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Chair: Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine)
later: Mr. Chekkori (Vice-Chair) (Morocco)
later: Mr. Sergeyev (Chair) (Ukraine)

Contents

Agenda item 83: The rule of law at the national and international levels (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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

1. **Mr. Gonzalez** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC was committed to the rule of law and recognized its importance for friendly and equitable relations and for just and fair societies, as acknowledged in the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels held on 24 September 2012. CELAC was also committed to the establishment of a just and lasting peace worldwide and pledged to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, to respect their territorial integrity and political independence, to refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and to uphold the resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right to self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and respect for the equal rights of all, irrespective of race, sex, language or religion. The members of the Community were also committed to international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and fulfilment in good faith of the obligations assumed under the Charter.

2. Respect for the rule of law at the international level implied compliance with international norms and acknowledgement that the rule of law applied equally to all States and international organizations, including the United Nations. It also meant refraining from the threat or use of force and settling international disputes by peaceful means and with due regard for the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Good governance at the international level was essential in order to strengthen the rule of law, and CELAC therefore supported efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, strengthen the Economic and Social Council and reform the Security Council with the aim of rendering it more effective, democratic, representative and transparent. Noting that important decisions had been taken on reform of the Bretton Woods institutions with regard to governance structures, quotas and voting rights to better reflect current realities and enhance the voice and

participation of developing countries, the members of CELAC underlined the importance of reform of the governance of those institutions in order to enhance their effectiveness, credibility, accountability and legitimacy.

3. CELAC was committed to strengthening and promoting the rule of law in its member States by fostering dialogue, cooperation and solidarity among them. It recognized the importance of national ownership in rule of law activities and the need to ensure the existence of a transparent legal system accessible to all, solid democratic institutions and laws, independent and impartial judicial systems and adequate redress mechanisms for human rights violations in order to provide a framework for political and social development. The Community also recognized the necessary link between the rule of law at the international and national levels.

4. CELAC strongly urged States to refrain from promulgating and applying unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter that would impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. Strengthening the rule of law was not an exclusive problem of certain countries or regions but a global aspiration to be governed by agreed values, principles and norms and created through open, predictable and recognized processes that took into account national perspectives.

5. The Community welcomed United Nations activities aimed at strengthening the rule of law and noted the efforts of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit. There was room for improvement, however, in order to avoid duplication and increase efficiency in the Organization's rule of law activities. Such activities must be broad in scope in order to take account of challenges relating to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication. The rule of law and development were strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels was essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development — all of which in turn reinforced the rule of law.

6. CELAC welcomed the progress made in promoting the rule of law at the regional level and emphasized the importance of continued discussion and promotion of the rule of law in all its aspects in order to further develop the linkages between it and the three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development.

7. **Mr. AlAjmi** (Kuwait) said that his delegation attached great importance to strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels. There was work to be done, along the lines indicated by the Secretary-General in his report entitled “Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities” (A/67/290), in order to ensure that the international community enjoyed international peace and security and to achieve justice and thereby foster comprehensive and sustainable development, economic growth and the elimination of poverty and hunger. His delegation also welcomed the adoption of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (General Assembly resolution 67/1), wherein States had laid the foundations of an international order built on the rule of law.

8. The rule of law was a principle of governance in which people and institutions were equal before the law and could seek justice from an independent judiciary. Kuwait would soon observe the fiftieth anniversary of its Constitution, which had established a democratic system with separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Under the Constitution the rights of all were protected without discrimination and all enjoyed freedom of association and the right to organize. The formulation of a sound national constitution contributed to peaceful political transition and to the prevention of conflict. In the wake of the Arab Spring — in which the principle had been affirmed that authority belonged to the people and that no authority was above the law — the countries concerned had therefore prioritized constitutional reform. His Government supported the efforts of the United Nations in assisting States with the drafting of a national constitution.

9. It was essential that all Member States and the principal organs of the United Nations should adhere to the principles of the Charter and the rules of international law. Human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the individual should be protected, as should the right of peoples to self-determination and

the principle of equality without discrimination. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict was one of the most prominent cases of violation of international law and international humanitarian law. Although the conflict threatened peace and security in the Middle East, the United Nations had failed to find a solution to the problem. Israel had thus persisted in its expansion and settlement policies and in its aggression against the Palestinian people and had imposed a blockade on Gaza without any consideration for human rights. His delegation welcomed efforts to achieve peace and stability in the area and supported the application of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations.

10. Kuwait held the international community responsible for the killing of innocent civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic and called upon the United Nations to adopt international resolutions to stop the loss of life and assure that there would be no immunity for the perpetrators of those killings. Conflicts should be settled peacefully, without the threat or use of force, through international judicial mechanisms. The international community should step up its efforts to provide needed humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, both in and outside Syria.

11. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that 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) provided a solid basis for reflection on current and future action in respect of the rule of law. The High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had underscored the unanimous position of Member States with regard to strict observance of the Organization’s norms and principles in all aspects of State functions. The United Nations should play a coordinating role in that regard.

12. Her Government was firmly committed to strict adherence to the rule of law and was proud that, 20 years after gaining its independence, Kazakhstan was progressing as a successful State with a democratic political and legal system, a stable economy and a high level of well-being. Its Constitution, adopted in 1995, recognized the right to life and freedom and provided the legal foundation for State sovereignty, stable and secure development and a balanced and effective system of government that adhered fully to the rule of law.

