaranteed equality and equal protection under the law, entrusted the implementation of international treaties and agreements to the central Government and provided for the separation of powers. The judicial branch ensured strict enforcement of the rule of law, the executive branch had adopted numerous programmes to alleviate poverty and ensure inclusive growth, while the legislative branch had taken appropriate legislative measures to protect and assist vulnerable groups.

6. In keeping with the subtopic of using technology to advance access to justice for all, India had launched a court digitization project aimed at improving access to justice, and had undertaken several initiatives to educate judicial officers, lawyers and the public about the project. Recently, an updated version of the electronic filing system had been rolled out, and 19 high courts had adopted model rules for electronic filing. Online access to the legal system and the holding of virtual hearings helped to make the judicial system accessible and affordable for economically and socially vulnerable groups.

7. The rule of law at the international level also entailed reform of international institutions of global governance, including those charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Reform of the United Nations, with the Security Council at its core, was needed to uphold the rule of law at the international level and ensure effective multilateral action. The Security Council should be made more representative with the establishment of permanent and non-permanent seats for developing countries.

8. **Mr. Ben Lagha** (Tunisia) said that it was difficult to list the virtues of the rule of law at the international level at a time when the world was witnessing the genocide of a population that should have been protected by the instruments and mechanisms put in place by the international community. Tunisia reaffirmed its solemn commitment to an international order based on the rule of law, in which all States complied with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, settled their differences peacefully and refrained from the use or threat of use of force.

9. Respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels was fundamental to global peace and

security, economic and social progress and the protection of human rights. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which called for a stronger connection between the rule of law and peace, development, human rights and international law, and promoted a people-centred, gender-sensitive and forward-looking approach by the United Nations system.

10. Tunisia welcomed the activities of the International Law Commission and remained steadfast in its support for all peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms, including the International Court of Justice, whose advisory opinions were critical for the clarification of international law. His delegation awaited with interest the Court's opinions on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as on the obligations of States in respect of climate change. Tunisia also supported the work of the International Criminal Court in the fight against impunity and urged all States to accede to the Court's Rome Statute. It also urged the Court to accelerate the examination of certain cases that had remained stagnant, in order to maintain its credibility, and to open investigations into the ongoing war crimes without delay.

11. Tunisia welcomed the adoption in June 2023 of the international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, which would strengthen the rule of law in international waters. However, greater multilateral efforts were clearly needed to ensure that the rule of law could respond to other modern challenges.

12. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that there was a global decline in the rule of law, as acknowledged in his report (A/78/184), owing to a resurgence of conflicts and increased violations of international law and international humanitarian law on several fronts, against the backdrop of increased polarization in international relations and the worrying paralysis of the Security Council. The Council should fulfil its mandate to achieve a cease-fire and put an end to the ongoing massacres and humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip. The inaction of the Council and the complicit silence of the international community over those crimes reinforced impunity, blurred the lines between the right of self-defence and vengeance and collective punishment, encouraged the commission of other crimes against humanity, and called into question the morality of the international legal system.

13. Selective, incomplete and discriminatory application of international law threatened to tip the world into a state of lawlessness. To strengthen the rule of law, it was essential that all States respect the law and act in accordance with their declared principles. The international community must ensure universal respect for international humanitarian law and should emphatically condemn war crimes, such as the bombing of a hospital in Gaza which had killed hundreds of sick and injured civilians. The application of double standards undermined trust between States, further deepened divisions, increased polarization and weakened the rule of law.

14. **Mr. Galstyan** (Armenia) said that the rule of law was instrumental in building just societies and maintaining peace. Armenia was committed to upholding and promoting justice and the rule of law at all levels. To that end, it had been working to design and implement multiple reform processes to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and judicial accountability, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/78/184).

15. In 2020, Azerbaijan had launched a full-scale war against Nagorno-Karabakh in an effort to resolve an international dispute by force. The systematic attacks by Azerbaijan had since involved multiple instances of violent and hostile conduct, in violation of international law and existing ceasefire arrangements. On 16 September 2021, guided by its commitment to the principles of the rule of law, Armenia had submitted a request to the International Court of Justice for the indication of provisional measures against Azerbaijan under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

16. In its order of 7 December 2021, the Court had indicated provisional measures that Azerbaijan must, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention, protect from violence and bodily harm all persons captured in relation to the 2020 conflict who remained in detention, and ensure their security and equality before the law; take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin; and take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts.

17. In response to a request by Armenia following the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan on the only humanitarian lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh

with Armenia and the outside world, on 22 February 2023, the Court had indicated another provisional measure ordering Azerbaijan to take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. On 6 July 2023, the Court had reaffirmed that measure, recalling also that its orders on provisional measures had binding effect and thus created international legal obligations for any party to whom they were addressed. It had also reaffirmed that the parties should refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute or make it more difficult to resolve.

18. In a clear violation of its obligations under those orders, Azerbaijan had carried out what amounted to ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh by imposing a 10-month blockade on the 120,000 people there, with the subsequent use of large-scale military force that had brought about forced displacement of the entire Armenian population from their homeland. On 29 September 2023, Armenia had requested that the Court reaffirm the obligations of Azerbaijan under the previously rendered orders and indicate new provisional measures, including ordering Azerbaijan to refrain from taking any measures that might be in breach of its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to refrain from impeding the access of the United Nations and its specialized agencies or interfering with the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

19. Member States should work together to enforce the decisions of international judicial bodies. Armenia firmly believed in the primacy of international law over the use of force and was committed to effectively addressing impunity, including through the international criminal jurisdiction mechanisms. In line with that commitment, it had recently ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

20. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that her delegation welcomed the collective efforts of the United Nations to uphold the rule of law, although it regretted the deterioration of the rule of law, democracy and women's rights during the reporting period in several vulnerable settings, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/78/184). It agreed with the Secretary-General that upholding the rule of law was essential to addressing the complex crises of the time and to building peaceful societies with equal opportunities and with full respect for the rights and freedoms of all. Georgia remained committed to revitalizing progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16, which was key to achieving all the other Sustainable Development Goals.

