



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Audronius Ažubalis,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
at the High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels.**

67th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 24 September 2012

Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the European Union. I will touch upon two points of particular importance from our national perspective and to which we pay particular attention in Lithuania's bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the term 2014-15.

Firstly, Lithuania has relevant experience in the field of Rule of Law and is willing to share it with others. Since restoring independence more than twenty years ago, Lithuania had to overcome serious challenges while building a modern democratic state based on the rule of law principles. In this effort we were not left alone, but could count on the support of the international community. Today Lithuania, like other states with modern experience in comprehensive reform making, is ready to assist other countries in their efforts to reform legal and administration systems in order to enhance the rule of law. Here I would like to mention that we already include the rule of law element in our development cooperation activities.

Secondly, Lithuania continues to pursue the highest standards in the field of the rule of law. In the area of our international relations I would like to state, that compliance with voluntarily accepted international obligations, respect for universally recognized principles and norms of international law is the legal tradition and constitutional principle of Lithuania. Therefore, we attach great importance to the legitimacy of our own actions and expect the same from the others. We also believe that these elements, in combination with settlement of disputes by peaceful means referred to in Chapter VI of the U.N. Charter, are central in maintaining international peace and security.

In order to reinforce its international commitments, as well as international legal accountability, and to contribute to strengthening of international judicial mechanisms, Lithuania has decided to recognize the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 36 of the Court's Statute.

The respective declaration, together with instruments of accession to the Optional Protocols to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes, will be deposited during this year's United Nations Treaty Event.

This will bring a major addition to the long list of specific treaties, in respect to which Lithuania had already recognized the Court's jurisdiction. They also indicate increased reliance on the international judicial system. Based on this national decision I want to take this opportunity to join those who call for wider international efforts to encourage recognition of ICJ jurisdiction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Lithuania on the occasion of this High-level meeting expresses its deep concern about recent attacks on the US and German diplomatic and consular offices in some countries. We strongly condemn the outrageous attack on US diplomatic facility in Benghazi, which took the lives of four people, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. It should be definitely stressed that such attacks are unacceptable also from the perspective of the Rule of Law.

I thank you.