13. The Government had striven constantly to comply with international human rights standards. It had ratified the relevant treaties and conventions and put in place a system that protected political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights. All citizens were equal before the law. Judicial and law enforcement reforms had increased the level of public trust in the system and ensured that all citizen had access to justice. A new criminal code would support the Government's uncompromising struggle against corruption and enhance protection of human rights. In 2011 important new legislation had been passed and programmes launched on information security, education, health and civil society. New institutions included the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Human Rights. Programmes existed to ensure the right to development for vulnerable groups, including women and persons with disabilities. The Government reported periodically on human rights and its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It stood ready to join in the collective effort to promote the rule of law in all its aspects.

14. **Mr. Echeverría** (Mexico) said that one of the most important features of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law was the international community's acknowledgement of the importance of the rule of law at both the national and international levels for the development of peoples and the peaceful coexistence of nations. The Declaration provided a necessary foundation for the actions that must be taken to advance the work of the Organization; it set forth a broad vision that touched upon almost all bodies of the United Nations.

15. At the international level, States and international organizations must act and carry out their functions in strict compliance with international law. At the national level, States must implement their treaty obligations domestically, upholding fundamental principles such as equality before the law, respect for human rights and fair access to justice systems. Ensuring full respect for the rule of law would provide a vital impetus to economic, political and social development.

16. The General Assembly had a crucial role to play in promoting the rule of law in all its aspects, and the Sixth Committee was the best platform for further developing the linkages between the rule of law and the three pillars on which the work of the Organization rested: international peace and security, human rights and development. It was essential to involve all

stakeholders, including civil society, business and academia, in that effort, which was not the exclusive province of Governments. His delegation offered its full support in carrying out the work called for by Heads of State and Government in the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting.

17. **Mr. Mamadi Touré** (Guinea) said that since 2010, the year that had seen the end of decades of dictatorship in his country, his Government had made promotion of the rule of law a top priority. To combat impunity, it had investigated the murders and rapes of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators committed by the security forces of the military junta in September 2009. The indictment of several senior army officers had shown that the Government was serious about and capable of prosecuting those responsible for such crimes. Numerous visits to Guinea by representatives from the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, the International Federation for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict had confirmed that that was the case. The new authorities were also targeting financial crime, which had enabled a few highly placed officials to amass scandalous wealth while impoverishing the vast majority of the population. To staunch the financial haemorrhage, a unified treasury system had been put in place and audits had been conducted, which had revealed the misappropriation of billions of francs of public funds. The perpetrators would be prosecuted as soon as possible.

18. Regarding the promotion of human rights and individual freedoms, the Government had authorized public protests, provided they did not adversely affect the rights and freedoms of other citizens. The recent establishment of the Ministry of Human Rights and Civil Liberties was evidence of the Government's firm commitment to place promotion of rule of law at the heart of its work. Recognizing that a requirement for the rule of law was an independent, corruption-free judiciary, in March 2012 the Government had undertaken an evaluation aimed at identifying the principal problems affecting the justice system and recommending solutions. Those recommendations were being implemented with support from partners, including the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, with a view to extending the reform of the defence sector to the justice and police sectors.

19. The rule of law must also govern international relations, particularly within the United Nations. Significant reforms were needed to make the Organization more equitable and effective and enable it to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained, as envisaged by its founders.

20. The violent social convulsions that had recently shaken a number of countries, broadcast around the world by the magic of television and the Internet, had brought about regime change and shown that people were no longer at the mercy of dictatorships. The international community had a duty to support the people of those countries in their quest for their right to freedom, democracy and happiness. However, the responsibility to protect — the grand principle that justified interference in the internal affairs of States — must not be exercised selectively.

21. **Mr. Hameed** (Pakistan) said that the adoption of the Declaration at the recent High-level Meeting attested to the importance that Member States attached to the rule of law at the national and international levels. The rule of law was critical for creating an international order conducive to peace, prosperity, dignity and equal development opportunities for all, and the United Nations played a central role in promoting it. Respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations was a prerequisite for a stable international order, which could only be maintained by upholding the principles of justice and the rule of law, cooperative multilateralism, sovereign equality, non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, settlement of disputes by peaceful means and the conduct of international relations without the threat or use of force.

22. The United Nations and its organs should lead by example in promoting the rule of law. The Security Council must determine the existence of any threat to peace through uniform application of the principles of the Charter and must be consistent in implementing any decisions taken under Chapter VI or Chapter VII. The international community should persist in demanding full compliance by all with international humanitarian law in all situations of armed conflict. His Government supported continued reform of the procedures of the Security Council committees in order to ensure due process in the implementation of sanctions regimes. In that regard, it appreciated the

work of the Ombudsperson of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999).

23. Increasingly complex global challenges had necessitated adaptation in the activities of the United Nations and had led to expansion of its rule of law assistance, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities had served as an important tool in restoring peace and normalcy and promoting the rule of law in conflict situations, and his Government was proud of its contributions to those activities. Nevertheless, the United Nations had a mixed record with regard to conflict resolution, and some long-standing disputes awaited just and lasting solutions. The International Court of Justice could provide useful advisory opinions to guide the Security Council and the General Assembly in such difficult situations. In addition, frequent recourse by Member States to the Court and other international adjudicative mechanisms to settle disputes peacefully would promote the rule of law. His delegation commended the work of the various courts and tribunals established under United Nations auspices for promoting accountability and fighting impunity.

24. Rule of law assistance could play a pivotal role in divided post-conflict societies. Such societies should be helped through national institution-building, particularly judicial capacity-building. However, rule of law assistance should be provided only at the request of and in close consultation with the Governments concerned, and national ownership of reform initiatives should be encouraged.

25. National laws must be consistent with international obligations, and nations must respect the rule of law beyond their borders as well as within them. A uniform and consistent approach to upholding the rule of law would contribute significantly to equitable socioeconomic development and a just international system.