21. Recognizing the potential of digitization, Georgia had made significant strides towards the digitization of government services and would soon adopt a national digital governance strategy. To protect the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, it was continuing to improve the functioning and transparency of the penitentiary system and had adopted a new penitentiary code. Distance learning had recently been introduced to provide access to quality higher education across the system, and digital dactyloscopy had been implemented to enable the digitization of prisoner data.

22. Georgia was a founding member of the International Criminal Court and reiterated its readiness to continue its close cooperation with the Court in order to ensure that justice was served for victims of the most serious international crimes in Georgia and elsewhere. Her delegation wished to recall that both the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court had confirmed the occupation of and effective control over the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia by the Russian Federation and that the Russian Federation bore full responsibility for the grave violations committed in those regions.

23. **Mr. Vannasin** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the rule of law contributed to the maintenance of global peace and security, which were fundamental for sustainable development. Deliberations on new international legal instruments, norms, standards and rules should be guided by the principles the Charter of the United Nations and international law. To advance Sustainable Development Goal 16, the United Nations should continue to provide capacity-building to developing States for the implementation of international instruments at the national level.

24. His Government was currently carrying out a five-year plan to enact or amend laws in a transparent, accountable and participatory manner, and it was continuing to implement its action plan on preventing and combating corruption. It attached great importance to the development and improvement of digital platforms and had made an accurate and reliable disaster management data system publicly available to assist in emergency preparedness and response.

25. **Ms. Sahrip** (Brunei Darussalam) said that respect for the rule of law was essential to preserving peaceful coexistence and good relations among States and promoting peace, security and stability. Brunei Darussalam remained committed to a "friend to all" foreign policy, to respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and national identity of all nations, to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to non-interference in the internal affairs of States. It

supported the leading role of the United Nations in promoting and coordinating efforts at the global level to strengthen the rule of law, and it recognized the work of the Organization in the areas of peacekeeping, disarmament, development and good governance. The international system must remain firmly anchored in the principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

26. The States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) would continue to promote the rule of law and a rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at its centre. Regionalism and multilateralism were important principles and frameworks of cooperation. Their strength and value lay in their rules-based nature, inclusivity, transparency, openness and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect. Brunei Darussalam would continue to uphold the principles and values of the ASEAN Charter and reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region on the basis of international law, including in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

27. In 2016, Brunei Darussalam had amended its Code of Criminal Procedure to allow victims to testify digitally, and in 2021 it had amended its laws to allow online judicial hearings. However, while digital technologies could facilitate equitable access to justice, they must not compromise judicial integrity.

28. **Ms. Jiménez Alegría** (Mexico) said that her Government continued to work closely with the United Nations to improve security, prevent crime, reduce armed violence, combat corruption and strengthen accountability in the country. It had thus been able to improve internal processes and had made progress toward adopting legislation on internally displaced persons. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law and agreed with its people-centred, human rights-based approach. The New Vision would improve the coherence of initiatives to strengthen the rule of law and ensure the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to promote efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

29. Technology had tremendous potential to improve access to justice, particularly since the explosion of digital connectivity. In 2013, the Mexican Constitution had been amended to include the right to access to information and communications technologies, and the current legislature was studying another amendment that would enable the implementation of digital justice systems. The national judiciary had developed an online portal that could be used to file motions, consult case

files and follow cases remotely, and the Supreme Court of Justice had used language models created with artificial intelligence to digitize thousands of judgments and precedents and build a search engine for public use. In addition, it was now possible to affix a certified electronic signature to claims and court documents.

30. Digitization promoted access to justice, simplified processes and reduced costs. The use of virtual courts and judicial improvements were good examples of how technology could be used to address current circumstances and facilitate access to justice. However, to ensure that judicial digitization did not exacerbate inequality and discrimination against vulnerable groups, it was necessary to take a human rights approach, which meant narrowing the digital divide and considering the application of better practices and technologies.

31. **Ms. Cedano** (Dominican Republic) said that the rule of law was crucial in any democratic society to ensure justice and equality and protect the rights of all citizens. The Constitution of the Dominican Republic provided for the separation of powers and, thus, judicial independence. Her Government had made progress in protecting fundamental rights and ensuring access to justice, and worked tirelessly to strengthen institutions, improve accountability and transparency, and promote public participation in decision-making processes. The rule of law was an ongoing process in which all citizens, in and out of government, played a part in ensuring that justice, equality and legality prevailed.

32. At the international level, the Dominican Republic actively supported the peaceful resolution of disputes, human rights, accountability and strengthening of the rule of law. In an interconnected world, the stability and progress of one country affected those of all other countries. The Dominican Republic would continue to work with the international community to strengthen the rule of law at the international level, including by supporting the work of international organizations and promoting cooperation and dialogue on matters of common interest, such as the impact of digital technology.

