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**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Speech by
H.E. Mr. Demetris Christofias
President
of the Republic of Cyprus**

**at the
High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law
at the National and International Levels**

**United Nations
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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. Secretary General, Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the High Level Meeting of the 67th Session of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels.

Today's meeting is held against the background of the recent disconcerting developments in the world and the massive abuses of human rights. It is a great opportunity for states and NGOs, from all over the world, who gathered here to voice their concerns, being acutely aware that through close, decisive and concerted cooperation and action, we can successfully tackle the challenges that lie ahead of us.

Lack of respect for the rule of law principle leads to bad governance, civil unrest, political instability, and if not addressed early enough, to failed states with devastating consequences that affect us all. These states ultimately become a regional stability -and global security-threat. It is crucial, therefore, that we all focus our efforts towards the universal promotion of the rule of law and for the strict monitoring of its application.

The successful promotion and universal application of the rule of law is an enormous challenge for both the United Nations and its member states. It requires close cooperation between the United Nations and its member states for the constant exchange of relevant data and other useful information, in order to allow for close monitoring of areas of crisis and early coordination for the purpose of conflict-prevention.

In addition, it must be stressed that the involvement of regional actors, in a responsible and meaningful way, in the deliberations of the United Nations and its principal judicial organ is crucial in enabling the regional promotion and widest possible acceptance of the work of the United Nations.

The Republic of Cyprus, having fully subscribed to the pledges made by the EU and its Member States, commits itself to reinforcing the rule of law through national policy and to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, in order to strengthen the Organization's main pillars of work; peace and security, human rights and development.

At the national level, Cyprus retains constitutionally a separation of powers, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and access to justice for all. Cyprus is fully committed to the protection of human rights and gender equality. In the context of the labor market it has been the goal of consecutive Governments in Cyprus for gender equality to be incorporated in the social and economic policy of the state.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

Cyprus acknowledges that the fight against impunity concerns us all. It is a stepping stone in establishing the rule of law in post-conflict societies. The International Criminal Court is the competent institution to fight impunity in the world and we welcome the increased participation to the Rome Statute. At the same time, Cyprus, pursuant to the complementarity principle of the Statute, has incorporated in its national penal code the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, punishable with life imprisonment. Cyprus has also initiated the internal process for the amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression, adopted in 2010 at the Review Conference in Kampala. We encourage all states to become parties and implement the relevant conventions and treaties that aim at a better protection of human rights, particularly those relating to the International Humanitarian Law and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The international community is sending a strong message today by organizing this meeting on the rule of law that takes place for the first time, at this high level and in a manner that entails wider policy making. Most importantly, the adoption of the political declaration on the rule of law demonstrates the international community's commitment and paves the way for the future. In a divided world, the concept of the rule of law is one of the greatest unifying factors, perhaps the greatest, the nearest we are likely to approach to a universal principle. This remains an ideal, but an ideal worth striving for, in the interests of good government and peace, at home and in the world at large.

I thank you Mr. President