



General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General
31 December 2012

Original: English

Sixth Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 October 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 83: The rule of law at the national and international levels (A/66/749 and A/67/290)

1. **The Chair** recalled that, pursuant to its resolution 66/102, the General Assembly had convened a high-level meeting on the topic “The rule of law at the national and international levels”, which had been held as a one-day plenary on Monday 24 September 2012. At that meeting, the Assembly had adopted the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (resolution 67/1), in which it had, *inter alia*, taken note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Delivering justice: programme of action to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels” (A/66/749), which had been submitted in preparation for that meeting.

2. **Mr. Eliasson** (Deputy Secretary-General), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities (A/67/290), said that he had been impressed by Member States’ strong participation and engagement at the successful High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, as well as by the comprehensive yet concise Declaration they had adopted by consensus. He was confident that a process had been put in place for the application of the rule of law in all three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. He welcomed the numerous pledges made at the High-level Meeting, as well as the call in the Declaration for States to consider making further pledges to strengthen the rule of law. The Secretariat would work with the States concerned to see how the United Nations could best help them to fulfil their pledges.

3. Many statements made during the Assembly’s general debate had acknowledged the growing importance of the rule of law, which had also been reflected in the theme chosen by the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session, namely “Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means”.

4. The Organization’s engagement in the rule of law at the international level was rooted in the recognition that an effective multilateral system, based on the Charter and international law, was essential to address global threats and challenges. The International Court

of Justice played a particularly important role in that regard, as the only judicial forum to which Member States could bring virtually any legal dispute concerning international law. Although no other forum had such far-reaching jurisdiction, the Court was only competent to hear a case if the States concerned had accepted its jurisdiction. The Secretary-General had therefore begun a campaign to encourage those States that had not yet done so to accede to the Court’s jurisdiction.

5. The work of the international criminal tribunals was also crucial to efforts to strengthen the rule of law at the international level. In that regard, the conviction of Charles Taylor constituted a milestone in efforts to achieve accountability, since it sent a strong signal that impunity for the worst crimes, committed at any level, could no longer prevail. The issuance of the International Criminal Court’s first verdict, in the Thomas Lubanga case, was another landmark. The Court would now consider reparations for the victims, the first time it had exercised that innovative part of its mandate, which was a critical element in transitional justice. While international tribunals and courts could be of assistance when a State was unwilling or unable to conduct its own investigations and prosecutions, the primary responsibility for ensuring accountability for gross human rights violations rested with Member States, whom the United Nations could assist and support in their efforts. The international community should also find effective ways to support Member States in meeting their people’s increasing claims for justice and the rule of law. In particular, newly constituted Governments looked to the United Nations for advice and assistance in drafting constitutions, reforming justice and security institutions, and dealing with the legacies of atrocities.

6. The report of the Secretary-General (A/67/290) provided an overview of the extensive efforts undertaken by the Organization to meet requests for assistance and strengthen the rule of law at the international and national levels. The United Nations was providing rule of law assistance in more than 150 Member States in contexts ranging from development to conflict, post-conflict and peacebuilding, including in 17 peace operations with rule of law mandates. In some 70 countries, at least three United Nations entities were engaged in rule of law activities, while five or more entities were carrying out activities in more than 25 countries.

7. In Somalia, for example, a draft constitution had been presented to the National Constituent Assembly in July 2012, following United Nations assistance with the constitution-making process, and, in Timor Leste, the United Nations had supported the establishment of the first land registry system. The United Nations had a comparative advantage in providing such assistance, since it had broad and long-standing experience, brought neutrality and the weight of the international community to its work, and used its convening power to advance the debate.

8. The linkages between the rule of law and the three main pillars of the United Nations should be further developed, as emphasized in the Declaration. First, in the area of post-conflict and peace and security, the provision of effective rule of law institutions was the basis of the social contract and key to a State's security and social and economic health. It was especially critical in post-conflict States, where the rule of law provided the institutional and normative framework for delivering security and for strengthening resilience to shocks, thereby preventing relapses into conflict or cycles of fragility.

9. Secondly, there were broad and cross-cutting linkages between the rule of law and development: the sanctity of contracts must be guaranteed and legal frameworks were necessary for international trade. In addition, independent courts boosted investor confidence, labour safeguards protected the labour force and environmental regulations safeguarded the long-term interests of both businesses and people. Such linkages should be further developed, particularly in the development agenda beyond 2015.

10. Thirdly, the rule of law was fundamental to the protection of human rights, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had stressed in her statement at the High-level Meeting. International human rights obligations must usually be ratified through parliaments, followed by the promulgation of national laws. Once the laws were in place, the rights in question should be enforced by independent courts and, in many cases, national human rights commissions. A strong rule of law was therefore needed to guarantee the universal enjoyment of human rights.

11. Since the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations had made considerable progress towards greater coherence and coordination of its rule of law activities. Institutional arrangements, including the

establishment of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, had helped the Organization to establish a clearer policy framework. Strengthened arrangements were being made to further improve United Nations service delivery, particularly in the field. In that connection, a joint global focal point, to be led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), would support conflict and post-conflict countries in strengthening their police, justice and correction systems.

12. He thanked Member States for their continuing support for the application of the rule of law, and welcomed the growing prominence of the topic in the Committee's deliberations. As a universal organization with unique legitimacy, the United Nations was the natural home for that vital work. It was to be hoped that the report of the Secretary-General would help the Committee to continue its role of focusing international and national attention on the importance of the rule of law.