33. **Mr. Camara** (Guinea) said that, by guaranteeing the exercise of rights, the rule of law ensured security and social cohesion and provided a framework for preventing impunity for national and international crimes. Guinea was a party to regional and international instruments to combat trafficking in persons, organized crime and corruption. It had taken measures to combat serious crimes in its legal order. For example, its 2016 Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure punished crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of genocide, and stipulated that they were not

subject to any statute of limitation, and in particular that official capacity was irrelevant for the purpose of prosecution. Guinean law also provided for and punished economic crimes, which were also not subject to any statute of limitation.

34. His delegation thanked the members of the International Law Commission for their continuing efforts to ensure the codification and progressive development of international law. For the good of current and future generations, it was essential to build an international order based on law and respect for legal norms, including the principles of sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, freedom in international relations and peaceful settlement of disputes.

35. **Ms. Mokhawa** (Botswana) said that Member States must fulfil their obligations to protect and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to abide by the Charter of the United Nations. The rule of law was integral to the advancement of the Organization's three pillars. Botswana was committed to upholding the principles of the Charter, international law and the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Her Government was actively pursuing constitutional reform and working to ensure access to justice for all, combat corruption, and prevent and counter terrorism. It stood ready to engage with Member States and all relevant stakeholders to advance the rule of law at the international level.

36. **Mr. Aron** (Indonesia) said that violations of international law had become the norm and the spirit of multilateralism continued to fade. His delegation shared the observation made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/78/184) that the reporting period had seen a global decline in the rule of law. It supported the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which acknowledged that the rule of law was critical for lasting peace and security, essential for sustainable development and the basis for multilateral cooperation and political dialogue. It was therefore vital for all Member States to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. In addition, the international community must encourage all States to settle their differences peacefully and ensure that all voices were heard.

37. With regard to the subtopic of using technology to advance access to justice for all, it was important to remember that although technology offered solutions, it also presented new challenges that must be addressed. In that connection, international cooperation was needed to foster meaningful digital inclusivity and

connectivity, collaboration on cybersecurity and harmonization of digital legal frameworks.

38. His delegation was disappointed that reference to the death penalty, something that had no direct connection to the rule of law, continued to be included in the Secretary-General's report, even though there was no global consensus on the death penalty or universal legally binding norms governing its application. All States should be free to exercise their sovereign right to adopt laws in accordance with their obligations under international law. His Government exercised maximum restraint when imposing the death penalty, ensuring that it was applied only as a last resort through stringent due process of law for only 16 of the most serious crimes, such as terrorism and drug-related offences. Under the new Penal Code, the death penalty could also be commuted.

39. Indonesia strongly condemned the attack on a hospital in Gaza, which had killed hundreds of civilians and clearly violated international law, in particular international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It called for an immediate cessation of armed hostilities in Gaza and the immediate opening of safe humanitarian corridors. The occupying force had carried out unjust and inhumane actions against the Palestinian people for far too long. The international community must prioritize the establishment of a just peace for Palestine, including through the implementation of all United Nations and international agreements aimed at creating a two-State solution based on agreed international parameters.

40. **Mr. Al-Ajmi** (Oman) said that the rule of law was the basis of governance and the cornerstone of his Government's actions. At the national level, his Government had been reviewing and modernizing the country's laws and had upgraded the judiciary system and litigation procedures. In order to strengthen transparency and integrity, an annual review was undertaken in collaboration with the judiciary and various government agencies to verify their compliance with the law. Laws pertaining to social protection and the private sector had also been modernized to ensure compliance with international standards and instruments. In the Oman Vision 2040, a particular emphasis was placed on oversight, governance and accountability, which would encourage competitiveness and confidence in the national economy and attract foreign investment.

41. At the international level, Oman reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for international law and international humanitarian law, the principles of

non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful resolution of disputes, prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, cooperation and dialogue among States, and peaceful coexistence. Oman therefore condemned the targeting of a hospital in Gaza by the Israeli occupation forces, which had killed and wounded hundreds of civilians. That genocidal act was a war crime and a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and morality. Oman called on all Member States to respect international law and on Israel, as the occupying force, to respect the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Israel must not target Palestinian civilians in the occupied Arab territories, including in the Gaza Strip, or subject them to any ill-treatment, torture or collective punishment, including by depriving them of water or electricity or preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to them.

42. **Ms. Taye** (Ethiopia) said that a predictable legal system with competent and legitimate legislative bodies and an independent judiciary was the cornerstone of national governance. To that end, her Government had undertaken a number of reforms in the legislative, law enforcement and judicial sectors. It believed that in addition to addressing current concerns, it was critical to acknowledge and address past grievances and the root causes of discord, in order to build a just, equitable and harmonious society.

43. The United Nations and other organizations should complement the efforts of Member States to find home-grown solutions to the challenges confronting the rule of law. In that connection, the use of information and communications technology in civil registries and in the work of law enforcement and judicial bodies had created significant momentum for access to justice in Ethiopia. However, advances in modern technology had also expanded loopholes exploited for counterfeiting purposes. It was therefore necessary to increase investment in technology infrastructure and to strengthen capacities on information integrity. Countries should share best practices, technical knowledge and resources to ensure the safe and secure use of technology.

44. Serious shortcomings in the rule of law at the international level and in global institutions remained, including unilateral coercive measures, inequitable international cooperation, the biased interpretation and application of international norms and treaties, systemic double standards and the indisposition to serve justice. Hostility towards States and the use of modern technology to pressure and discredit Governments continued. Furthermore, despite the principle of the sovereign equality of States, United Nations institutions remained unrepresentative and undemocratic. For

example, the working methods of the Security Council were the antithesis of the rule of law, as States under discussion at the Council had no voice or representation in the Council. Such practices called into question the Organization's decisions and credibility. The international community must recognize the impact of lawlessness on fomenting instability and underdevelopment and must demand respect for international law.