26. The Constitution of Pakistan enshrined the principles of equal rights and equal treatment of all persons under the law. It guaranteed independence of the judiciary and protected fundamental rights and freedoms, including economic and political rights, freedom of association and freedom of thought, expression, belief and religion. It also made special provision for representation of women in elected office

and directed the State to take appropriate measures to enable women to participate in all spheres of life and to safeguard the rights and interests of minorities.

27. **Mr. Otsuka** (Japan) said that his delegation welcomed the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and was committed to engaging actively in follow-up discussions. The rule of law played a pivotal role in maintaining international peace and security by preventing and defusing international disputes and promoting their peaceful settlement. His Government attached particular importance to the role of the international courts and tribunals in strengthening the rule of law at the international level and had made substantial financial contributions to them, in addition to providing judges. Japan had accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in 1958, and it called upon all States that had not done so to do likewise and also to accede to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

28. The International Law Commission had played an important role in the codification and progressive development of international law by providing the basis for such universal conventions as those on diplomatic and consular relations and the law of treaties. The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law had helped to advance education on and dissemination of international law. Regional frameworks, such as the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, had also made a crucial contribution to promoting the rule of law at the international level.

29. International cooperation, especially assistance to developing countries, was important in order to strengthen the rule of law at the national level. It was essential to develop legal systems and human resources in each State. His Government was providing support for that purpose and would continue to do so.

30. **Mr. Yadav** (India), welcoming the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels and highlighting several of its provisions, said that his delegation considered it essential to reform the Security Council in order to make it broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

31. Strengthening the rule of law at the national level was essential for the protection of democracy,

economic growth, sustainable development, gender justice, eradication of poverty and hunger, and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/67/290), the main challenge for strengthening the rule of law at the international level was ensuring implementation of the existing international norms and standards. His delegation stressed the need for honest and effective implementation by States of the international legal framework aimed at combating terrorism and denying safe haven to terrorists in any part of the world.

32. It was important to strengthen the capacity of States, especially developing and least developed States, to carry out the rule of law activities and to fulfil their obligations. All rule of law assistance should, however, be in line with the national priorities of the recipient State.

33. With regard to the subtopics proposed for future consideration by the Sixth Committee, his delegation would prefer that a limited number of topics should be discussed during each session in order to allow sufficient time to examine them properly.

34. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that one of the biggest challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century was strengthening the international legal order and the rule of law, which was essential to the peaceful coexistence of peoples, good governance, respect for human rights and the economic and social progress of all peoples. Respect for the rule of law at the international level was necessary for peace and stability; it entailed acceptance by States of international law, including compliance with their obligations under international treaties, particularly treaties establishing national boundaries, which should remain stable. Universal acceptance of multilateral international treaties, which governed matters of interest to the international community as a whole, should be a goal of the members of the United Nations. The General Assembly should encourage States to sign and ratify or accede to such treaties.

35. Strengthening the rule of law at the international level also meant using the peaceful means of dispute settlement envisaged in the Charter, subject to the principle of free choice of such means. The International Court of Justice played a key role in that regard, both as a judicial and as an advisory body. His delegation also valued the work of the special tribunals, the regional human rights tribunals, the ad hoc criminal

tribunals and the International Criminal Court. The establishment of the latter had marked a milestone in the struggle to end impunity and had clearly demonstrated the commitment of the States parties to its Statute to work towards that end.

36. International law could function properly only if the rule of law functioned properly at the national level. The two levels were intrinsically linked. The rule of law at the national level was both a prerequisite for domestic peace and the foundation on which international peace was built. The foundation for the rule of law at the national level, in turn, was representative democracy and the establishment and effective functioning of national institutions. An autonomous and independent judicial system was also essential, and all, regardless of rank or position, must be accountable for their actions and treated equally under the law. The United Nations, and particularly the General Assembly, should continue to promote reflection, on and conditions, means and mechanisms for, enhancing respect for the rule of law at the national level. States should also work together for that purpose.

37. In conjunction with the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, Chile had pledged to develop national legislation on cooperation with the International Criminal Court and had made a joint pledge with several other countries to promote truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and to support the work of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council dealing with those questions. The Declaration adopted by Member States at the High-level Meeting affirmed basic principles of the rule of law and of the Charter of the United Nations; it was, however, only declaratory in nature. In his delegation's view, the Declaration should have been more action-oriented and should have established a follow-up mechanism, such as the working group proposed by the co-facilitators, which might have led to fruitful discussions and concrete actions by States concerning the rule of law. The High-level Meeting had not been an end in itself but rather the start of a process of strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels. The Committee's future discussions on the topic should be oriented towards the achievement of specific goals.

38. *Mr. Chekkori (Morocco), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

39. **Mr. Singh (Malaysia)** said that the overwhelming interest shown by many Heads of State and Government in the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law was evidence of the importance that States attached to the issue. The High-level Meeting had been a first step towards greater respect for and adherence to international law. Given the subject matter, future deliberations on the rule of law should take place in the Sixth Committee and should reflect the priorities and focus areas of all Member States.

40. The foundation for the rule of law in Malaysia was the Federal Constitution. That document and the country's other laws were periodically amended to reflect internal developments and the aspirations of the people to democracy, equality and justice. Laws had been repealed when deemed obsolete or not in the best interests of the people. For example, the internal security act had been reformed, and the Government had recently repealed a series of emergency regulations and section of the Police Act of 1967. The Peaceful Assembly Act of 2012 allowed for freedom of peaceful assembly with responsibility.