13. **Mr. Mohamed Khalil** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the African Group welcomed the convening of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, which had reaffirmed the need for universal adherence to the rule of law at both the national and international levels. The African States, in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, had reiterated their respect for the rule of law as one of the fundamental guiding principles for their conduct. Over the years, they had adopted instruments that reaffirmed their determination to observe, promote and protect human rights and uphold the rule of law, which was vital for the promotion of stability, peace and security, as well as conducive to good governance and closer integration on the African continent.

14. In the application of international law, the fundamental principle of equality before the law must be strictly respected, with no double standards. There was a need to ensure fairness and equity in international human rights and humanitarian law, economic law, environmental law and the rules relating to maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, international institutions such as the Security Council, international financial institutions and other United Nations bodies required urgent reform.

15. A balanced approach should be taken that considered both the national and international aspects of the rule of law. The African Group called on States to ensure that the provisions of the international instruments they adopted were effectively implemented in domestic law. Capacity-building, including enhanced technical assistance, was the key to promoting the rule of law at the national level, and such activities should be based on the concepts of effectiveness and national ownership in determining needs and priorities. Those principles required partnership and mutual respect between the providers and recipients, taking into account the customs and national, political and socioeconomic realities of the recipient States. In that regard, the Rule of Law Unit should be encouraged to explore initiatives that would enable donors, recipients and other entities involved in financing rule of law activities to work in a more coordinated manner. The Group stood ready to engage with the Unit in developing more effective mechanisms to assess the impact of its rule of law activities and to harmonize the various monitoring mechanisms used by United Nations agencies. Other potential challenges and gaps should also be addressed.

16. **Mr. Norman** (Canada), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), said that the CANZ group recognized the Declaration adopted at the recent High-level Meeting as a restatement of the international consensus on the rule of law, but such statements of principle were not enough. The real challenge lay in the concrete implementation of recognized principles and the existing legal framework. The CANZ countries welcomed the work being done by Member States to ratify international agreements and implement international legal standards in the domestic sphere.

17. Open and vibrant democracies, where many points of view were expressed and the rights of all, especially women, children and minorities, were protected, could only exist in the presence of the rule of law. The CANZ countries had instituted strong and independent national police and judicial authorities to ensure respect for the rule of law.

18. The interrelated core values of rule of law, freedom, democracy and human rights were also reflected in their foreign policies and international development assistance. The CANZ countries engaged in capacity-building to strengthen the rule of law in their respective regions and elsewhere. Australian

development assistance, inter alia, supported programmes to prevent violence and improve access to local justice and dispute resolution systems, put police back on the streets and strengthen the courts; by 2016, it would also have trained 14,000 law and justice officials in developing countries. New Zealand, recognizing that the rule of law was a critical enabler of sustainable development, was assisting partners in the Pacific, Timor Leste, Indonesia and Afghanistan in their efforts to build effective law enforcement agencies, ensure access to effective legal representation and create independent and competent judiciaries. Canada was involved in rule-of-law-related projects in the Middle East, the Americas and Africa, including the provision of support for international courts and tribunals, national truth and justice processes, legal aid, land restitution, capacity-building and technical assistance; it also continued to support work to improve access to justice and strengthen legal institutions in Afghanistan.

19. The CANZ countries, acknowledging the important role played by international courts, tribunals, treaty bodies and truth commissions in promoting the implementation of international law, called on all States that had not yet done so to consider accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, to ratify the Rome Statute and to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court. They also underscored the value of hybrid or mixed courts, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone; by combining international support with support from the national judicial system, such courts held perpetrators to account while developing national legal systems.

20. Notwithstanding the role played by the aforementioned institutions and initiatives, the rule of law would not be fully achieved by tinkering with structures or developing new plans of action. The primary responsibility for enhancing the rule of law rested with States, leaders and all individuals, for whom respect for the rule of law should be a primary consideration at all times.

21. **Mr. Le Hoai Trung** (Viet Nam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that full implementation of the rule of law at the national and international levels was fundamental for dispute settlement by peaceful means, protection of human rights and sustainable economic development. In that connection, the ASEAN members welcomed the outcome of the High-level Meeting on

the Rule of Law and renewed their own commitment to promote and implement the rule of law at the national and international levels in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Charter. At the current session, the Committee's discussions should focus on how to realize the commitments made at the High-level Meeting. International efforts to implement the rule of law should always be based on the principles of national ownership, sovereign equality of States, peaceful settlement of disputes, adherence to a rules-based regime and respect for territorial integrity.

22. In preparation for the establishment of an ASEAN Community in 2015, the Association was intensifying its efforts to build a rules-based, people-centred and fully integrated organization through the implementation of the ASEAN Charter. At the 20th ASEAN Summit, held in Cambodia in April 2012, ASEAN leaders had expressed satisfaction at the progress made in developing and adopting rules and procedures to make the Charter operational. The ASEAN member States, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children had also stepped up their efforts in 2012 to strengthen the Association's work in the field of human rights, including by drafting the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, which would be adopted at the 21st ASEAN Summit in November 2012.

23. Bearing in mind that the rule of law was an effective tool to promote sustainable economic development, ASEAN had recently brought into force a Comprehensive Investment Agreement with provisions on investment liberalization, protection, facilitation and promotion in line with international best practices with the aim of creating an open investment environment for ASEAN members and promoting further cooperation with other partners.

24. In addition to effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which ASEAN had signed with China, ASEAN senior officials had recently taken the further step of agreeing on the basic elements of a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea, which would aim to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, mutual trust and lasting peace and stability in the region. ASEAN had also noticed a growing interest on the part of other countries to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

25. **Mr. Gharibi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels was essential to maintaining international peace and security and achieving socioeconomic development. The High-level Meeting had been an important step forward in the General Assembly's discussions on the rule of law with the aim of developing a common understanding among Member States. The Movement would spare no efforts in continuing those discussions in the Committee, in cooperation with other partners.

