

**Statement on behalf of Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, France,
Germany, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Portugal,
Sierra Leone, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States;
members of the Justice Action Coalition**

**78th Session
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6th Committee

**Agenda item 83:
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair,

Madam Deputy Secretary General, Your Excellencies,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States; and my own country the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We represent the [Justice Action Coalition](#): a multistakeholder coalition of countries and partner organizations championing equal access to justice for all as part of SDG16.

At this annual committee conversation about the rule of law, we wish to highlight three points:

1. The Secretary-General's new Vision for the Rule of Law and Guidance Note on Transitional Justice. These guiding documents underline that justice systems must put people at the center, addressing their needs and delivering fair outcomes for them;
2. The need to invest in innovation and leverage technology to effectively ensure accessibility, inclusivity, responsiveness and accountability to advance equal access to justice for all.
3. The importance of cross-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships to achieve progress and close the justice gap.

Mr/Mme Chair,

To our first point: We take note with appreciation of the Secretary General's new Vision for the Rule of Law, which commits the Organisation to reinforce the centrality of the rule of law in all its activities. This is fundamental to lasting peace, the fulfilment of human rights and sustainable development.

We are particularly pleased to see the close alignment of the Secretary-Generals new Vision with the principles of people-centered justice. These have been articulated for instance in the [The Hague Declaration on Equal Access to Justice by 2030](#) that has been endorsed by over 60 countries. For example, the new UN Vision states that the *"rule of law is people-centred"* and this implies *"that laws and justice institutions are accessible to every person, user-friendly, non-discriminatory, fair, and focused on solutions and remedies that address people's needs and deliver better outcomes"*.

Data from the [Justice for All](#) report shows that 5.1 billion people lack meaningful access to justice. This is broadly categorized in three dimensions: people living in extreme conditions of injustice, people who cannot resolve their justice problems and people who are excluded from the opportunities that the law provides them. We cannot close this global justice gap with a business-as-usual approach. To ensure justice for *all*, including those most left behind, we must transform the justice systems, policies and services.

Furthermore, we commend the new Vision for its emphasis on the role of the rule of law in advancing gender equality, as well as recognising all different stakeholders within and beyond the UN whose enhanced engagement is essential in realising this vision. This multistakeholder approach is also an important feature of the new Guidance Note on Transitional Justice, that includes actionable recommendations for more innovative and transformative context-specific solutions.

Secondly, our Coalition is committed to leveraging data, evidence, technology and innovation to close the justice gap. In response to the report presented today, we urge the UN and member states to similarly commit to this approach and share good practices to achieve the target under SDG 16.3 of ensuring equal access to justice for all by 2030.

In his new Vision for the Rule of Law, the Secretary General rightly recognizes that technology “has the potential to transform justice systems by increasing accessibility and accountability”. We agree that when harnessed effectively and in line with human rights, and considering the challenges it may pose for people in vulnerable situations, technology can be used to serve the interest of people and promote access to justice. It can be a gamechanger in ensuring scalable, transparent, responsive, innovative and datadriven transformation of justice systems as long as principles of openness, inclusiveness and accountability are built into the design.

Mr/Mme Chair,

Third, no one can do this alone, whether at the domestic, regional or global level. We need cross-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships to close the justice gap.

Justice does not always begin, nor does it end in a courthouse, it has to be a means to empower people to prevent and to resolve their justice problems. At national and subnational levels, justice actors must partner with other sectors including health, education, employment, migration, land and environment to provide alternative means to achieve justice. In addition, formal institutions must also engage with informal and customary justice actors including civil society organizations, paralegals and others to deliver justice to people in their communities. Inspiring examples of such services include expanded access to legal assistance and counsel, paralegals, community-mediation services, holistic psychosocial and legal (one-stop) service centres and guided legal information technology platforms.

At the regional and global levels, we must learn from and support each other in adapting innovative and cost-effective solutions to our own contexts and within the framework of each domestic legislation. Our Coalition is striving towards this goal and we would be very happy to engage with others in taking forward the ambitious target set by SDG 16.3: not only of ensuring access to justice, but *equal* access to justice and for *all* people.

In closing, Mr./Mme. Chair,

We strongly believe that we cannot address poverty, inequalities, the impact of climate change and root causes of conflict and violence without people-centered justice. We therefore call on all states to redouble their efforts and work closely with each other, non-state actors and the United Nations, to implement the vision for rule of law and make equal access to justice for all a reality.

Thank you.