45. **Ms. Muzumbwe-Katongo** (Zambia) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which would enhance equal access to justice for all. The rule of law was central to addressing the disregard for international law, egregious violations of human rights, inequality and corruption. Independent judiciaries played a critical role in preserving the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice.

46. Technology could also be used to improve access to and the delivery of justice. It could help to minimize filing costs and the time needed to exchange records and information among justice institutions and relevant parties; to reduce the risk of loss of records; and to detect repeat offenders. Technology also allowed vulnerable communities to have direct access to legal services, despite geographic or socioeconomic constraints, and to circumvent the individuals and institutions likely to discriminate against them. The technical revolution, including innovations in artificial intelligence, was opening new opportunities for human civilization and new frontiers for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The international community must therefore cooperate to mitigate its related ethical and human security risks.

47. Her Government was working to strengthen and modernize the country's criminal justice system. It had implemented a case flow management system to speed up processing and improve accountability by tracking the time it took for cases to go to trial and identifying those responsible for delays. The new system would also help to better respond to the transnational nature of corruption-related offences and expedite asset recovery. In addition, an electronic record keeping system had been implemented to aid in the quick disposal of cases.

48. **Mr. Feruță** (Romania) said that the global decline in the rule of law and a backsliding of democracy observed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/78/184) was a concerning trend that needed to be reversed. States could do more to highlight the rule of law agenda and take a cohesive approach to its promotion across United Nations processes, including through the Security Council and informal networks

such as the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, as well as the targeted assistance and projects undertaken by the United Nations in many Member States. Romania remained committed to improving its national framework and offering assistance based on its own transition to a consolidated democracy.

49. Romania continued to support the International Court of Justice, as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, and its role in promoting and reinforcing the rules-based international order. To encourage a wider use of the Court, Romania and a group of countries had issued a declaration in 2021 listing the main arguments for accepting the Court's contentious jurisdiction and reaffirming its contribution to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of the rule of law globally. The group encouraged States to confer jurisdiction on the Court by any of the means envisaged in its Statute and to make better use of its potential. All Member States were invited to endorse the declaration. Furthermore, the international community should continue to strive for the universality of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Continued political and financial support for the Court was crucial, given the vital role it played in combating impunity.

50. **Mr. Hernandez Chavez** (Chile) said that his delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Secretariat to promote a people-centred, gender-sensitive and forward-looking approach to the rule of law. One of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century for the international community was to strengthen the international legal order and the rule of law. Promotion of the rule of law at the international level involved the gradual and universal acceptance by States of international law and the consequent fulfilment of their obligations in that regard.

51. The rule of law at the national and international levels were intrinsically linked. States must therefore adopt measures within their legal systems to ensure respect for and compliance with international law. The United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, should continue to encourage Member States to ensure respect for the rule of law at the national level, the full exercise of which was facilitated by democracy and the participation of women. It was therefore concerning that, according to the Secretary-General's report (A/78/184), there had been a global decline in the rule of law and a backsliding of democracy and women's rights, including in several fragile settings. States should redouble their efforts to reverse those trends in the coming years.

52. Despite the difficulties it had experienced, Chile had been able to channel the legitimate demands of its people for constitutional reform into a peaceful, institutional and democratic process, in keeping with its Constitution and the rule of law. In the 50 years since the coup d'état that had deposed the Constitutional President of Chile, Salvador Allende, the country had made significant progress in restoring democracy, the Republic, social rights and fundamental freedoms. Given that truth and reparations also played an important role in the rule of law, the Government had implemented a number of transitional justice initiatives, including the establishment of national commissions on truth and reconciliation, political prisoners and torture. It was also developing a national plan to search for victims of enforced disappearances during the dictatorship.

53. The support of the United Nations was fundamental to the defence and promotion of the rule of law, as it enabled States to better address the current complex crises and build peaceful societies with equal opportunities and full respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

54. **Mr. Giret Soto** (Paraguay) said that his country promoted respect for international law and reinforced the fundamental principles of democracy at the national level, with a particular emphasis on citizen participation, access to information, freedom of expression, human rights and the rule of law. The rule of law must be considered an imperative for the credibility of institutions and for just and equitable societies. His Government was committed to ensuring that the country's institutions respected the principles of justice, liberty and equality and guarantees of the rule of law for citizens. The constitutional order of Paraguay called for the observance of human rights and the exercise of power by the three branches of government in a system characterized by independence, balance, coordination and reciprocal control.

55. His Government believed that the application of the rule of law, access to justice, democracy and respect for human rights were essential for the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In its discussions, the United Nations should address the decline in the rule of law and the backsliding of democracy outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/78/184). His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which promoted a people-centred approach and served to acknowledge the cross-cutting nature of the rule of law in connection with human rights and its importance as the basis for multilateral cooperation and political dialogue.

56. Technology could facilitate accessible and inclusive solutions to achieve universal access to justice. Nevertheless, the implementation of technological resources should be accompanied by measures that addressed the potential inequalities and obstacles arising from their use. Access to public information was essential for strengthening the rule of law. The use of technology in accountability and access to information processes could make an important contribution to that principle. In Paraguay, a law on free access to public information and government transparency allowed the citizens to monitor the work of the country's institutions. Electronic filing had been adopted in 2016 and played a fundamental role in supporting administrative and judicial decision-making for courts and tribunals. It had also improved security and efficiency, which had been especially beneficial during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and had facilitated the holding of remote judicial proceedings.