26. It was essential to maintain a balance between the national and international dimensions of the rule of law. To foster international relations based on the rule of law, all States should have equal opportunity to participate in international law-making processes and should fulfil their obligations under both treaty law and customary international law. The selective application of international law must be avoided and the legitimate and legal rights of States under international law must be respected.

27. The principles of prohibition of the threat or use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes constituted the cornerstone of the rule of law at the international level. The Non-Aligned Movement encouraged States to use the mechanisms established under international law for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including the International Court of Justice, treaty-based courts, such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and arbitration. The Movement called upon the General Assembly and the Security Council to make use, whenever appropriate, of their right under Article 96 of the Charter of the United Nations to request advisory opinions on legal questions from the International Court of Justice.

28. Respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy were interdependent and mutually reinforcing. All States should fulfil their obligation to promote the observance and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international law. The purposes and principles of the Charter and the principles of international law were of paramount importance for peace and security, the rule of law, economic development and social progress, and human rights for all, and Member States should renew their commitment to uphold, preserve and promote them.

29. The Movement remained concerned at the use of unilateral measures, given their negative impact on the rule of law and international relations. No State or group of States had the authority to deprive other States of their legal rights for political considerations. The Movement condemned any attempt to destabilize the democratic and constitutional order in any State member of the Movement.

30. Member States must fully respect the functions and powers of all the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and maintain the balance among them. Close cooperation and coordination among all the principal organs was essential. The members of the Movement remained concerned that the Security Council was encroaching upon the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by taking up issues within the competence of those two organs.

31. The General Assembly should play a leading role in promoting respect for the rule of law. The international community must not, however, supplant the national authorities in their task of establishing or strengthening the rule of law. National ownership was of great importance in rule of law activities. The national capacities of Member States in the domestic implementation of their respective international obligations should be strengthened, including through enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building, which should be provided at the request of Governments and strictly within the respective mandates of the United Nations funds and programmes. Account should be taken of the customs and the political and socioeconomic features of each country, and the imposition of pre-established models should be avoided. Appropriate mechanisms should be established to enable Member States to keep abreast of the work of the Rule of Law Unit and to ensure regular interaction between the Unit and the General Assembly.

32. The Non-Aligned Movement welcomed the operationalization of the new system of administration of justice in the United Nations. It also supported initiatives to hold United Nations personnel accountable for misconduct during a deployment on mission.

33. The Movement reiterated its support for the application submitted by Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, convinced that it

would be a major step towards securing freedom, dignity, stability and peace for the Palestinian people, and that it would reflect the international community's true commitment to upholding the rule of law at the international level and foster international legitimacy.

34. While the Movement underlined the importance of freedom of opinion and expression, as provided for under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it emphasized that morality, public order and the rights and freedoms of others must be recognized and respected in the exercise of that freedom, as laid down in article 29 of the Universal Declaration. Freedom of expression was not absolute, and its exercise should carry responsibilities in accordance with the relevant international human rights law and instruments.

35. **Mr. Marhic** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union welcomed the adoption of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, which put forward a comprehensive vision of the rule of law and affirmed, inter alia, equality before the law, the right of access to justice, a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and the fight against impunity, as well as the importance of the rule of law for conflict prevention and in post-conflict situations. The European Union had made substantive pledges, backed up by concrete measures, in each of the areas covered by the Declaration. It welcomed the pledges made by many other States Members of the United Nations and the actions already taken to implement them, and it encouraged further pledging.

36. The European Union strongly supported further comprehensive discussions at the General Assembly level on the linkages between the rule of law and the three pillars of the United Nations, especially the interrelationship between the rule of law and sustainable development in the international development agenda beyond 2015. It looked forward to the Secretary-General's report at the sixty-eighth session on proposed ways and means of developing further such linkages, with wide stakeholder participation.

37. The European Union was built on the pillars of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. Respect for the rule of law was essential for peace and stability in the consolidation and support of democracy, and in the fight against impunity; it was also inextricably linked to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and should be pursued at both national and international levels. The European Union and its member States therefore strongly supported the role of the International Court of Justice as the principle judicial organ of the United Nations and called on all States that had not yet done so to consider accepting the Court's jurisdiction in accordance with its Statute.

38. The European Union also supported the International Criminal Court in its efforts to provide for accountability and fight impunity, and particularly welcomed the decision taken by the Security Council, in its resolution 1970 (2011), to refer the situation in Libya to the Prosecutor of the Court. Since the universality of the Rome Statute was key to widening the reach of the Court and preventing the most serious crimes, the European Union called on all States Members of the United Nations to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute and implement it in their national legal order, and on States parties to the Statute to enforce decisions of the International Criminal Court. It particularly welcomed the intention of the Government of Haiti to ratify the Rome Statute and the Ivorian Government's commitment to do so following the reform of its constitutional framework.

39. The European Union, underlining the importance of prompt and effective implementation of relevant sanctions, which were an important tool in the international fight against terrorism, welcomed the steps taken by the Security Council to further reinforce fair and clear procedures in the Al-Qaida sanctions regime, including through enhancing the role of the Office of the Ombudsperson. Full respect for the rule of law and due process were necessary to uphold the legitimacy and efficiency of targeted sanctions regimes.

40. Through its Instrument for Stability, the European Union was providing concrete rule of law assistance, primarily through United Nations agencies, to many countries, particularly those in post-crisis situations. Many of the civilian crisis management operations carried out under the Common European Security and Defence Policy, including the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, also focused on the rule of

law. While substantial progress had been made in building societies resilient to conflict, common efforts were needed to improve the strategic and effective assistance provided in conflict and post-conflict situations by enhancing the quality, coordination and coherence of international engagement. In particular, the events of the Arab Spring represented a historic opportunity to build greater respect for human rights, democracy, dignity and prosperity, and efficient rule of law systems in the Southern Mediterranean.

