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## **S T A T E M E N T**

**By H.E. Mr. Rosen Plevneliev  
President of the Republic of Bulgaria**

***at the High-level Meeting of the 67th Session of the General Assembly  
on the Rule of Law  
at the National and International Levels***

*New York, 24 September 2012*

Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bulgaria subscribes to the statement made by President Jose Barroso on behalf of the European Union, as well as to the joint pledges undertaken by the EU member states on the occasion of this high-level forum.

Along with other EU members, my country is a strong proponent of the rule of law as the foundation of a predictable and just international system and as the best strategy for peaceful settlement of disputes and prevention of conflicts. It is the duty of the United Nations and its member states to uphold the rule of law in all their activities and to continue to improve their performance at national and international level. In this regard we welcome the report and the programme of action presented by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Over the past two decades Bulgaria has adopted the highest international standards in its national legal system. This year, for example, my country has acceded to several international legal instruments, such as the 1954 UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 UN Convention on the reduction of Statelessness, as well as to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We are committed to speed up the work on the process of ratification of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance from 2006. We also support the universal abolition of the death penalty.

We believe it is important to enhance the role of the International Court of Justice in the peaceful settlement of disputes. Being one of the original signatories of the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court**, we join in the efforts to strengthen the international system of delivering criminal justice. The United Nations must be at the forefront of the fight against impunity and the crimes against humanity. Based on recent testimonies of brutal acts of violence and massacres committed by the regime in Damascus against its own people, Bulgaria has supported the proposal for referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Delivering justice is vital for addressing the scourge of terrorism - one of the ugliest crimes against humanity. The recent attack on our soil has made us stronger and more determined. Bulgaria has adhered to 15 international Conventions and Protocols related to the fight against international terrorism and looks forward to the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism.

Mr. President,

**Human rights, democracy and the rule of law** are core values of the United Nations. The leading international human rights bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, should remain central in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, monitoring implementation of commitments and fostering international cooperation in this area. As a clear demonstration of our commitment to the cause of human rights, **Bulgaria has presented for the first time its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2019-2021.** Although we have an extensive record of achievements in this regard, we view our prospective membership as a challenge and an opportunity to further develop Bulgaria's domestic policies applying the highest possible standards.

**At national level** we have made significant progress in streamlining our judicial and law enforcement system making it more efficient, transparent and accountable to the citizens. The reforms of the judiciary refer both to new and improved legislation, as well as to its implementation. We cooperate with relevant European and international monitoring bodies focused on justice and judicial reform.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria appreciates the outcome of this meeting achieved through complex negotiations. Though the final text does not reflect fully our views on the fundamental link between legality, accountability, democratic governance and human rights, we hope that it provides a good starting point for future dialogue and cooperation on how best the rule of law should be applied at national and international level.

Thank you for your attention.