41. It was unquestionably important to uphold the rule of law at the national level in order to enhance respect for the rule of law at the international level, but the relationship worked both ways. The international community had a responsibility to uphold the rule of law as expressed in international conventions and treaties. The United Nations, as the primary international organization for the enforcement of international law and the promotion of security, economic development, social progress and human rights, should set an example for Member States. His delegation was particularly concerned about the lack of progress in revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council, whose composition and procedures did not reflect current realities. Surely the use of the veto, which allowed a single State to overrule the wishes of the majority, was in contradiction to the principle of the rule of law.

42. Referring to recent violent reactions in the Middle East and North Africa, he emphasized that freedom of expression must be exercised with responsibility, caution and respect for others, in accordance with Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 29 should not be applied selectively, however, and freedom of expression should not be used as an excuse for failure to exercise self-censorship. Although in Malaysia, a

multicultural, multiracial society where misunderstanding and prejudice could easily occur, individuals were free to express their views, the Government had to consider the best interests of the majority and of all strata of society so that Malaysians could continue to enjoy relative peace, security and harmony. At the international level, as well, the interests of all should be served.

43. Double standards and selectivity must also be avoided in other areas, such as the campaign to end impunity. Atrocities taking place in one State should not be ignored while others were condemned. At the High-level Meeting, Member States had adopted a solemn Declaration stressing that the rule of law should apply to all States equally. They must therefore demonstrate consistency in observing and applying the law. Double standards and selectivity would undermine credibility and discourage respect for the rule of law.

44. *Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine) resumed The Chair.*

45. **Mr. Chekkori** (Morocco) said that commitment to the rule of law at the international and national levels was essential not only for the preservation of international peace and security but also in order to promote and achieve economic prosperity and development. Implementation at the national level of international legal obligations freely accepted by States was critical to continued progress towards an international community in which the rule of law prevailed. The High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had afforded an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitment to promoting the rule of law on all levels, take stock of the rule of law activities of the United Nations, review national experiences and reach consensus on how to achieve further progress with respect to the rule of law.

46. His Government affirmed its commitment to the establishment of a multilateral international system based on the principles of the rule of law and on respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their domestic affairs and peaceful settlement of international disputes. The United Nations should continue to play a leading role in strengthening the rule of law at the international level and in supporting the efforts of Member States to do so at the national level. In that connection, his delegation affirmed its support for the work of the Rule of Law

Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should create opportunities to enter into dialogue with States in order to deepen understanding of their political and economic particularities and gain a better understanding of their priorities. The Organization should also ensure their active participation in implementing initiatives aimed at strengthening the rule of law at the national level.

47. Citizen participation was essential for the achievement of a society based on the rule of law. His Government had succeeded in creating an environment conducive to participatory democracy; initiatives led by citizens, locally elected representatives and civil society movements had been fundamental in the launch of recent major reforms in Morocco.

48. Morocco had adopted a new Constitution which affirmed its people's irrevocable commitment to the establishment of a democratic State based on the rule of law. The Constitution provided for separation and balance of powers and set forth rules for political and economic governance at the national, regional and local levels. A code promoting the role of women in society had been adopted, a national initiative to support human development had been launched and a reconciliation and justice commission had been set up to address gross violations of human rights.

49. His delegation looked forward to continued discussion within the Sixth Committee aimed at building on the momentum created by the High-Level Meeting and reaching mutual understanding on what should be done to follow up on the Declaration of the Meeting. As a first step, it would be important to agree on a set of subtopics for discussion, selected from among those suggested in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/290, para. 70). It was to be hoped that the climate of trust and the spirit of consensus that had always characterized the Committee's discussion of the subject would continue to prevail.

50. **Mrs. Zarrouck Boumiza** (Tunisia) said that her Government supported a participatory approach to the rule of law that took account of the capacity of States and the aspirations of peoples undergoing transition. It was ready to cooperate with international organizations in promoting the rule of law based on transparency and constructive dialogue aimed at enhancing its capacity to deal with any violations and break totally with the practices of the former regime. Her delegation

supported discussion of the subtopic “Strengthening of international adjudicative mechanisms, including the implementation of their final and binding decisions”, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/67/290, para. 70). Such mechanisms played an important role in ensuring respect for international law.

51. The Government of Tunisia was committed to aligning its judicial reforms with international rules and norms concerning the rule of law, as it had affirmed during the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and had demonstrated by ratifying a number of important international instruments. It would seek to establish the equality of men and women under the new Constitution; strive to build democratic institutions in the context of a civil State that guaranteed freedom, equality and development; and honour the commitment made by all Member States in the Declaration of the High-level Meeting to promote respect for and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

52. Lastly, her delegation favoured the establishment of an international constitutional court which would have the power to rule that existing constitutions or laws violated international law and could also declare disputed elections fraudulent and therefore illegal.

53. **Ms. Niyomnaitham** (Thailand) said that her Government welcomed the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/290 and A/67/749) and would incorporate them into Thailand’s national practices and programmes. In 2011, the Government had established an independent national commission to ensure that all State organs performed their duties in accordance with the rule of law, with the objective of reinforcing accountability.

54. Her delegation welcomed the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, which should serve as a basis for action by the international community to promote and strengthen the rule of law. During the High-level Meeting, Thailand had stressed its firm commitment to the rule of law and to compliance with all treaties to which it was a party. It had pledged to sign and deposit its instrument of ratification to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, and had already fulfilled that pledge.