41. **Ms. Anttila** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had been a milestone, reaffirming the cross-cutting nature of the rule of law and its critical importance for all three main pillars of the United Nations. The forward-looking Declaration adopted, which emphasized the right of equal access to justice for all, including vulnerable groups, would guide the Committee's future work. It was encouraging that a number of Member States had made voluntary pledges based on their national priorities and needs; in that connection, Denmark and Finland had given several pledges to enhance women's access to justice and tackle violence against women. Finland had also had the honour to host a high-level event on women's access to justice; the high level of attendance and the pledges made demonstrated that there was broad support for combating gender-based discrimination through strengthening the rule of law.

42. The development of international norms and standards, as described in the Secretary-General's report (A/67/290), had been encouraging, as had the significant progress made in the fight against impunity. The Nordic countries were committed to promoting the universal ratification and effective implementation of the Rome Statute and called for full cooperation with the International Criminal Court to ensure accountability for the most serious international crimes. Furthermore, they fully supported the efforts to establish appropriate reparations for the victims and the work of the Court's Trust Fund for Victims.

43. While the Secretary-General had reported encouraging progress with non-judicial dispute resolution and accountability mechanisms, the latest report of the independent international commission of inquiry established to investigate alleged violations of human rights in Syria had drawn attention to gross violations of international human rights and

humanitarian law, including reports of sexual violence, which were particularly worrying. The Nordic countries called for the recommendations of such non-judicial bodies to be implemented to maximize their utility.

44. National ownership was crucial for successful rule of law assistance. In that connection, the Nordic countries noted the valuable contribution made by the United Nations by supporting Member States in their legislative reforms, strengthening of justice and security institutions and enhancement of citizens' participation, as well as in the design and implementation of transitional justice strategies in post-conflict situations.

45. The Nordic countries welcomed the recent decisions of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee aimed at further enhancing the coordination and coherence of the Organization's rule of law work. Field leadership must be empowered in order for joint assessments and programming to be effective at the country level. It was to be hoped that the global focal point would allow the United Nations to respond to requests for assistance in a swift and appropriate manner. The Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group would continue to play a crucial role in shaping the Organization's strategic and comprehensive approach to the rule of law.

46. **Mr. Stuerchler Gonzenbach** (Switzerland) said that the High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law had been an undoubted success. The Declaration adopted at that meeting constituted a reference document laying the foundation for the international community's future rule of law activities and reaffirming the importance of such issues as human rights, international humanitarian law, transitional justice and the fight against impunity, to which his country attached major significance. Switzerland had submitted nine pledges supplementing the Declaration, the implementation of which would strengthen its own action to promote international justice, including criminal justice and transitional justice, international humanitarian law, and respect for the rule of law in United Nations procedures.

47. His delegation commended the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Rule of Law Unit to strengthen the Organization's rule of law architecture. As recognized in the Declaration, it was vital to further develop the linkages between the rule of law and other core values, including the three main pillars of the

United Nations. The Secretary-General had a major role to play in that regard. It was useful to take an inventory all United Nations activities to foster the rule of law, in order to improve their coordination and coherence; it was also necessary to review the existing institutional arrangements in the area of the rule of law and to clarify the relationships between them. In that regard, the recent emphasis on better field coordination, the pooling of efforts by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP, and the increased integration of the rule of law in strategic planning at Headquarters should be applauded. As the United Nations could not achieve its objectives alone, it should also develop partnerships with all actors, including the World Bank, keeping in mind the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States adopted in Busan in 2011.

48. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council should consider extending to all other sanctions lists the mandate of the Ombudsperson charged with reviewing delisting requests in respect of the Al-Qaida sanctions regime. With regard to the subtopics proposed in paragraph 70 of the Secretary-General's report (A/67/290), it particularly welcomed subtopic (I), "Strengthening national legal systems to investigate and try genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity", and took a special interest in the subtopics linked to development, particularly the issue of improving access to justice for vulnerable persons. It also supported efforts to strengthen treaty bodies and international adjudicative mechanisms.

49. Lastly, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's campaign to increase the number of Member States accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and reiterated its proposal for a subtopic on maximizing the potential of the International Court of Justice. Although the Court's authority and the importance of its activity were widely recognized, it had not yet been able to fully exploit its potential, largely because only roughly one third of States had accepted its jurisdiction as compulsory to date. His delegation therefore proposed that the Committee should consider means of facilitating access to the Court and encouraging States to accept its compulsory jurisdiction.

50. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels was a core mission of the United Nations, and the

High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and the Declaration adopted by consensus represented a major step toward strengthening United Nations rule of law activities. Developing countries needed capacity-building assistance to establish the rule of law, which was fundamental to fostering democracy, good governance and respect for human rights and created the conditions favourable to economic and social development and lasting peace. Conflict-affected and post-conflict countries in particular faced severe institutional and resource deficiencies, which often undermined efforts to institute the rule of law. For those countries, international assistance in restoring national administrative and judicial structures was indispensable.

51. At the international level, respect for the rule of law was the only way to ensure the peaceful coexistence of nations and the maintenance of international peace and security. Adherence to generally accepted rules and principles, such as those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and obligations arising from multilateral treaties and international law was crucial. Frequent violations of international law and the lack of political will to systematically adhere to those rules constituted major obstacles to the development of international relations based exclusively on legal principles.

