

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

*His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Mahama,  
President of the Republic of Ghana*

New York, 24 September 2012

Allow me first to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I also wish to express my profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for organizing this event at this time, when abuse of human rights, arbitrariness, persecution and impunity are on the increase in the world. Let me also single out the special efforts of the co-facilitators, Denmark and Mexico, and commend them for their tireless contribution to the outcome of today's meeting.

Respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels is an integral part of the Charter of the United Nations. Ensuring respect for and the strengthening of the rule of law is fundamental to the maintenance of peace and international security and the effective promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and is essential to nurturing a vibrant and dynamic democracy.

In Ghana, we believe that respect for the rule of law is essential to building our nation and this has been our thinking since independence. Our national motto, therefore, is "freedom and justice". Ghana has, over the past 20 years following the return to democracy, worked to continuously strengthen our governance institutions. The framework for ensuring respect for the rule of law has been established in our 1992 Constitution, and continues to be further elaborated and extended. That includes the passage of legislation to ensure accountable and good governance, transparency in public procurement, the transparent management of oil revenues, press freedom, human rights, and transparent and credible elections, to name just a few.

Ghana is reaping the dividends of democracy and rule of law. The stable atmosphere created as a result of constitutional governance since 1992 has seen a remarkable increase in economic growth. Last year, Ghana's economy grew by some 14 per cent, one of the highest rates in the world. Per capita income for

Ghanaians has grown from \$400 in 1992 to \$1,300 today, pushing Ghana into lower-middle-income status.

During visits to Ghana in 2009, President Barack Obama said that what Africa needs is not strong leaders, but strong institutions. The Government of Ghana is therefore in the process of undertaking the following interventions, by developing appropriate legislation, policy and administrative reforms in the following areas: building the capacities of governance institutions responsible for ensuring compliance with existing laws; strengthening the judicial service and other agencies responsible for the administration of justice to build confidence in the judicial system, both for our citizens and for our guests who may have social or business interests in Ghana; reviewing the laws on investment promotion and protection; strengthening the institutions that investigate and prosecute cases relating to corruption; strengthening the framework governing the banking and financial service sector; the integration of information and revenue management systems; organization to promote greater efficiency in revenue collection; and ensuring transparent management and utilization of Ghana's oil revenues.

Ghana is a State party to many international conventions, treaties and protocols, and recently we became a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its related Protocols, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Comprehensive Nuclear-TestBan Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We have also incorporated many international conventions, protocols and systems into our municipal laws. We are committed to ensuring that we respect and give effect to all international conventions, treaties and protocols to which we are a State party.

We believe that it is also important to give attention to regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States and to help strengthen the institutions that we have established through those regional groupings in order to promote the rule of law both regionally and on the continent.

The Government of Ghana recognizes that our systems for ensuring respect for the rule of law can be considered effective only if they successfully uphold and protect the legal rights of the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. Our goal, therefore, is to live up to our national motto of being a land that ensures freedom and justice for all our citizens and those who reside and work in our country.

In short, we believe that respect for the rule of law is essential to the creation of a fairer and more just world and to the promotion of peace, prosperity and cooperation.