



STATEMENT

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ON

THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL
AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS
(Sixth Committee)

AT THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER,
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation commends you for the efficient manner you have been conducting the affairs of this meeting and we are grateful to the Secretary-General for the Report A/72/268 of 1 August 2017 tabled for our consideration titled "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities."

2. It is noteworthy, from the report, that Member States and the international community at large have continuously recognized that the rule of law is critical in efforts to build and sustain peace, as an enabling factor in the prevention of conflict, in the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for the overall protection and promotion of human rights. Significantly, we noted that the report contains updates and analysis on the assistance by the United Nations in relation to the rule of law at the national and international levels in the last one year, including proposals to further strengthen the work of the UN among Member States in promoting the Rule of Law. We agree with the report that the engagement of Member States is crucial in addressing the challenges before the UN in promoting rule of law. We call on all Member States to cooperate with the UN in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

3. My delegation will like to make brief comments on "Ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law," which by Resolution A/RES/71/148 adopted on 13 December 2016, is the

sub-topic for our debate on this agenda item this year. In this regard, Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement earlier delivered by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

4. My delegation commends the UN Secretary-General for placing a high priority on the subject of rule of law and making it a matter of system-wide coordination. We also like to re-echo some of the words of the Deputy Secretary-General on this agenda item. We share her views that the essence of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and its specific targets to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all was “not only a self-evident objective, it was also catalytic to all the Goals.” Undoubtedly, the rule of law must also focus on addressing issues such as climate change, migration, and violence against women and girls. Our deliberations on this agenda item is equally relevant in the area of peace operations, especially by examining how to measure progress on the UN’s rule of law support in the context of peace operations.

5. Nigeria commends the UN Office of Legal Affairs and its specialized divisions that are responsible for the dissemination of international law to strengthen the rule of law. In particular, we appreciate the work of this Office in the area of Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. This office has truly contributed towards a better knowledge of international law to strengthen international peace and security and promote cooperation among States. The dissemination of international law has contributed

considerably to the strengthening of international peace and security and in promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The efforts and several activities of this office have been very helpful in strengthening the rule of law across the World. For instance, the use of the electronic treaty database to disseminate information on treaty law and practice as well as the organization of capacity-building seminars at different levels are veritable initiatives in promoting the rule of law across the World. Similarly, we commend the efforts of this office in the dissemination of international commercial law through coordinating the work of organizations to promote cooperation and coherence in the modernization and harmonization of international commercial law.

7. The dissemination of international commercial law has engendered wider participation in existing international conventions through technical assistance activities. We also noted the efforts of this office in collecting and disseminating information on national legislation and modern legal developments through the website of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). This programme has also assisted justice systems around the world through the dissemination of knowledge of international law, including human rights law. All these are crucial for strengthening rule-based order in any society.

8. Certainly, the publication of bulletins on relevant legal materials by this office has further strengthened and promoted the understanding of the

principles of the rule of law. It is encouraging that the United Nations organized its second training course on promoting marine scientific research with the participation of government officials and scientists from the Caribbean region.

9. However, my delegation observed the need for the UN bodies whose mandates relate to Law of the Sea to work more closely with the UN Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. In particular, we call on the facilitators of the Programme to assist bodies such as the International Seabed Authority (ISA), in sensitization and reaching out to different sectors of the societies across the world that are yet to fully understand and appreciate the importance of the work of the ISA. This can also be achieved by integrating issues concerning the ISA richly in the content of the Programme.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The adherence to and respect for the principle of rule of law must reinforce our collective responses to global issues. Indeed, all responses to global challenges, including climate change, environmental challenges as well as conflict across the world, must be based on the rule of law. Issues pertaining to good governance, democratic practice, accountability, fight against impunity, protection of civilians in armed conflict, women and children, terrorism and transnational crimes, and a host of other subjects have intrinsic to them respect for and observance of the rule of law. For

these and other germane reasons, the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels should be a shared responsibility by all.

Mr. Chairman,

11. For us in Nigeria, the rule of law is a fundamental article in our national jurisprudence and it is a pivotal principle of governance. We practice it. We are deeply committed to it. We promote it relentlessly and we have been advocating for it at the national, regional and international levels. Nigeria remains committed to a process of governance that is firmly anchored on democratic principles. We consider the rule of law as a fundamental prerequisite for the establishment of justice and as a basis for peaceful coexistence and the prevention of armed conflict. The National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria was established to create an enabling environment for the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights in furtherance of the promotion of and adherence to the principles of rule of law in the country.

12. In addition, the works of the various anti-corruption agencies are meant to ensure that 'due process' is always observed and to grant access to justice for all. Only few days ago, the Chief Justice of the Federation directed heads of court to immediately set up what could pass for separate courts to try people accused of financial crimes. Indeed, our system is firmly rooted in the understanding of the importance of respect for rule of law for peace, progress and justice in the society.

Mr. Chairman,

13. My delegation wishes to reaffirm its support to the Declaration adopted at the General Assembly's 2012 high-level meeting on the rule of law. In this connection, we also like to underline the need for national ownership in every effort aimed at strengthening national capacities of Member States in the promotion of the rule of law as well as in providing technical assistance and capacity-building towards that end. We call on UN Member States to renew their commitment to respect and defend the UN Charter as a means of promoting international law and strengthening the rule of law.

14. We should collectively work to attain a world where the rule of law, accountability and social justice are the foundation for sustainable development and durable peace. This must be a priority for the international community, for world leaders and for all peoples.

15. I thank you for your attention.