55. Her delegation wished to highlight the importance of mainstreaming gender sensitivity and a rights-based approach into the criminal justice system

to promote equality before the law, a key concept of the rule of law. Frequently, the process of police investigations, from witness interviews to the prosecution of cases, was male-dominated, with the result that women were all too often subject to subtle or overt discrimination. Thailand also stood ready to share its experience in implementing the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

56. Upholding the rule of law required the constant efforts of all stakeholders in society. Her Government would continue working to ensure that the rule of law took strong root at the national level and would cooperate with the international community in promoting the rule of law at the global level under the umbrella of the United Nations.

57. **Mr. Hassan Ali Hassan Ali** (Sudan) said that his delegation had welcomed the convening of the High-level Meeting and supported continued effort to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels in keeping with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law, especially the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs. However, like many others, his delegation had some reservations about the Declaration adopted by the High-level Meeting. The Sudan wished to emphasize the need not to politicize justice or harness international institutions in the service of private agendas. His delegation also wished to stress the importance of legal dialogue and debate within the Sixth Committee and the need for continued discussion of how best to implement the rule of law at the national and international levels.

58. In the light of recent political developments, especially the secession of South Sudan, the relevant authorities at the national level were working, in consultation with all segments of the society, to draft a permanent constitution. The new constitution would affirm the values of justice, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary and protection of and respect for human rights and would provide for domestication of international instruments. The Sudan had ratified most regional and international conventions relating to human rights, corruption, terrorism, weapons and non-proliferation and other matters, and had already incorporated most of their provisions in domestic law.

59. The Sudan acknowledged the importance of respect for international law. However, it affirmed the right of sovereign States to exercise justice. It also recognized the importance of peaceful settlement of international disputes and highly valued the role of the International Court of Justice, which should be promoted and supported. International cooperation was also important, but must be offered with due respect for national sovereignty and international law. States should refrain from taking unilateral action and imposing measures against other States in violation of the principles of international law. The reform of international institutions in the context of the United Nations should respect the principles of legality, democracy, transparency in decision-making and equality of States. The Security Council, in particular, should be reformed so as to ensure more democratic decision-making, and its members should promote objective approaches that would put a definitive end to conflicts rather than adverse approaches that would deepen them.

60. It was to be hoped that the discussions on the rule of law would serve to champion the cause of those chafing under the yoke of occupation, especially in Palestine, and to affirm the equality of all before the law.

61. **Ms. Lalić Smajević** (Serbia) said that her delegation appreciated the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/290), even though, in paragraph 32, it referred to the Serbian province of Kosovo as if it were a State, in contradiction to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Through their deliberations at the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and the adoption of the Declaration, Member States had recognized the need for universal adherence to the rule of law. Her Government affirmed its strong commitment to an international order based on international law, which was at the core of the principles and activities of the United Nations. The rule of law was a necessary condition for sustainable peace and economic, social and political development in any society and for the maintenance of peace and security at the international level.

62. Ensuring accountability and combating impunity were essential to the rule of law. In that connection, she wished to emphasize that the goals of her Government and those of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia were identical and achievable. Through its efforts and the results achieved, the Government of

Serbia had helped to strengthen international justice, normalize the situation and improve relations among the Balkans States. It had also made a significant contribution to strengthening confidence in the work of national and international institutions, and stood ready to share its experiences, particularly with respect to domestic war crimes trials, with other countries and international stakeholders.

63. Transitional justice was an essential component of efforts to strengthen the rule of law and ensure peace and security. Her Government maintained that its successful cooperation with the Tribunal gave it a moral right to insist on effective investigation of the allegations of organ-harvesting contained in the January 2011 report of the Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Those investigations should be conducted professionally, impartially and efficiently with a view to establishing the truth and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

64. The Serbian Government remained committed to the International Criminal Court. The Court had become a valuable institution for prosecuting perpetrators of the most serious international crimes, and the Rome Statute served as a prime example of the interplay between international and national rule of law efforts. Nevertheless, the fight for a strong and efficient system of international criminal justice had not been won. The next stage in the development of the system would be finding the most appropriate mechanisms to enable national judicial systems to take over the tasks imposed by the principle of complementarity. In that regard, she was pleased to report that in January 2011 her Government had signed an agreement undertaking to enforce any Court-imposed criminal sanctions.

65. Her delegation commended the Secretary-General for his leadership in advancing the issue of the rule of law and affirmed her Government's support for the activities of the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group.

66. **Mr. Kasymov** (Kyrgyzstan) said that his delegation welcomed the commitment to the rule of law reaffirmed by heads of delegations in the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law. Adherence to laws and agreements by citizens and Governments alike was essential to economic

growth and the well-being of the people. His Government had demonstrated its commitment to the rule of law at the international level by acceding to core international human rights treaties, International Labour Organization conventions and the Helsinki Final Act.

67. At the national level, it had undertaken comprehensive reforms to improve the court, law enforcement and penitentiary systems; ensure gender equality; strengthen the role of youth; and protect the rights of children and the poor. In so doing it was mindful of the important principles of the rule of law, such as equality before the law, the promotion of human rights, the independence of the judiciary and the right to a fair trial. His Government believed that ordinary citizens needed to understand their role in the implementation of policies and the problems those policies addressed. To that end, by law, new legislation that had a direct effect on entrepreneurial activity and the interests of private citizens and legal persons was subject to discussion in a variety of public forums.

68. His Government supported the work of the International Court of Justice, a key mechanism for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The International Criminal Court, along with fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry, had also contributed to strengthening the rule of law. His Government also valued the contribution of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law and supported the efforts of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit in coordinating the United Nations rule of law activities. The work of the International Law Commission in the progressive development and codification of international law and standards was also of the utmost importance to the rule of law. His Government contributed to the work of the Human Rights Council, which played an important role in upholding the rule of law through its special procedures mechanism, as well as the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly with respect to strengthening national systems for protecting human rights around the world.