52. In view of the cross-cutting nature of the issue of the rule of law and the many actors involved, good coordination and consistency were needed in system-wide rule of law activities. A global plan of action to institute the rule of law needed to be inclusive and consistent and take into account the specific concerns of the Member States and other stakeholders.

53. **Ms. Quidenus** (Austria) said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had provided an opportunity for all Member States to renew their commitment to the rule of law at the national and international levels. Her Government stood ready to contribute to follow-up initiatives to the High-level Meeting. International law and the rule of law were the foundations of the international system. A system of clear and predictable rules that applied equally to all Member States was a precondition for lasting peace, security and economic development.

54. The rule of law was also a fundamental pillar for economic growth. Both small and large businesses were more likely to thrive where laws were clearly

defined, known to the public and applied neutrally. Her delegation commended the International Development Law Organization, for its pioneering efforts in the field and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) for promoting the rule of law in the context of international trade, long-term development, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction.

55. Corruption was a true enemy of development, as it drove off investors and its cost was paid by society as a whole. The International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria provided education, training and technical assistance in combating corrupt practices. Her delegation invited States to join the Agreement for the Establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Academy as an International Organization, which had been already ratified by 35 member States. As the coordinator of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, her Government would continue to give the utmost priority to that topic.

56. **Mr. Barriga** (Liechtenstein) said that the level of participation in the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and the substance of the outcome document were evidence of the progress made on the topic. The Declaration clearly showed the linkages between the rule of law and the main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. The main disappointments were the lack of ambition in the follow-up to the event and the hesitation to include all stakeholders, in particular civil society.

57. The Secretary-General's report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities (A/67/290) detailed impressive recent achievements in combating impunity, including the judgement against Liberia's former President Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the first verdict of the International Criminal Court in the case of Thomas Lubanga. However, much more needed to be done to ensure that justice reached all those who needed it.

58. While the International Criminal Court had been criticized for taking up investigations regarding non-States Parties, based on the referral powers of the Security Council, that criticism was usually directed against the way in which the Security Council selected situations that it deemed worthy of a referral and unfairly blamed the Court for the implications. There was, however, a consensus that there should be no impunity anywhere in the world for those bearing the

greatest responsibility for international crimes. In order to achieve that goal and to reduce selectivity, more States needed to ratify the Rome Statute, so that the Court could establish jurisdiction without the help of the Security Council.

59. Liechtenstein had been the first State to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the crime of aggression, which established a new mechanism to enforce Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations and would empower the Court to prosecute leaders who were responsible for the most serious forms of the illegal use of force against other States. His delegation welcomed the ratification by Samoa and the pledges made by other States to ratify. At the High-level Meeting his Government had pledged, *inter alia*, to assist other States in the ratification of those amendments.

60. It was also important to strengthen national justice systems to enable them to effectively deal with international crimes at the national level. His delegation looked forward to the outcome of the lessons-learned exercise being conducted at the United Nations. His delegation strongly supported the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, established in response to the Committee's request, as well as that of the Rule of Law Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

61. The outcome document of the High-level Meeting recognized that the United Nations needed to measure up fully to its own human rights standards with respect to individuals. The due process gains that had been made in recent years in the internal administration of justice at the United Nations and in the Security Council's targeted sanctions regimes should be extended to all affected individuals.

62. The United Nations rule of law activities went far beyond the topics that the Sixth Committee typically dealt with and required a holistic approach that included all relevant stakeholders.

63. **Mr. Aynekullu** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation was encouraged by the activities undertaken by the United Nations on the rule of law attached great importance to the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group. The rule of law should govern relations between States in all spheres, as it ensured peaceful coexistence and the safety and security of the planet. Experience in the Horn of Africa

showed the extent to which discord among States stemmed from a lack of compliance with the principles of international law. Adherence to those principles helped to prevent conflict and made it possible for peoples and countries to focus their attention on combating poverty.

64. Over the previous twenty years, his Government had sought to make the rule of law the basis of governance. The Ethiopian Constitution adopted in 1995 ensured the equality of its peoples by guaranteeing their right to administer themselves within a federal system with an effective separation of powers. The Government was pursuing a justice sector reform programme designed to make the judiciary and law enforcement organs more responsive to the needs of the public. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the office of the ombudsman held the Government accountable to the public for compliance with its national and international human rights obligations. National ownership of those activities and reform initiatives was critical to their success.

65. **Ms. Madani** (Saudi Arabia) said that her Government was committed to the rule of law and to upholding the Charter of the United Nations. The High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had demonstrated that there was no one uniform model for achieving the rule of law and had highlighted the importance of ongoing dialogue about the different successful national applications in that field. While differences in culture and religion might seem on the surface to reflect opposing values, in truth all shared the common goal of creating a world where people could live in peace and security.

66. The rule of law in Saudi Arabia was based on the principle of concern for others handed down from God through His prophet. Islamic sharia law was in harmony with the basic concepts of the rule of law: the need for laws to regulate all aspects of society and the fundamental principle that State authorities were obligated to abide by the laws themselves. Sharia law was based on the principles of justice, equality and dignity; the lies propagated by some claiming that Islam suppressed freedoms and oppressed women were desperate attempts to mask the truth and spread hatred. Islamic law did not distinguish between persons based on race, sex or language and held the rich and the poor equally accountable. Human rights were respected under Islamic law and included civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights. Their importance

was not merely a legal concept but a cornerstone of the Islamic faith.

67. Recent events had shown the need for greater understanding in a changing world, not for unilateral action. International cooperation based on shared responsibility was needed in combating organized crime, arms trafficking, human trafficking and other illicit activities that posed a grave threat to international peace and security. Her delegation wished to emphasize the principle of sovereignty and the right of every State to exercise that sovereignty within its territory without external threats, as well as the right of all peoples to live free of oppression in their own land, enjoy their natural resources and achieve social and economic development necessary for stability.

