

UNGA 74: Sixth Committee

CANZ Statement – Rule of Law

Mr. Chairman

I have the honour of speaking to you today on behalf of Canada, Australia and my own country, New Zealand.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. These treaties and additional protocols were signed by States in the aftermath of the horrors of the Second World War. They and other key instruments of the rules-based international order, including the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, laid the foundation for a relatively stable and prosperous post-war period. The rule of law is embedded in the Charter and is an essential ingredient for just and effective governance at the domestic and international level.

The Geneva Conventions also illustrate our capacity to achieve consensus and agree on fundamental, universal obligations that are legally binding. They reflect the lessons of a global tragedy and deal with the enormous humanitarian challenges posed by warfare.

It is our generation's task to deal with the global challenges of our time. CANZ countries thank the Secretary General for clearly identifying global trends that concern the rule of law in his report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities. The challenges we face now are of an enormous scope, scale and complexity.

Many of today's challenges are not constrained by national borders. Some stem from new and rapidly developing technologies and inhabit unseen virtual spaces. Non-traditional actors are in play. The degree of interconnectedness between people, communities, organisations, and States is greater than ever before. Unprecedented events are occurring with increasing frequency and are transmitted across the globe instantly. These challenges bring uncertainty.

But the international rules-based system, with the rule of law at its heart, provides an anchor. New and emerging threats can be addressed and constrained through the application of existing international law. Unlawful cyber activity; terrorism and violent extremism online; security challenges in space: while these and other issues may raise new and difficult questions for legal experts and policy makers, they can and should be addressed through the prism of existing international law, with the Charter at its core.

CANZ countries urge States to cleave to the rule of law at both national and international levels to help ensure stability, freedom and prosperity for all. We encourage all States to both initiate and welcome dialogue about the rule of law and to focus on what adherence to the rule of law means in practice. This includes sharing ideas and best practice at every opportunity.

The United Nations system is instrumental in translating the rule of law into practical measures to materially improve lives. The Secretary General's report canvases the enormous scope of work undertaken. The United Nations has contributed to ensuring the effective, inclusive and functioning justice institutions, ensuring accountability for violations of

human rights, curbing corruption and making justice accessible. CANZ countries encourage all states to engage in this important work. We acknowledge the work of the Rule of Law Unit. We also acknowledge the Law Coordination and Resources Group. The Group's remit includes taking into account the emergence of new realities and actors in the field of the rule of law.

In engaging in this work, and with one another, we should be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter. We should be heartened by our proven ability to achieve consensus and agree to be legally bound by our commitments and we should reflect on the benefits that the international rules-based order has and will continue to deliver.

Thank you.