69. The United Nations should take the lead in providing effective rule of law assistance to Member States and focus on areas identified as priorities by the States themselves. His delegation called on developed countries and international organizations to continue

providing technical assistance to developing countries in order to strengthen institutions that worked to further the rule of law.

70. **Mr. Delgado Sánchez** (Cuba) said that achieving true rule of law, which would make it possible to change the unjust international order, must begin with reform of the United Nations and its transformation into a model of transparency, democracy and participation by the entire international community in resolving pressing global problems. As part of that reform, it was essential to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, as the only organ with universal membership and with exclusive responsibility for the development and codification of international law. True rule of law also required democratizing the international economic, monetary and financial institutions. Thorough reform of the Security Council was also needed in order to make it an inclusive, transparent and democratic body that reflected the real interests of the international community. Unfortunately, paragraph 35 of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law did not adequately reflect what needed to be done in that regard.

71. His delegation also had reservations about paragraph 28. It was insulting to the international community to suggest that the Security Council had made a positive contribution to the rule of law. The Council and those of its permanent members that were also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) openly violated international law and the Council's own decisions, seeking to impose their political agenda and military domination on developing countries. The vast majority of countries had wanted the Declaration to contain a clear call to the Security Council and its members to act in accordance with international law, but the wording of paragraph 28, which reflected the narrow interests of a small minority, had been undemocratically imposed.

72. As stated in paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting, sovereign equality, good faith compliance with obligations, peaceful settlement of disputes, refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and non-selectivity must be the basic principles that governed the actions of States and efforts to promote the rule of law. During the negotiations for the High-level Meeting, some developed countries had attempted to use the issue to

shape the post-2015 development agenda, yet those same countries consistently failed to meet their financial obligations with respect to development and refused to approve an international legal framework that would save humanity from climate change, for which the developed economies were primarily responsible.

73. His Government condemned any attempt to supplant or replace national authorities or to foment internal conflicts in order to impose external agendas. As stated in paragraph 11 of the Declaration, there must be national ownership of all activities aimed at strengthening the rule of law at the national level. Such activities must respect the legal institutions of the States concerned and recognize the sovereign right of peoples to create legal and democratic institutions suited to their cultural and sociopolitical interests.

74. During the negotiations for the High-level Meeting, the Secretariat and some Member States had made a concerted effort to impose their view of the rule of law and to create a monitoring mechanism outside the Sixth Committee. His Government rejected any attempt to politicize the issue. Future debate on the topic should take place within the Sixth Committee, in which all States were represented, and be guided by the subtopics proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/290).

75. True rule of law required the unequivocal rejection of any unilateral action or attempt to impose extraterritorial laws or the jurisdiction of national or international courts. His Government condemned and demanded the immediate repeal of the extraterritorial laws under which the United States of America had imposed an economic, financial and trade embargo against Cuba for over 50 years, and urged the Government of that country to comply without delay with the provisions of paragraph 9 of the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting and the countless resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the matter.

76. **Mr. Manongi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Sixth Committee provided a useful platform for Member States to share their views on the rule of law, and the Committee should continue to discuss the topic with a view to arriving at a common understanding. The rule of law was essential to democracy and stability and to social and economic development. At the national level, the rule of law was at the heart of the social

contract between the State and its citizens. The principles of equality before the law, accountability and separation of powers were embodied in the Tanzanian Constitution. At the international level, the rule of law was the foundation for promoting international peace and security, good governance and respect for human rights. The United Nations played a pivotal role in promoting the rule of law and in enhancing and strengthening national rule of law capacity. In that regard, his delegation commended the work of the Rule of Law Unit.

77. His Government was committed to ensuring respect for the rule of law at all levels and to complying with its international obligations, including the numerous multilateral treaties to which it was a party. It attached great importance to States' responsibility to end impunity by prosecuting those responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law in conflict and post-conflict situations. In that regard it supported the work of the International Criminal Court and applauded the contribution of other international criminal tribunals to ending impunity, strengthening the rule of law and institutionalizing human rights.

78. The Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had reaffirmed the importance of political dialogue and cooperation among States, emphasizing that the rule of law applied equally to all States. His delegation wished to underscore the need for reform of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. If the rule of law was to be strengthened at the international level, the Organization's governing structures must serve all Member States equally.

79. **Mr. Htut** (Myanmar), welcoming the programme of action for strengthening the rule of law proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/67/749), said that it was encouraging to see that a large numbers of Member States had made voluntary pledges affirming their wish to strengthen rule of law mechanisms. United Nations rule of law assistance provided a helping hand to Member States seeking to reform their justice systems. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and hoped that the Rule of Law Unit would continue to play an active and effective role in coordinating and rationalizing rule of law activities. Regional frameworks such as the Association of South East Asian Nations could also play an important role in promoting the rule of law.

80. At the international level, the rule of law rested on the commonly agreed international principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which served as a fundamental basis of modern international law. Member States could not achieve peace, security or economic development unless they abided by the principles of the Charter. Numerous threats and tensions remained around the world, and it was essential that they should be addressed on the basis of the rule of law. Settling disputes peacefully in accordance with existing international laws and making use of mechanisms such as international courts and tribunals could yield fruitful and impartial results. A case in point was the recent resolution of a maritime boundary dispute between Myanmar and Bangladesh, which had been settled peacefully and even-handedly through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

81. His Government placed high priority on the rule of law and on peace and stability in the reform process under way at the national level. A parliamentary committee on the rule of law and stability had been established recently under the leadership of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, and reforms in the legal sector, including the enactment of new laws and the review of old ones, were being pursued with a view to strengthening the rule of law. New legislation allowed for trade union activities and guaranteed freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration. Media censorship had been abolished. The Government was cognizant of the need to bring national laws into conformity with international law and instruments, but lack of human capacity and legal expertise were hindering its ability to do so. Capacity-building and technical assistance in that area would be appreciated.

