

STATEMENT

BY

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NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

"THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS"

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**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Mr. Chairman,**

My Delegation commends you for the efficient manner you have been steering the affairs of this Meeting. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his Report, which outlines United Nations Rule of Law developments and activities at the national and international levels in the last one year.

2. Nigeria's delegation wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the Representatives of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the African Group and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), respectively. All aspects of human development are linked to or related to the rule of law. It is, therefore, imperative that focus on the rule of law is given priority by the United Nations.

3. The Declaration of the High-Level Summit on the Rule of Law at the National and International levels adopted at the 67th Session of the General Assembly provides us the normative framework to address this

all-important subject. Issues relating to governance, accountability, peacekeeping, protection of civilians particularly women and children in armed conflict, terrorism and transnational crimes, are all connected to respect for and observance of the rule of law.

4. Adherence to the rule of law is important, especially at the international level, to regulate the behaviour of States and hold them accountable for higher ideals and standards for the attainment of peace and development, as embodied in the UN Charter. There is always a link between the rule of law and other issues on the agenda of the UN, including the post-2015 Development Agenda and thematic issues such as women, peace and security. The General Assembly, the Security Council and the wider United Nations system have been rightly seized with this cardinal subject over the years.

**Mr. Chairman,**

5. All the instruments, norms and principles that govern the rule of law, namely: the provisions of the UN Charter, UN conventions and treaties, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), international human rights and humanitarian law, customary international law, national legislation and acts of States have proved beneficial to peaceful co-existence. Equally pertinent to the rule of law and peaceful co-existence are time-honoured principles, such as respect for sovereignty, integrity and independence of states, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign colonial occupation, as well as the right to development.

6. The respect for and observance of the rule of law are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. There are also corresponding regional and sub-regional instruments in Africa embedded in the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act and ECOWAS

protocols. The rule of law is also a fundamental principle in our National jurisprudence.

7. Nigeria considers the rule of law a prerequisite for the establishment of justice and as a basis for peaceful co-existence and the prevention of armed conflict. Therefore, we envision the promotion of the rule of law at all levels as a vital means of strengthening cooperation, establishing enduring peace and security within and amongst states.

8. We have consistently demonstrated our respect for the rule of law, both at the national and international levels. As a country governed by a written constitution (1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended), Nigeria remains committed to a process of governance that is firmly anchored on democratic principles. The Constitution provides the basis for a 'Rule of Law' approach to governance at the national level. We view the rule of law as a prerequisite for the

promotion and protection of democracy, good governance, and sustainable development.

9. Furthermore, Nigeria's policies on gender issues is another testimony to its adherence to the rule of law at the national level. This policy particularly focuses on women empowerment as well as elimination of discriminatory practices that are harmful to women. For instance, tremendous progress has been made towards parity in primary school education between boys and girls in Nigeria. The constitution of Nigeria prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including gender.

**Mr. Chairman,**

10. Nigeria has demonstrated strong political will to fulfill its international obligations through the domestication of relevant international instruments and recommended practices such as: the enactment of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP); Administration of Criminal Justice Act,

2015 (ACJA); Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015; HIV/AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act 2014; Anti-Torture Act 2017; Compulsory Treatment and Care for Victims of Gunshot Act, 2017; National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (Establishment) Act, 2017; Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Act, 2017; National Disability Act, 2019.

11. Our Judicial system plays a pivotal role in the promotion and protection of the rights of the people through effective oversight of both the executive and the legislative arms of government. The role of the judiciary as the final arbiter among the three branches of government and in the electoral process has further strengthened enabling environment for peace and stability to thrive in Nigeria.

12. The Rule of Law drives the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The work of the various anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the

Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the Nigeria Police Force, (NPF) and the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal, are meant to ensure that 'due process' is always observed.

13. Known for efforts to fight corruption and eliminate illicit financial flows, my delegation welcomes the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Corruption, scheduled to hold from 2 – 4 June, 2021 in New York. This important gathering will provide the opportunity for member states to explore avenues on better and innovative ways to fight corruption.

14. At the international level, Nigeria has consistently pursued a foreign policy anchored on the promotion and achievement of global security, as well as the protection of the dignity of all persons. Nigeria recognizes the important role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International

Criminal Court (ICC) and other international tribunals in the peaceful resolution of international disputes. Our support for peacekeeping since our independence in 1960 is an expression of our commitment to international peace, security and the rule of law.

**Mr. Chairman,**

15. Nigeria appreciates the sustained initiative of the United Nations to promote the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies all over the world. We commend the Secretary-General for his unwavering advocacy and support for the rule of law. Addressing the global rule of law deficit should be considered an imperative for all; without strengthening the rule of law at the national level, there will be no platform upon which the rule of law would stand at the international level. Therefore, member states should collectively work to attain a world where the rule of law, accountability and social justice are the

foundation for sustainable development and lasting peace. This must be made a priority for the international community, for world leaders and for all peoples.

I thank you, for your attention.