57. **Ms. Almhawas** (Saudi Arabia) said that the ongoing heinous attacks by Israeli occupying forces against the oppressed and defenceless Palestinian civilians in Gaza constituted a blatant violation of international law and norms, including international humanitarian law, and was fuelled by the international community's persistence in applying double standards and selectivity in the implementation of international law. Saudi Arabia strongly condemned the atrocious crimes committed by Israeli occupying forces with the destruction of a hospital in Gaza, which had resulted in countless injuries and the deaths of hundreds of civilians, including children and the elderly. Her Government called on the international community to take a firm stance to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors to deliver food and medicine to besieged communities and hold the Israeli occupying forces fully responsible.

58. Her delegation commended the Secretary-General for taking a balanced approach to the national and international dimensions of the rule of law in his report (A/78/184), and for referring therein to the concerted action by the United Nations to assist Member States, at their request, to promote the rule of law. However, her delegation had reservations about paragraph 89 of the report, in which it was stated that the United Nations continued to promote the universal abolition of the death penalty. The use of the death penalty did not contravene international law or international instruments. In addition, there was no international consensus on the abolition of the death penalty, and each country had the sovereign right to develop its own legal system and laws governing punishment. In Saudi Arabia, the death

penalty was only issued for the most serious crimes, following a fair trial with due legal process and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 on safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty.

59. The rule of law at the national and international levels was fundamental to achieving international peace and security. States had a shared responsibility to address domestic and international challenges to the rule of law by adopting effective measures to combat corruption. In order to achieve the priorities of its Vision 2030 campaign, the Government had taken measures to enhance integrity and accountability with a view to preventing all forms of corruption, including financial and administrative corruption. Saudi Arabia was committed to establishing a legal system based on the principles and purposes of the Charter. The rule of law could be achieved only through effective multilateralism and must be applied at the national and international levels, while respecting the principle of sovereignty.

60. **Ms. Flores Soto** (El Salvador) said that her delegation appreciated the valuable support provided by the United Nations to help States in developing special capacities for the investigation and prosecution of digital threats and harm, in particular with regard to online child sexual abuse and exploitation. The protection of the rights and best interests of children and adolescents was a special priority for El Salvador, which had strong normative frameworks that regulated the protection of such safeguards and imposed the strictest penalties for any conduct that threatened the physical, psychological or moral well-being and integrity of children and adolescents.

61. Innovation and the use of new tools were needed to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels, in order to develop fairer and more equitable societies. Her Government had begun to gradually implement new digital technologies in judicial processes, which had helped to improve the administration of justice. In 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice had issued a ruling modifying the rules governing the use of the electronic notification system in order to facilitate the timely delivery of notifications regarding legal proceedings. The Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure had been amended to provide for virtual hearings. The Criminal Code had also been amended to cover the introduction of digital evidence in criminal proceedings.

62. El Salvador was collaborating with States to exchange information regarding its use of videoconferencing in criminal proceedings. Advances in

the use of digital tools in judicial processes promoted better access to justice and speedy processes. El Salvador would continue to analyse ways to use technology to strengthen the justice system and, by extension, the rule of law.

63. **Mr. Kim Hyunsoo** (Republic of Korea) said that the assessment of the Secretary-General in his report (A/78/184) regarding the global decline in the rule of law and backsliding of democracy gave cause for concern, since the rule of law was the basis for international peace and security, human rights and development. The international community must redouble its efforts to promote and strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels; the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law could serve as a foundation to that end. To achieve the goal of equal access to justice for all, the international community must encourage the sharing of best practices and provide effective technical assistance and capacity-building to respond to the specific needs of States.

64. New technologies could advance access to justice for all, especially for vulnerable groups, and contribute to the development of just and equitable societies with strong and agile institutions. In that regard, his Government had established judicial access centres, an online video court and electronic litigation system which relied on modern technology to ensure that accessibility was not constrained by time or distance. It also conducted annual capacity-building activities with over 10 countries. At the same time, the use of new technologies should be optimized. The Republic of Korea therefore proposed the establishment of an organization within the United Nations that would discuss the norms governing artificial intelligence and digital technologies and set forth rules aimed at curbing their misuse and bridging the digital divide.

65. **Mr. Katz Pavlotzky** (Uruguay) said that States were obliged to resolve conflicts peacefully following pre-established norms and rules. Actions contravening the Charter of the United Nations were unacceptable and should trigger international responsibility, particularly with regard to the most important provisions of the Charter, such as the obligation not to use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another State and respect for the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The efforts of the international community to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels should include the adoption of disarmament policies, respect for human rights, protection of the most vulnerable, defence of access to impartial, fair and depoliticized justice, respect and support for international courts, delivery of

justice, and prevention of impunity for the perpetrators of international crimes.

66. In order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16, international law must adapt to changing times. The national laws of States must be compatible with the rules of positive law and international commitments. States could not avoid their international obligations by claiming that such obligations had not been incorporated into their domestic law. Technological tools could be used to improve the management and performance of judicial institutions by improving case management and processing, enhancing the quality of and access to information and facilitating decision-making.

67. The International Law Commission played an important role in enabling and fostering the continued development of international law, thereby supporting adherence to the rule of law. Appropriate follow-up by States, in the framework of the Committee, to draft articles prepared by the Commission needed to be ensured. The work of the Commission, including its reflections on existing customary international law and its preparation of legal solutions to pressing international topics, contributed to ensuring legal certainty. Both the Committee and the Commission had the capacity to carry out in-depth analyses and formulate well-founded recommendations, taking into account new situations which would have to be addressed through innovative thinking.

