

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me express at the outset my appreciation for holding this High Level Meeting on the Rule of Law, both at the national and international level. In our view the Rule of Law is indeed primordial to the wellbeing and well functioning of our societies.

Mr. President,

The history of humankind is, in fact, the history of the evolution of the Law and that of the relation of the societies with the Law. Every time we have lost the vision to respect the Law, both at national or international level, we have faced turmoil, wars and suffering. Every time we have committed to respect the Law and to universalise its core principles, we have found peace, agreement and prosperity.

Truth said, the relation of humankind with the Law is not easy, since our societies, peoples and cultures have different takes in approaching the Law. However, we all agree on the fact, that as humans who share the same Earth, we are more and more required to leave aside our individual interests for the sake of a common good. Albania is glad to have invested wholeheartedly in this role at the Organization of United Nations, which has contributed greatly

to what we commonly refer to as the International Law and to which we are all willingly bound to abide by.

As substantial and sometimes controversial discussions on the Rule of Law extend, I would like to lay emphasis on two particular moments: on the universal character of the jurisdiction of the International Courts and Tribunals, extended to also their rulings and opinions; and on the fact that although Law is not above people, it is there by the people, for the people, to serve well their existence and wellbeing.

These principles have proven fundamental to the difficult history that my nation has known throughout the centuries. Albanian people have had a complicated relation with the Rule of Law. The deformed application of the Rule of Law and the ability with which Law was applied to serve ruling class concepts of justice, created in Albania one of the most evil dictatorship in Europe after the Second World War. In fact, Albanian people's struggle for democracy in the '90s was closely related to their strong disagreement with the principles of governance of a State not accountable to its promulgated Law. Thousands of citizens were subject to summary extrajudicial, to political adjudications and multiple arbitrariness by the Courts, inconsistent with Human Rights norms.

No surprise therefore that for Albania, strengthening the Rule of Law at the national level has become a guiding principle for a new and strengthening democracy, the cornerstone to a harmonious and consolidated society, a solid open market economy, regional stability and lasting peace and security. It is

precisely the principle of the Rule of Law to which we all align that charts our national and international Law, our Conventions and our Regulations and also the very functioning of this august body.

Albania is today at the forefront of the support and protection of the Human Rights and we sympathise with the struggle of all peoples for Freedom all over the world, from Syria to Myanmar. Every regime that violates the Law of Freedom is to be held accountable at the national or at the international level.

Rule of Law at the national and the international level are closely interlinked, they reflect one other and above all, they deserve to enjoy an equal and unanimous respect. And we have materialised that in the most concrete way: the Albanian constitution provides that in case of conflict between national and international law, the latter prevails. This is the best guarantee that while fully respecting state sovereignty, Albania remains a true committed partner to the promotion of justice, accountability, firmly against impunity for any committed crimes. In this regard, Albania supports wholeheartedly the principle of universal jurisdiction, as we believe it to be an important mechanism to end impunity and to promote accountability.

Albania has and always will support the mandates of International Courts and Tribunals for their irreplaceable role in combating impunity and in establishing standards for global justice in the interest of peace and security.

It is deplorable that sometimes the Rulings and Opinions of International Courts and Tribunals are disregarded even from states that initiate their cases.

Such was the case with the Advisory Opinion of ICJ on the Independence of the Republic of Kosovo.

In my region, the Balkans, people of different ethnicities, Albanians, Bosnians and Croats have experienced some of the worse wars waged in the name of ill nationalism. Chauvinistic minds sanctioned in Law the ideology of their superiority towards other peoples, legitimating their subsequent genocide and massacre.

The last two decades have shown that it is no easy task to turn this page of the Balkan history book. The perpetrators of tragedies and genocides certainly cannot do it one-sidedly. What is needed is the consent of all peoples, but first and foremost that of the victims who first demand justice. Disturbingly, in the Balkans, instead of genuine apologies for the inflicted massacres and genocide, we are served with negationist statements, and that, at the highest levels.

It is thus only natural that we uphold the respect for the Rule of Law both at the national and the international level; its application is indeed directly reflected in our just and peaceful and good relations among us as neighbours, in region and beyond.

In this regard, Albania has taken crucial steps beyond the national level for the establishment of a constructive dialogue and cooperation with all countries in the region and, unconditionally supports all EU initiatives and those of the wider International Community in strengthening the Rule of Law in our region. We praise in particular the exemplary work of EULEX in the Republic

of Kosovo, as an invaluable addition to peace and security in the region after Kosovo's Independence. We believe that, in our region, our objective to establish, respect and abide by the Rule of Law is a must that should be fully embraced by all the countries that aim seriously and sincerely toward full regional cooperation and harmony and the common goal of European integration.

Mr. President,

I would like to end my remarks by reiterating Albania's commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to International Law and to International Order based on the Rule of Law, as vital values for the promotion of our peaceful coexistence as peoples, and our harmonious relation and cooperation as States.

I thank you for your kind attention.

