



SLOVAKIA

STATEMENT BY

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRES
OF SLOVAKIA**

AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING

ON THE RULE OF LAW

DURING THE 67th SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,
Excellencies,

It is a distinct honour and pleasure for me to address this Assembly at the outset of its 67th session. This High-Level meeting on „The rule of law at the national and international level“ provides us with excellent opportunity to share our views and experiences on the rule of law, as a core principle of governance that ensures justice and fairness, values so essentials to our humankind today and in the future.

Slovakia fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union which was delivered earlier today.

Mr. President,

The foreign policy of Slovakia is based on respect for core democratic values, international law and effective multilateralism. We therefore welcome and support convening this meeting on the rule of law. This topic is even more important, since it is based on the presumption of governance in which all stakeholders – persons, public and private institutions and entities, and States themselves, are accountable to laws publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated and which are consistent with international norms and principles. At the international level, it is of the utmost importance to assure equality of States, full compliance of their actions with international law, their responsibility to individuals on their territories and under their sovereignty. On the other side, at the national level, the rule of law is a key principle that interacts with society at every level, guarantees human rights protection as well as fair resolution of disputes of individuals and provides legitimate tools of recourse in case of power abuses.

Mr. President,

Slovakia is fully committed to respecting **general legal principles contained in the United Nations Charter** as sovereign equality, peaceful settlement of international disputes, refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, and to fulfill its obligations arising out of various international instruments. Ensuring national implementation of existing international legal framework remains today's challenge. States are facing different obstacles in securing it at national level, thus contributing to non-

compliance with their international obligations. Therefore, we commend the readiness of the United Nations Secretary General to provide an integrated response to requests by States for assistance in this area.

Furthermore, immanent part of the rule of law principle is to ensure existence of adequate adjudicative mechanisms where States can bring their claims in case of their disagreement. In this regard, any international dispute among States should be resolved by means of peaceful settlement. The key role of the **International Court of Justice**, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, should be strengthened through acceptance of its *compulsory jurisdiction* by all Member States of the United Nations. The Court's jurisprudence in contentious cases and advisory proceedings contributes to the development of international law and maintenance of international peace and security.

Slovakia strongly supports application of this principle in **conflict and post-conflict situations** where the rule of law is indispensable for both restoration and maintenance of peace and stability and establishment of integral governmental system, well-functioning public institutions including justice and security ones. With respect to situations in transitional societies, Slovakia in cooperation with the Netherlands coordinates, through the common Task Force for Tunisia, efforts aimed at building democratic institutions, security sector reform, reinforcement of civil society and regional development, supporting the capacity-building in this country. Main target of the Task Force formed in 2011 is to coordinate Tunisian demands and the offers of the international community, as well non-governmental sector to provide technical and financial assistance for further development of the projects in the priority areas. Furthermore, Tunisia belongs to priority countries for technical assistance provided by the Slovak Official Development Aid.

While addressing the rule of law topic, we cannot forget to stress the importance of strengthening international human rights legal framework. In particular, those most vulnerable deserve our attention. Slovakia, as a strong promoter of protection of human rights, was one of the main initiators of the adoption of the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure**, which was opened for signature in February this year. This Protocol represents not only a new juridical instrument that will strengthen and broaden the implementation, recognition and representation of the rights of the child, but it also constitutes a new remedy for children to invoke their rights. It will provide individual children the opportunity to submit complaints on the violation of their rights to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

after exhaustion of local remedies, or directly, when national mechanisms for such complaints are not in place or inefficient. We call all UN Members to become States Parties to the Protocol.

In this regard I would like to inform you that Slovakia has joined other states that have submitted their national pledges with the aim to strengthen their support to the rule of law. Slovakia undertakes to ratify by the end of 2013 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. In addition, Slovakia will strengthen its legal and institutional framework in order to recognize women's rights to be free from all forms of violence and discrimination in compliance with international human rights law.

Mr. President,

Slovakia fully supports the fight to end impunity of perpetrators of the most serious crimes under international law, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must all ensure accountability for gross violations of human rights we witness today. Once the State itself is not able or willing to do so, the matter should be referred to an appropriate accountability mechanism. In this regard, the **International Criminal Court** plays irreplaceable role. States, not Parties to the Rome Statute should reconsider its ratification and subsequently implementation into national legislation.

In conclusion, our everyday life confirms that abuses of law occur both at national and international levels. These cases very often happen at the expense of justice. I wish to raise a question, whether the time has not come yet to focus our joint efforts on further enhancement of the principle of rule of justice, since it forms an equal and indivisible part of the rule of law. Our common ambition toward the future is not only pragmatic application of Rule of Law in individual cases but mainly strategic compliance of this principle which goes hand in hand with the principle of Rule of Justice.

Slovakia is prepared to contribute actively to effective discussion in this regard.

Thank you.