68. **Mr. Bouchedoub** (Algeria) said that the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law were a *sine qua non* for friendly and just relations among nations and for international cooperation. Respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels was also essential to maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights and achieving sustainable socioeconomic development. However, the rule of law continued to face global challenges, such as wars, conflicts, unilateral coercive measures, violations of human rights and pollution. The international community must put an end to unilateral coercive measures and the application of double standards in international relations, and compel States to respect international law and their international obligations equally, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. However, Member States had the right to develop their national legal systems on the basis of their national priorities and specific circumstances.

69. With a view to ensuring that there was access to justice for all, his Government had established an effective, independent and modern justice system. It was using digital technologies to promote effectiveness and efficiency and facilitate legal processes. One of his

Government's top priorities was to rebuild people's faith in the national legal system. To that end, it was seeking to improve judicial rulings and ensure that they were issued within reasonable timeframes. The use of digital technologies was expected to enhance judicial proceedings by ensuring that disputes were settled in a transparent and timely manner. His Government was also making efforts to improve prisons in order to support prisoners' rehabilitation and social inclusion. As part of the digitization of legal processes, the Government had established an electronic portal for administrative and legal services.

70. The Committee's current discussion on the rule of law seemed meaningless, as it was taking place at a time when the rules of international law, especially the rules of international humanitarian law, were being blatantly violated, and without any accountability. Algeria strongly condemned the deliberate attack on a hospital in Gaza by the Israeli occupying forces, in which hundreds of innocent civilians had been killed and many more injured. The international community and humanitarian organizations should immediately intervene to put an end to such cruel war crimes. They must take the measures necessary to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, could be delivered, and to provide protection for medical, humanitarian and relief workers, in line with the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.

71. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) said that the rule of law was the foundation of peaceful and harmonious societies, enabled societies to pursue development and helped to protect and preserve democracy, human rights and justice. Adherence to the rule of law at the national level was fundamental to conflict prevention, which in turn contributed to international peace and security. Unfortunately, there had been a global decline in the rule of law and a backsliding of democracy and women's rights, as the Secretary-General indicated in his report (A/78/184). There had also been a series of unconstitutional changes of government, which were never a sustainable solution to political, economic or social disputes.

72. The illegal overthrow of a democratically elected Government was a flagrant violation of the rule of law and represented a blatant denial of people's right to elect their government. The United Nations must be unequivocal in condemning such actions. The international community must do everything it could to restore the rule of law and justice in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. His delegation supported United Nations efforts to strengthen rule of law institutions and promote accountability at the national and international levels.

73. The rule of law at the national level was not a tool for oppression; rather, it served to protect people's fundamental rights and provide justice in society. In Myanmar, in 2021, the military had snatched power from the democratically elected Government in a coup. Since then, the illegal junta had been systematically dismantling the rule of law in order to maintain control over the people, who resoundingly rejected its leadership. The junta had been making so-called laws as it saw fit and had removed legal safeguards that protected people's rights. The military and police were responsible for the systematic and widespread murder of peaceful protesters, arbitrary arrests, the torture of detainees, the execution of democracy activists, brutal massacres, indiscriminate aerial attacks on civilian towns and villages and burning of civilian homes.

74. There was no accountability for such acts, which were committed with the knowledge and approval of the junta's leadership. There were no independent courts; instead, secret military tribunals had been issuing death sentences to political activists. On 9 October 2023, the military had attacked a camp for internally displaced persons in Laiza, Kachin State, killing at least 30 civilians, including 13 children. Such crimes were blatant violations of international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law. His delegation appreciated the fact that the United Nations Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar had significantly expanded its collection of information and evidence, which would play an important role in his country's transitional justice process in the future.

75. The military junta's continued disregard for the rule of law at the national and international levels had serious implications for regional peace and stability. Transnational organized crime was on the rise in the country's border areas, and there were nearly two million internally displaced persons in Myanmar. Children and women were particularly vulnerable in that situation and risked becoming the victims of trafficking in persons. In order to restore peace, the rule of law and justice in Myanmar, the illegal military junta must be replaced by a federal democratic union with inclusive and accountable security and justice institutions. The National Unity Government of Myanmar had been working to that end, alongside ethnic resistance organizations and people's defence forces. Myanmar called on the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other countries to support it in its struggle to achieve sustainable peace and development.

76. **Mr. Khaddour** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation energetically condemned the aggression

against the Palestinian people, which, in its barbarity, exceeded the worst crimes committed since the Second World War. The airstrike on a hospital in Gaza, killing hundreds of Palestinians, was a disgrace for the international system. If the United Nations, as represented by the Security Council, was unable to fulfil its responsibility to bring an end to the killings by Israel and to save the people of Gaza from the genocide which awaited them, discussing the rule of law at the international level no longer made sense. The rule of “might makes right” was prevailing over the rule of law.

77. His delegation had reservations with respect to paragraph 101 of the Secretary-General’s report (A/78/184), under the heading “Other international accountability mechanisms”. It deplored and rejected the determination of the report’s authors to refer to the so-called International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. The continued promotion of that illegal and non-consensual mechanism was incomprehensible and unjustified. Most surprisingly, the mechanism was referred to in the context of strengthening the rule of law at the international level. His delegation requested the authors of the report, and in particular the Secretary-General, to whom the report was attributed, to consider whether that illegitimate mechanism was truly the best example of the promotion of the rule of law at the international level. The establishment of the mechanism had, in fact, been part of an attempt to undermine that goal.

78. Owing to the inclusion of that paragraph, his delegation dissociated itself from any consensus on the draft resolution on the agenda item. Such a paragraph should not be included in future reports of the Secretary-General under the agenda item, in order to ensure respect for the rule of law as well as for the principle of consensus, which was one of the principles governing the Committee’s work.

79. Strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels was one of the flagship principles of the constitutional and legal system of the Syrian Arab Republic. The continued development of national legislation was contributing to the modernization and simplification of the legislative system and judicial proceedings. In that regard, the use of technology, including communications resources and portals for judicial and police institutions, allowed citizens to have access to the texts of laws, rules of procedure and instructions needed for them to initiate any judicial proceedings. His Government had also developed online services for the issuance of civil status documents and

the dissemination of judgments, rulings and jurisprudence.

80. Strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels required first and foremost adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The approach of all countries in that regard must be in line with the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. That approach should ensure full respect for the provisions and principles of the Charter, which must be interpreted in good faith, without selectivity or politicization, and taking into account the opinions of all States.

81. **Ms. Nze Mansogo** (Equatorial Guinea) said that, in order to ensure international peace and security, the international community must prioritize strengthening the rule of law, which was the foundation of friendly and equitable relations among States and the basis for fair societies. In order to promote the rule of law at the international level, it was essential to respect the legitimate rights of States under international law, which included respecting the principles of national sovereignty, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States; reject the use or threat of use of force; make use of and support preventive diplomacy and peaceful dispute resolution; condemn unilateral, selective acts and double standards; and rebuild multilateralism. Her delegation welcomed the activities carried out by the United Nations aimed at promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, as well as the Secretary-General’s New Vision for the rule of law.

82. Digital technologies held great potential to strengthen the rule of law; however, their possible misuse posed many challenges. Equatorial Guinea was therefore taking a cautious approach to adopting such technologies, although it had digitized its public administration and had adopted a national strategy aimed at developing an information society and a digital economy, and training its citizens, State institutions and public and private enterprises to process, produce and disseminate information digitally from anywhere in the country.

83. Her Government had also prioritized strengthening the capacity of the judiciary to enable it to urgently address requests for justice, the rights of future generations, gender equality, accountability for atrocity crimes, respect for human rights and, above all, the establishment of an inclusive, sustainable and resilient society. By way of example, as part of the national anti-corruption programme, the judiciary and

Office of the Prosecutor had received training to strengthen their capacity to prosecute and try offences of corruption involving senior State officials, civil servants and State-owned companies. Much remained to be done, however, and her Government was continuing to adopt policies aimed at achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty and hunger, protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and maintaining the peace that characterized Equatorial Guinea.

84. **Ms. Daw** (Guyana) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which was the foundation on which the United Nations rested. Respect for the rule of law entailed adherence to the principles of the supremacy of the law, equality and fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, legal certainty, accountability, transparency and the avoidance of arbitrariness. The global decline in the rule of law to which the Secretary-General had referred in his report (A/78/184) was not a result of the inadequacy of the existing rules, but of an unwillingness to implement and respect them. The peaceful settlement of international disputes, accountability for international crimes and full respect for the binding decisions of international courts and tribunals were key components of the rule of law.

85. In Guyana, digital technology was being used widely to support court operations, improve efficiency and advance access to justice, including through the use of electronic filing, digital case management and virtual courts. Digital technology was also contributing to increased reporting and prosecution of domestic violence and child abuse cases. There were specially equipped interview rooms, which facilitated the recording of interviews with domestic violence survivors, and virtual hearing rooms, which allowed cases to be heard online. Children were relieved of the burden of having to give statements multiple times, and domestic violence survivors no longer had to face the public or the perpetrator of the crimes when testifying. Guyana had also improved its juvenile justice system, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund.

86. While digital technologies were contributing to justice and development, there was also significant misuse of such technologies and increased criminal activity online. Strong legal frameworks were needed to protect users' human rights and data privacy. Guyana continued to engage actively in the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes. Her Government was also investing in providing Internet access to all communities,

including those in rural and remote areas, and simultaneously building the capacity of its judiciary and security forces in order to further bolster the rule of law.

87. **Mr. Nagano** (Japan) said that the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations was the most fundamental rule of the post-war regime for peace, which was based on the rule of law among nations. Japan believed that there were three basic principles that must be respected in order to uphold the rule of law. First, States must observe international law in good faith and must not abuse its principles. Second, any attempt to acquire territory by force must not be allowed, and, third, Member States must cooperate to address violations of the principles enshrined in the Charter.

88. The Russian aggression against Ukraine had revealed the ineffectiveness of the Security Council to fulfil its primary responsibility, which was to maintain international peace and security. In order to prevent similar situations in the future, Member States should have a comprehensive discussion on how to use existing rules and mechanisms under the Charter more effectively. Cooperation among Member States to address serious violations of the Charter, particularly aggression, was critical. The duty of Member States to cooperate stemmed from the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. That duty did not entail any obligation that went beyond each State's capacity. It did, however, require States to refrain from supporting aggression and to make an effort to put an end to aggression insofar as they were able.

89. Member States should also consider how to strengthen the role of the International Court of Justice. In that regard, Japan had been calling for Member States which had not yet done so to make a declaration under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Court's Statute accepting the Court's compulsory jurisdiction. Even in the absence of such declarations, pursuant to Article 36 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council could recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment, including recourse to the International Court of Justice. It should be recalled that Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter stipulated that, when the Council was voting on decisions relating to the pacific settlement of disputes, parties to the dispute in question must abstain from voting.

90. Japan had been providing human and financial resources to reinforce international institutions such as the International Court of Justice, the International

Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Criminal Court, and would continue to do so. It spared no effort in its partnership with the International Criminal Court aimed at promoting the universality of the Rome Statute.

