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The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (Agenda Item 84)

Sixth Committee: Statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)

4 October 2017

Statement by Dr Carrie McDougall, Legal Adviser

(Check against delivery)

Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, as well as Australia.

CANZ thanks the Secretary-General for his report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities. We welcome the report's emphasis on effectiveness, coherence and sustainability. We applaud the ongoing efforts of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, and the Rule of Law Unit.

The rule of law is central to the maintenance of international peace and security, the prevention of conflict, to justice and accountability, and to the promotion of human rights. The rule of law must underpin our collective responses to global issues. Complex global challenges, from terrorism to climate change, intractable conflicts, and the ensuing humanitarian crises, demand global responses consistent with the rule of law, with international norms and agreements.

The international rules-based order depends on our ability to establish, shape and ensure compliance with international law. This requires effective dissemination of international law, including through capacity building, information sharing, and ensuring that the development of customary international law is clear and coherent.

In this context, we underscore the importance of publishing States' views on the application of international law and of State practice in continuing to build a coherent

body of customary international law, and the importance of ensuring that commentaries and Court decisions reflect the views of States.

The United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law is another asset for the dissemination of international law. We appreciate Ghana's leadership role in engagement on this initiative.

Mr Chair,

In discussing the ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law, we wish to highlight efforts in the fields of international humanitarian law and accountability.

The importance of respecting international humanitarian law in an era of protracted armed conflicts cannot be over-stated. Our countries each work to strengthen adherence to international humanitarian law through training, funding, and advocacy, including through work with the International Committee of the Red Cross in its ongoing efforts to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law, and through the provision of technical and financial assistance to Member States. CANZ countries see civil society and academia as vital partners in this work.

Accountability is a crucial element of the rule of law. All Member States should be able to participate in the development and reinforcement of international legal norms and institutions, including those that promote accountability such as the International Criminal Court. Member States' assistance to initiatives such as the Court's Trust Fund for the Participation of Least Developed Countries helps ensure meaningful access for all.

The Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, particularly Goal 16, explicitly recognises the importance of the rule of law and its role in underpinning peace, development and human rights. As countries that fully support the 2030 Agenda, we underline the importance of aligning this Committee's consideration of the rule of law with efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda and SDG16 in particular, and hope that this can be reflected in the rule of law resolution that we will adopt this year.

Mr Chair,

CANZ acknowledges the work of the UN in disseminating international law to strengthen the rule of law. Member States also have an important contribution to make, and this Committee provides a valuable forum to share best practices. CANZ members will continue to do what we can to ensure that our actions are consistently aimed at strengthening the rule of law.