



**Remarks**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe**

**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**High-Level Event of the General Assembly**

“Contributions of Human Rights and the Rule of Law

in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

Closing Session

**New York**

**10 June 2014**

*Please check against delivery*

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the conclusion of our final High-level event, which was the last in a six part series to “set the stage” for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. At the outset, I would like to thank the Chairs and the panelists for their engagement and thought-provoking presentations, as well as the Secretariat staff for their excellent support.

Allow me also to extend my appreciation to Member States for supporting this event, which many have called opportune and timely, and for sharing experiences about how human rights and the rule of law have impacted development in their respective countries. While we all hail from different regions of the world, with different judicial systems, the points you raised in your interventions are testimony to the importance and universality of the issues that brought us together today.

As the Chairs of the panels have just shared highlights from today’s sessions, I would like to call your attention to some of the main points that Member States brought out yesterday during the general debate.

Excellencies,

We are in general agreement that human rights and the rule of law are critical to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development. For our development efforts to succeed, it is imperative to address both freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Many noted that the realization of human rights, including the right to development, and the strengthening of the rule of law and good governance are development outcomes in their own right.

We heard that for the post-2015 agenda to be transformative and people-centered, it will have to be rooted in the principles of non-discrimination, equality, participation and accountability. The most vulnerable and marginalized, including women, children and youth, people with disabilities, minorities, indigenous people and migrants deserve a place and a voice.

Many described how transparent and capable institutions, inclusive participation, and democratic accountability are drivers of peace and stability, equality, well-being and sustainable and equitable use of resources. The role of good governance was underscored by a number of delegations. Indeed, it was pointed out that this was one of the priorities identified by the global citizens who have taken the MyWorld Survey to tell world leaders about the world they want.

Interventions highlighted that respect for the rule of law facilitates investment and inclusive growth, promotes predictability and stability, helps to combat corruption, illicit financial flows and crime, and builds trust between the State and its citizens, as well as between the State and its development partners.

In order to promote the rule of law at the national level, national ownership and adaptation to local context were deemed critical. At the international level, some noted the importance of strengthening global governance, including through reforms in the international decision-making bodies. The roles of civil society and of the private sector were also underscored, as several recalled that people are the driving force of development.

As Member States shared their views on how to reflect human rights and the rule of law in the upcoming development agenda, some pointed out that there is no need for a dedicated goal on human rights, arguing that human rights can support the achievement of goals and targets across the agenda, while in turn development can promote the full realization of human rights. We also heard different perspectives on whether the rule of

law should be included as a standalone goal or should be mainstreamed across all other goals in a cross-cutting manner.

Some possible targets related to human rights and the rule of law were, inter alia: clear legal frameworks and effective and transparent institutions; access to independent justice; sustainable management of natural resources and equal property and land rights; legal identity and universal birth registration; elimination of discriminatory laws; combatting corruption and illicit financial flows; strengthening a rules-based equitable multilateral system; and respect for international law and international commitments.

We were also reminded of the inter-linkages between human rights and the rule of law and other goals and targets, including gender equality, peaceful and stable societies, poverty eradication, health, disaster preparedness and response, and sustainable management of natural resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I trust that our deliberations today have brought forth useful insights on the contribution of human rights and the rule of law and that they will inform the ongoing deliberations on the post-2015 agenda. As a first step, a summary of key messages will be shared with Member States and the Open Working Group in the next few days. They will also be posted on the website of my office.

The next step then is for me to pull my own six events and other parallel but post-2015 – related exercises together. To do so, I will be convening a stock taking exercise on 8 and 9 September. The objective of this exercise will be to provide inputs to the Secretary-General's synthesis report, which will be made available to member States later this year and serve as the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations that will take place during the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.

It is my hope that the cherished values we have discussed during these events, and particularly over the last two days – equality, participation and inclusiveness – will continue to inspire our efforts as we begin crafting a development agenda for the post-2015 era. For it is our collective duty to ensure that we leave no one behind on the road that leads to a sustainable future of shared prosperity for all.

Thank you.

\*\*\*