91. **Ms. Nyakoe** (Kenya) said that the rule of law was the foundation for progress towards the shared aspiration of a united family of nations that was just, secure and peaceful. Without laws to constrain the conduct of individuals and States, peaceful coexistence and cooperation would remain a mere dream. Kenya subscribed to the classic definition of the rule of law, which was based on general principles that were applicable to all people, on equal terms, and which served to preserve the dignity, equality and human rights of all. The norms of international law must be reliable, predictable and equitable in order to help foster closer regional and international cooperation. Those norms, which were enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya, continued to guide her country's engagement in international efforts, including in relation to climate change, humanitarian interventions, international peace and security, countering terrorism and violent extremism and the long-overdue review of the international financial architecture. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, and looked forward to its implementation.

92. Although Member States had been working to ensure the continued delivery of rule-of-law-related services while keeping pace with rapid technological change, the technological inadequacies in developing countries, which the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had laid bare, meant that increased capacity-building was needed in the field of information and communications technology. Her delegation therefore called for more cooperation and technical assistance to support the use of such technology as a tool for the dissemination of international law. Such assistance would also be important in tackling the lethal counter-peace efforts being aggressively advanced through social media, especially through the dissemination of disinformation, fake news and hate speech.

93. Technical assistance programmes should be tailored in close collaboration with the beneficiary States to ensure that the laws and social and economic realities of those States were taken into account. Such an approach would support national ownership of rule-of-law processes and promote their sustainability. While it was critical to establish the legal structures needed for the rule of law, implementation was even more important. Therefore, States and local, regional and international tribunals should ensure that the rules of the international law instruments adopted by States were

interpreted and implemented in a fair, predictable way. Kenya remained committed to effectively fulfilling its international obligations at the national level, in accordance with its laws.

94. **Mr. Laki** (Uganda) said that the principle of the sovereign equality of States was critical, as it enabled all States to participate in regional and international law-making processes at regional and international levels. Member States should renew their commitment to upholding and promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law more broadly. In his report entitled "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982), the Secretary-General had highlighted the need to renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. His delegation believed that, at the national level, that could be operationalized by fostering good governance and upholding the law in order to combat discrimination, racism, xenophobia, violence and inequities, and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms.

95. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which was key to the establishment of just societies and strong institutions and to sustainable development. Equal access to justice for all was a critical component of the rule of law; however, such access was sometimes impeded, including by a lack of awareness of the existence of legal services. Geography was also a major impediment, which could be addressed by digitizing legal services. Digitization made legal services more accessible and affordable and facilitated key components of access to justice, such as the right to legal aid. Therefore, the subtopic "Using technology to advance access to justice for all" was timely and appropriate.

96. Innovative initiatives, such as the introduction of videoconferencing, were revolutionizing court proceedings in Uganda. With videoconferencing, hearings could be conducted without the need to transfer detainees to court, and victims and witnesses could participate in proceedings remotely, free from intimidation while they gave evidence. That had helped to reduce revictimization, especially of the survivors of gender-based violence, and to lower the costs related to physical attendance in court. In addition, an electronic criminal records management system had helped reduce the backlog of cases, and new electronic systems were enabling more expeditious trials, thereby enhancing access to justice.

97. His delegation welcomed the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution [77/276](#), to request

the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change. Requesting such an opinion was the most constructive and un confrontational way to use international adjudication to address the climate crisis. The legal weight and moral authority of the Court's advisory opinion could influence States' conduct. The legal questions set out in the resolution represented a careful balance, the result of extensive consultations. At the heart of the questions was the desire to strengthen efforts to address climate change by bringing to bear on it the entirety of international law, and to give climate justice the importance it deserved.

98. Lastly, capacity-building was key to the promotion of the rule of law and the strengthening of the capacities of Member States. The approach to determining the needs and priorities of requesting States should be based on effectiveness and national ownership.

99. **Mr. Saranga** (Mozambique) said that his delegation condemned the deplorable attacks on a hospital in Gaza the previous day, which had led to the death of hundreds of innocent civilians. Urgent humanitarian aid should be provided to those in need, and the norms and principles of international humanitarian law must be respected. His delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's New Vision for the rule of law, which was aimed at reinforcing the centrality of the rule of law in all United Nations activities and strategically integrating the principles of the rule of law into the work of the entire Organization.

100. Mozambique remained committed to the consolidation of the rule of law at the national and international levels, with States bearing the primary responsibility for such consolidation, and counted on the support of the United Nations and other partners in that regard. It attached great importance to national ownership, the strengthening of national institutions and respect for cultural and regional specificities, without prejudice to internationally accepted fundamental values and principles. His delegation welcomed the deep interconnection established in the Secretary-General's New Vision between development, gender equality and people-centred public policies.

101. His country's continued consolidation of the rule of law at the national level was evidenced by, inter alia, an increase in the number of domestic courts, the establishment of special courts, the expansion of the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office, a significant increase in the number of institutions providing legal training, and the provision of legal aid for citizens in need. The Government had adopted a national strategy for combating corruption in public administration and

was successfully implementing a pension scheme for former Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) guerrillas. Mozambique was also making progress in its efforts to combat international terrorism, thanks to the support of international partners, including the United Nations. In addition, it was developing capacity-building programmes to strengthen the ability of its judicial system and security forces to deal with the perpetrators of crimes, while protecting victims and respecting human rights.

102. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need to use new technologies to expand access to justice. In that connection, the ongoing modernization of his country's courts required the continued support of partners, including to promote access to the Internet and train judicial officers.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.