

**Remarks of the Executive Director at the General
Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law
at the National and International Levels**

24 September 2012

Mr. President,

Secretary General,

Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful for this opportunity to add my voice to that of the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in support of the rule of law as a central building block at the national and international levels.

In a globalized world, illicit drug trafficking and transnational organized crime represent a growing challenge to the rule of law and good governance.

Once these billion-dollar industries were problems for law enforcement and national

authorities. Today they have grown in ambition, in scale, and in sophistication.

And the link between the rule of law and its role in improving stability is indisputable. Over the past ten years, violent crime has decreased in countries where the rule of law has improved.

The rule of law, development and security are, therefore, interdependent and keystone elements of the UN's mandate under the UN Charter.

For example, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the post-2015 agenda are essential to the lives of millions of people, in particular, to underpin the rule of law and ensure access to justice.

In recent years, UNODC has witnessed a large increase in the need for technical assistance under our justice programme.

Our Country Programmes and Regional Programmes undertake a wide range of practical activities, including: police reform; strengthening prosecution services; access to legal aid; as well as human rights, and justice for children, among others.

The approach rests on creating inter-agency relationships and other partnerships, while working through integrated regional programmes delivering technical assistance at the grassroots level.

We are an active member of the UN Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, and we will continue to work closely with UNDP and DPKO in area of justice in the most fragile countries.

Working with OLA and OHCHR, UNODC will also continue to strengthen the rule of law at the international level.

The Task Force on Transnational organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, established by the Secretary-General in 2011, also offers system-wide support to these processes.

As the UN Office specifically mandated to promote the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, and its protocols, and the UN Convention against Corruption, we need to assist Member States in the full implementation of these conventions.

In the area of counter-terrorism, UNODC views respect for the rule of law and promotion and protection of human rights as being at the core of efforts to fight terrorism.

But, if we are to make inroads into these multiple threats, our strategies must be aimed at both the international and local levels simultaneously.

The local must be connected to the global.

We also need to develop a collective vision of what a criminal justice system in the early 21st Century looks like.

UNODC believes such a system must be informed by international human rights standards delivering fair, effective and humane criminal justice policies.

This meeting today is another step towards ensuring we continue to uphold this universal benchmark.

Thank you.