68. In addition to adopting national legislation and abiding by relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, her Government's commitment to international peace and security was demonstrated in the King's initiative to establish the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT) and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna.

69. **Ms. Lipre-Järma** (Estonia) said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law showed the progress being made towards unity and agreement on fundamental values. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the outcome Declaration reflected the important role of the International Criminal Court and called on all countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute and to cooperate with the Court. It was also crucial to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression; at the High-level Meeting Estonia had pledged to pursue ratification. Her delegation commended the commitment shown by the United Nations to the Court through continued cooperation and logistical support.

70. It was, however, a primary duty of every State to exercise criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes and to provide victims of past violations with effective remedies, including reparations. To that end, development programmes with a focus on justice for grave international crimes were needed to strengthen national capacities to investigate and prosecute such crimes. The Court stepped in where national courts were unable or unwilling to act.

71. Justice was a prerequisite for sustainable development and security in a post-conflict society, since impunity provided fertile ground for the recurrence of conflicts. Often those responsible for the worst human rights violations were the same individuals responsible for corruption and organized crime, which kept societies in a poverty trap. While her delegation welcomed the mention of transitional justice in the outcome document on the rule of law, informal justice mechanisms should not preclude access to a formal justice system for those that needed or desired it, and serious international crimes, including gender-based crimes, should be dealt with only within a formal justice system.

72. National voices should be systematically heard and placed at the centre of rule of law efforts. The contribution of civil society was essential in that regard, and it was regrettable that it had not been acknowledged in the Declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting.

73. Only a society based on the rule of law had the means to offer its people better living conditions and prevent corruption; economists had repeatedly found that the better the rule of law the better off the nation. The information revolution had assisted Estonia in transforming itself into a democratic society based on the rule of law. Electronic solutions increased transparency, fostered fundamental rights and freedoms and improved inclusive and responsible governance. Information technology solutions could be implemented even with modest means and helped to re-establish or increase the trust of citizens towards the State, which was essential in post-conflict societies. Estonia wished to share its e-governance skills and experiences with partners worldwide.

74. The Secretariat was to be commended for implementing the paperless approach during the current session, as it was environmentally friendly and had the potential for tremendous cost-savings.

75. **Mr. Salem** (Egypt) said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law represented a milestone in General Assembly discussions on the topic. Consultations on the outcome document had revealed different views on the components of the rule of law and a tendency by some to focus on the rule of law at the national level and to ignore the importance of the rule of law at the international level. It was essential to reach a shared understanding of the concept of the rule

of law and to take a balanced approach encompassing both the national and international levels of the rule of law.

76. The profound political changes that had taken place in North Africa and the Middle East since 2011 had occurred in response to popular calls for accountability, transparency and the rule of law. The recently elected Government of Egypt was committed to establishing the rule of law, empowering institutions and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

77. Noting that the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had given a clear mandate to the Secretary General to organize a conference on establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in 2012, his delegation called for the completion of the necessary measures to convene the conference within the agreed time frame in order to address the threat caused by the presence of such weapons in the Middle East.

78. Another challenge to the rule of law at the international level was the continued suffering of the Palestinian people and the deadlock of the peace process. His delegation called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan and other Arab occupied territories. His delegation fully supported the Palestinian request for admission to the United Nations as a full Member as a minimum step towards realizing the legitimate Palestinian request to obtain international recognition. He urged all delegations to give their support to that request in order to preserve the credibility of the Organization and uphold the rule of law at the international level.

79. **Ms. Mwaura** (Kenya) said that the rule of law was the bedrock of peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. The Charter of the United Nations was the foundation of the rule of law at the international level and envisaged the collective responsibility of States in the maintenance of international peace and security and international cooperation in addressing economic, social and human rights issues. Her delegation welcomed the Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and hoped that it would provide the impetus for collective action in the promotion of the rule of law at all levels. The challenges associated with the promotion of the rule of law at the national and

international levels required collaborative effort and posed an even bigger challenge for developing countries, which could be addressed through capacity-building and technology transfer.

80. An impartial and independent judiciary was essential for the rule of law. Fundamental reforms of Kenya's judiciary included increasing the transparency of the recruitment process and improving the terms of service for judicial officers in order to attract a high-calibre workforce. The judiciary was independently funded, enabling it to undertake structural reforms to streamline processes, and judges were increasingly making independent decisions. The establishment of commissions on the administration of justice and gender equality, among other complementary reforms in the justice and security sectors, would lead to an effective justice sector that was accessible to all.

81. The promotion of the rule of law had led to increased activity across all sectors of the economy and greater political participation. Under the Constitution, equity was an underlying principle of governance, institutionalized by the provisions on devolved governance. Devolution ensured the equitable sharing of national and local resources, promoted social and economic development and made possible easy access to public services throughout the country.

82. Transnational organized crime undermined the rule of law and had far-reaching negative effects on national security and development. Since no single country by itself could win the war against such crimes as terrorism, piracy and the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, collective effort based on the principle of shared responsibility was necessary. Her delegation encouraged the United Nations and the international community to strengthen existing national and regional initiatives to counter transnational organized crime.

83. **Mr. Nikolaichik** (Belarus) said that his delegation was pleased that the Declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law upheld the sovereign equality of all States, discouraged unilateral coercive measures by States, and recognized the importance of fair, stable and predictable legal frameworks for generating inclusive sustainable and equitable development and economic growth.