82. His delegation joined others in welcoming the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and affirmed its willingness to cooperate with the United Nations and other Member States in promoting the rule of law.

83. **Mr. Pavlichenko** (Ukraine) said that respect for the rule of law at the international level was the basis for international peace and stability, a key condition for prevention and settlement of conflicts and a guarantee of predictability and legitimacy in international relations. Respect for the rule of law at the international level began with strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations by all Member States and by the Organization's principal organs.

84. The United Nations was actively engaged in dealing with a wide range of global challenges related to the rule of law, including climate change, counter-terrorism, human rights protection, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. His delegation commended the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit in moving the Organization towards better coordinated and more effective rule of law assistance. In Ukraine, United Nations support through the United Nations Development Programme had enabled the Government to implement successful projects relating, inter alia, to the rule of law in public administration, legal empowerment of the poor, enhancement of transparency and integrity and support for the Office of the Ombudsman.

85. The adoption of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had been a positive step towards formulating a common comprehensive vision to guide further dialogue and cooperation with regard to the rule of law. In his delegation's view, priorities for strengthening the rule of law at the international level should include increasing the effectiveness of international judicial and quasi-judicial institutions, providing fresh impetus for global nuclear disarmament and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, a key element of which should be legally binding security assurances for States that renounced nuclear weapons.

86. Commending the voluntary pledges made by many Member States in conjunction with the High-level Meeting, he noted that his Government had affirmed its commitment to the international Open Government Partnership. Under a national action plan, it had also committed itself to ensuring effective methods of public administration, involvement of civil society in the process of defining and implementing Government policy, equal access to justice for all and an effective fight against corruption. Members of civil society had taken part in drafting the action plan.

87. Ukraine was moving steadily along the path of reform aimed at strengthening the rule of law at the national level. The principle of the rule of law was enshrined in its Constitution and in recent years, in addition to the aforementioned reforms, the Government had tackled the crucial challenge of reforming criminal procedure and the justice system. It had been supported in those efforts by a number of regional organizations, including the Council of

Europe, which had provided assistance for reforms needed in order to realize the Government's European integration aspirations.

88. His delegation looked forward to receiving a report from the Secretary-General with proposals on ways and means of developing further linkages between the rule of law and the three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. It would strongly support the organization of further comprehensive discussions on the issue at the level of the General Assembly.

89. **Mr. Tladi** (South Africa) said that the rule of law was alive and well in South Africa. The country's Constitution was rooted in the democratic values of human dignity, equality, freedom and the rule of law. Public institutions and officials were held accountable and human rights were protected. Like all democracies, the country faced challenges, but its constitutional and legislative framework, coupled with a strong judiciary, had enabled it to overcome those challenges.

90. His Government was committed to fighting impunity for serious crimes. Although, in accordance with the principle of complementarity, States had primary responsibility for ensuring accountability and justice, where domestic justice systems were unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute perpetrators of serious crimes the international community had to step in to prevent impunity. His delegation applauded the contributions of the International Criminal Court and the various ad hoc international criminal tribunals to the fight against impunity and the promotion of justice, accountability and the rule of law. In the 10 years since the Rome Statute had entered into force, the International Criminal Court had experienced challenges, resulting mainly from its difficult relationship with the Security Council, but there had also been significant achievements, notably the adoption of amendments to the Rome Statute defining and giving the Court jurisdiction over the crime of aggression.

91. It was important to promote the rule of law at the international as well as the national level. Otherwise, the United Nations ran the risk of being accused of double standards and hypocrisy. The rule of law at the international level was not just about the number of international instruments adopted, ratified or implemented; it was also about the normative content of international law and about its fairness, equity and

justness. In assessing the rule of law at the international level, it was perhaps appropriate to begin by asking whether the United Nations reflected principles of deliberative democracy and a culture of justification, held its organs accountable for adherence to its foundational values and insisted on the equality of all its members.

92. The Security Council, as both a product and a source of international law, provided an excellent starting point for considering those questions. Decisions emanating from an unrepresentative organ such as the Council would constantly be attacked for lack of legitimacy, regardless of their content. A fair, just and equitable international order implied a governance system that recognized the equal worth of all members of the international community. As long as Africa was underrepresented, the Security Council could hardly be reflective of the equal worth of all members. A concerted effort to achieve tangible Security Council reform was critical to the attainment of the rule of law at the international level.

93. It also had to be asked whether the Security Council's decisions were fair. The adoption of resolution 1989 (2011) introducing human rights and due process standards into the Taliban/Al Qaida sanctions regime was a noteworthy illustration of Council action to promote the rule of law, but more needed to be done to separate political considerations from the listing and delisting process. There was also a need to ensure that Council action did not result in the flouting of international law, including by promoting greater accountability for action taken in the name of the Security Council. In addition, the jurisdictional limits of the Council's mandates needed to be clarified.

94. His delegation had repeatedly stressed the importance of the International Court of Justice as a means of providing a check on one-sided interpretation, and it continued to encourage organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, when confronted with complex legal questions, to request an advisory opinion from the Court. Advisory opinions and decisions of international courts should be fully respected and implemented.

95. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that the numerous threats to global peace made it necessary to reaffirm mankind's faith in the just, equitable and fair application of international law, the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of

the International Court of Justice. A just order based on the rule of law required greater representation of developing countries in major global institutions such as the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and the Bretton Woods institutions in order to ensure the principle of equity. Multilateral institutions must assist developing countries in their efforts to build their capacity for efficient implementation of the rule of law. The United Nations should increase the efficiency of its assistance, expand it to broader areas of international law and focus on the specific needs of Member States. It should also ensure national ownership of capacity- and institution-building activities.

96. Bangladesh believed that the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference should govern relations between States; it also believed that the rule of law was a necessary condition for sustainable peace and development in any society. The Government was actively promoting the rule of law and justice in all spheres of life, in particular through administrative, judicial and electoral reforms. Bangladesh had a constitutional government elected through free, fair, inclusive and credible elections. The judiciary had been separated from the executive, and a number of independent commissions had been formed in the areas of combating corruption, monitoring elections and promoting human rights, the right to information and consumer's rights. A Citizens' Charter of Rights had been instituted to ensure the delivery of public services to every citizen, and the Government had enacted legislation to make affordable legal services available to vulnerable and marginalized groups. An informal court system at the grass-roots level facilitated access to justice in rural areas and thus contributed to the rule of law.

97. An important aspect of ensuring the rule of law in Bangladesh was the war crimes trial against individuals accused of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and ethnic cleansing, committed in 1971. The utmost care was being taken to ensure that the trial was carried out in compliance with international legal standards and norms.

98. Bangladesh's respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and peaceful settlement of disputes was reflected in its role as one of the top contributors of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. In addition, it was a party to most international conventions on disarmament, nuclear

non-proliferation, human rights, humanitarian law and transnational crime and to all the international counter-terrorism treaties. The amendment of numerous domestic laws to bring them into harmony with those treaties attested to the Government's commitment to combat terrorism and promote the rule of law.

99. Bangladesh was a responsible, peace-loving nation and its Government was a strong proponent of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and secularism. With support from its international development partners, particularly the United Nations, and the involvement of all stakeholders in its society it would continue striving to strengthen the rule of law and create a better world for future generations.

100. **Mr. Och** (Mongolia) said that the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law had clearly indicated the way forward in strengthening the rule of law. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign equality of States, fulfilment of international obligations in good faith, peaceful settlement of disputes and refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, constituted the essence of international relations based on the supremacy of the law, equality before the law and accountability under the law. The United Nations was the universal centre for standard-setting in international law. His delegation applauded the programme of action put forward by the Secretary-General in his report (A/66/749) and would work tirelessly to carry it out.

101. At the same time, good governance and the rule of law were essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger and had been woven into the Millennium Development Goals. In 2005 Mongolia had adopted its own MDG-9, "Strengthening human rights, fostering democratic governance and zero tolerance to corruption".

102. As a member of the international community, Mongolia was a party to over 240 multilateral conventions, including core international human rights treaties and conventions, most recently the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Since the adoption of its 1992 Constitution, which contained new provisions on the application of international treaties, the Government had been engaged in extensive legal reforms to bring

national laws in line with international standards. New laws had been enacted related to reforming the national judiciary, combating corruption, ensuring good governance, reforming public service and creating favourable conditions for business enterprises.

103. The exercise had also provided a sound legal basis for the protection and promotion of human rights. Recognizing that knowledgeable participation by the citizenry was fundamental for a durable democracy, the Government had made education in democracy a priority and offered informal training on a regular basis to help citizens improve their legal knowledge, thereby empowering them to enjoy fully their rights and freedoms and participate in public and economic life. It had also set itself the goals of fostering interaction with civil society, combating corruption, strengthening regional cooperation and sharing experience with countries in transition.

104. Promotion of the rule of law required consideration of the special needs of countries in disadvantaged positions. His Government was actively promoting the special interests of landlocked developing countries in all relevant international forums and negotiations. In 2010, a multilateral agreement had been signed establishing an international think tank for such countries. He appealed to all landlocked developing countries that had not yet done so to accede to the Agreement, which would take effect when it had been ratified by 10 countries.

105. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that the Sixth Committee's debate on the rule of law was an important step in giving substance to the commitments made during both the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law and the 2005 World Summit to an international order based on the rule of law. The rule of law and development were interrelated and mutually reinforcing, as were the rule of law, human rights and democracy. Corruption had a very negative impact on people's lives and on development goals, as it eroded public confidence, accountability, legitimacy and transparency; his delegation therefore stressed the importance of the rule of law as an essential element in addressing and preventing corruption.

106. Mozambique's previous Constitution, adopted in 1990, had introduced a democratic legal framework with separation of powers and paved the way for multiparty elections. The current Constitution, adopted in 2004, reaffirmed, developed and deepened the fundamental guiding principles of democratic rule of

law, freedom of expression, free political party affiliation and respect for citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms. It also provided for an ombudsman to safeguard individuals against abuse of power. Subsequent legal and judicial reforms, including reform of the police force, had been introduced with a view to enhancing coordination among the different institutions involved in the administration of justice. The constitutional and judicial reforms had been preceded by public consultations, which had enabled citizens, politicians, non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders to take part in the search for solutions.

107. At the international level the rule of law and full respect for the principles of the Charter and international law must be the foundation for cooperation and peaceful coexistence among States. Activities of the United Nations system should promote universal adherence to those principles. The main focus of the United Nations rule of law activities should be promoting, disseminating and teaching international law, encouraging wider participation by all States in the codification and progressive development of international law and building national capacity to implement international legal instruments. The African Peer Review Mechanism provided a means for African countries to strengthen their democratic rule and governance structures by sharing and disseminating best practices in governance, transparency and accountability.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.