



Statement

of

Lebanon

**at the
Sixth Committee**

Item 85: “The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction”

New York, October 12, 2017

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*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
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Mr. Chair,

In times where we are being confronted to atrocities and other egregious violations of international law, it is imperative to pursue our common goals of achieving accountability, upholding international justice and preventing impunity.

This is where the principle of universal jurisdiction finds its essence, and its *bona fide* application is key to attaining those goals.

Yet, Mr. Chair, many loopholes still exist and improvements need to be made.

Given that the application of this principle lies on the nature of the crimes committed, it is essential to agree on a common list and definitions of these most serious crimes under international law for which this principle should apply. Such a harmonization would help in avoiding ambiguities and uncertainties.

Here, it is important to warn against the risk of selectivity and abuse in the application of this principle that could reduce it to a political instrument rather than a legal endeavor.

Universal jurisdiction should also come hand in hand with the principle of complementarity. It is indeed the States' main prerogative to exercise jurisdiction based on the territoriality or nationality principle; and only when they are unable or unwilling to prosecute the alleged perpetrators of those crimes, should universal jurisdiction be subsidiarily applied.

In concluding Mr. Chair,

We reaffirm our support to the Working Group on the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction. We thank the Secretary General for his report on this topic, contained in document A/72/112