84. His delegation underscored the importance of the rule of law as a key element in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and called on all States parties to act

exclusively in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law and not to invoke arbitrary interpretations to justify so-called humanitarian interventions into the internal affairs of sovereign States. Strict adherence to rule-of-law principles built trust and ensured the predictability and lawfulness of State actions. Selectivity and double standards were inadmissible: all States needed to fulfil the full scope of their international legal obligations.

85. His Government believed in the importance of strengthening the linkages between the rule of law and development goals, which would help create an international legal system that addressed contemporary realities and promoted sustainable development, the equitable distribution of resources and equal access to the common heritage of humankind. In that regard, his delegation hoped that substantive agreement could be achieved with regard to broadening the use of new and renewable sources of energy and other issues pertaining to the sustainable development of the global economy.

86. His Government supported the creation of a more effective system for providing technical assistance to States in the fulfilment of their international obligations. The system should offer information on new international legal instruments, an assessment of their relevance for a given State and specific assistance in the implementation of their provisions.

87. The fundamental importance of the rule of law called for broader consideration of related topics by the Sixth Committee, which possessed the necessary mandate and authority to do so, with the possible involvement of the heads of the legal services of the foreign ministries of the Member States and the bureaus of the other Main Committees of the General Assembly.

88. **Mr. Sengsourinha** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the rule of law was a fundamental principle governing collective action for the benefit of all members of the community. The rule of law underpinned the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. Since the adoption of the national constitution in 1991, the Lao Government had undertaken a number of measures to promote the rule of law in the country. A large number of laws, decrees and regulations and other legal acts had been put into place to form the national legal framework for enhancing the rule of law.

More recently, the Government had adopted a legal sector master plan aimed at enhancing capacity, improving legal institutions, promoting public awareness of legal rights, increasing public participation and ensuring effective implementation of international instruments to which the country was a party.

89. At the international level, his Government was a party to over one hundred multilateral, two hundred regional and three hundred bilateral treaties. At the annual United Nations treaty event held during the current session, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had deposited instruments of ratification to three additional treaties, including the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and a number of key instruments were being considered for accession and ratification in the years to come.

90. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) said that the greatest achievement of the rule of law at the international level was the founding of the United Nations, which remained relevant today. His delegation approached the rule of law topic through the prism of Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, which called for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. That was the rationale for the 1983 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, whose its thirtieth anniversary would be commemorated on November 15. His delegation requested the support of Member States for the resolution proposed in that regard by the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

91. The emphasis on the rule of law placed the Committee at the centre of the priorities before the Organization during its current session. His delegation unequivocally supported the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, which laid stress on peaceful settlement of disputes, the role of international tribunals, sovereign equality and the equality of women and men and identified the priorities of combating terrorism and corruption. The Declaration recognized that the United Nations system possessed the institutions, working methods and relationships to make the rule of law relevant to peace and security, human rights and development. His delegation was ready to work to further develop linkages between the rule of law and the three pillars of

the United Nations and to widen stakeholder participation.

92. The Declaration also affirmed the importance of national ownership of rule of law activities. The United Nations played a key supporting role in encouraging the rule of law at the national level and could further contribute by supporting capacity-building and the exchange of best practices. Useful work had already been done in promoting good governance, combating corruption and enhancing the speedy delivery of impartial justice. The experience of his own Government showed that the rule of law also made good economic sense as the bedrock of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth and development.

93. The rule of law satisfied the human desire for orderly and predictable behavioural patterns. Without it, there would be no social order, government or civilization or relations between countries. There would be no United Nations. The Organization had been created to protect the weak from the strong, to provide for the equality of all sovereign States, and to enshrine the rule of law as the governing principle in regulating international disputes.

94. **Mr. Lugunda Lubamba** (Democratic Republic of Congo) said that, in a society without the rule of law, peace was constantly threatened. Respect for the rule of law was the foundation for the peaceful coexistence of nations and a prerequisite for guaranteeing individual freedom and respect for human rights. The rule of law required a robust system of justice, one which guaranteed all citizens or legal persons a fair and speedy trial. A robust system of justice in turn provided the basis for good governance, and both were necessary to create conditions favourable to lasting peace, which itself was an indispensable condition for the steady development so greatly needed by the countries of his own region.

95. For several decades, his Government had been working to restore the rule of law and the authority of the State in the whole of its national territory. In the past few years the Government had instituted a number of reforms relating to the country's legal structure at the highest level, including the adoption of a new Constitution, which had enabled the conduct of transparent and democratic general elections, established the independence of the judiciary and restructured the Supreme Court into three branches.

Other judicial reforms aimed at increasing access to justice by reducing costs, expanding the network of courts and magistrates throughout the country and improving performance through training programmes. In that regard, the bilateral and multilateral cooperation given was much appreciated; its effectiveness could be enhanced by greater synergy with national policies and closer adaptation to real needs on the ground. Measures taken against corruption included the establishment of an anti-corruption monitoring body and the enforcement of laws requiring public officials to declare their assets.

96. On the score of human rights, in addition to ratifying nearly all the international human rights conventions, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had put in place and recently updated a national plan for the promotion and protection of human rights. Some of the reforms entailed the creation of human rights institutions, such as human rights liaison entities in all provinces, a structure for collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and human rights organizations, and an alert mechanism when threats were made against human rights defenders. In relation to women's rights, the Government was implementing a national policy that included plan of action to combat gender-based violence and had resulted in revised penal provisions in that regard. A 2009 law protecting children's rights was in the process of implementation, including the institution of juvenile delinquency courts.

97. His Government intended to pursue further internal reforms, including the passage of a law compensating victims of sexual violence; the amendment of discriminatory provisions in the Family Code; the establishment of a national commission for human rights; the adoption of a moratorium on the death penalty; amendment of the Code of Procedure; the adoption of a plan of action to combat the recruitment of child soldiers; and the application of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

98. Nonetheless, people living in the eastern part of the country were vulnerable, being cut off by negative forces from the institutional framework. The situation in that region gravely compromised the progress made toward the establishment of the rule of law. His delegation would appreciate the support of Member States for his Government's efforts to put a stop to all forms of human rights violations, particularly against women and children.

99. **Mr. Dintersmith** (United States of America) said that his Government's commitment to the rule of law had helped inform its work in confronting global challenges such as violent crime, public corruption and terrorism and in promoting global security and open governance, strengthening civil society and fostering economic development and job creation. His Government's pledge document demonstrated its strong support for ongoing rule of law initiatives at the United Nations and at the national level. His delegation stood ready to discuss follow-up initiatives to the High-level Meeting that took into account the cross-cutting nature of the rule of law and included the broad range of legitimate stakeholders, including United Nations bodies and civil society in the form of national bar associations, businesses, non-governmental organizations and academics.

100. The linkages were clear between the rule of law and human rights and the development of robust democratic institutions, which were reinforced by strong protections for freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and political participation. Strong legal systems ensured free and fair elections, which were a prerequisite for political stability, while good governance ensured inclusive and sustainable development. Failing to strengthen the rule of law in developing countries risked undoing the progress made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Full access to formal justice systems allowed people in both developed and developing countries to live without fear of arbitrary deprivation, displacement or dispossession. The most vulnerable groups of people were most susceptible to having their rights infringed upon and were least aware of those rights. In the absence of a legal system that offered security, entrepreneurs could not find credit to expand their businesses, domestic and foreign investors hesitated to make investments, and job creation and development were affected.

101. The critical importance of the rule of law was particularly clear in conflict-affected States and countries where development and development assistance were most needed. His Government recognized the critical role those countries played in their own transitions with respect to maintaining security, ensuring freedom from gender-based violence and equal access to justice for both men and women and fostering inclusive political processes and conflict resolution tools. His Government looked forward to

partnering with fellow Member States to address those challenges.

102. **Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, and the Declaration adopted, represented a turning point in the commitment of all Member States to promote and strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels. The Declaration would henceforth be the basis for all discussions and decisions on the rule of law, with implications extending into all areas of the Organization's work as the Assembly developed further the linkages between the rule of law and the three main pillars of the United Nations. It would be necessary to operationalize the concepts set out in the Declaration, prioritize challenges, define common goals and devise a roadmap for implementation.

103. The local and international aspects of the rule of law should form an indivisible and coherent whole, based on universal values and principles and respecting existing standards and commitments. At the local level, it was important to develop legislation, institutions and legal practices that were legitimate, robust and honest, equally accessible by all, and characterized by independence, fairness and transparency, within a framework of guarantees. Such an institutional architecture should also protect citizens from the abuse of power. At the international level, respect for the rule of law entailed full compliance with the obligations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, other international instruments, and the decisions of international tribunals.

104. Costa Rica, which had accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice as early as 1973, recalled that it was a Charter obligation of all States to comply with the Court's decisions in full and without exceptions. His country also reiterated its full support for the International Criminal Court, bearing in mind that the fight against impunity was a key component of the rule of law, particularly in relation to the most serious human rights violations. It would continue to promote the universality of the Rome Statute, in order to ensure adequate financing for the Court and support compliance with its decisions.

105. **Ms. Arias Orozco** (El Salvador) said that the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law constituted a major advance, and the Declaration adopted by consensus had set the debate on a new course. It was the first document to expressly state that Member

States' response to political, social and economic transformations would be guided by the rule of law. As indicated in the Declaration, the rule of law did not merely constitute formal respect for the law, but encompassed a whole range of components and principles, including respect for human rights, democracy, effective division and balance of powers of the State, existence of an effective and independent judicial system, and accountability of public officials. Given the broad scope of the rule of law, it was impossible to classify different State systems as being right or wrong. No State was likely to have all, or none of, those components in place. Compliance with the rule of law was therefore a challenge and an ongoing commitment for all States, one that necessitated taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of each State.

106. In that regard, international law, and in particular international human rights law, served as the overarching framework for States' actions. Respect for the rule of law demanded full compliance with the principles of equality before the law, equal protection of the law and the prohibition of discrimination on any ground such as race, sex, religion, nationality, political opinion or any other status.

107. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/102, her delegation proposed that the following subtopics might be considered for future Sixth Committee debates: principles of the rule of law; the rule of law and judicial independence; the rule of law and its relationship to democracy; the rule of law and security; and legitimacy and separation of powers under the rule of law. All were of great relevance, particularly in view of the recently adopted Declaration, and examining them in a legal context could help to further clarify the scope of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

108. **Mr. Kim Saeng** (Republic of Korea) said that the successful High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and the resulting Declaration reflected well-established principles and represented a benchmark in global efforts to enhance the rule of law. His delegation welcomed paragraph 4 on the settlement of disputes, which recognized the freedom of Member States to select the forum in which to settle their disputes. The Declaration, in paragraph 31, also recognized the contributions of international judicial organs in promoting the rule of law and reflected the reality that there were various avenues for the jurisdiction of the

International Court of Justice, including through agreement and interpretation of bilateral or multilateral treaties.

109. His delegation attached great importance to the continued consideration and promotion of the rule of law, in particular its relationship with the three pillars of the United Nations. His country's mature democracy and its level of economic development and human rights protection would not have been possible without its commitment to uphold the rule of law at home and abroad. His Government was fully committed to make a continuing contribution to rule of law initiatives, including by sharing his country's experience.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m