

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

On behalf of the Nordic Countries

by

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in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly

The Rule of Law at the national and international levels

9 October 2013

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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Statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

We welcome the attention of the General Assembly and the Sixth Committee to the important topic of the rule of law, as well as the work carried out by the UN Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, the Rule of Law Unit and the various UN agencies promoting the rule of law.

The Nordic countries welcome the report of the Secretary-General of 29 July 2013 on strengthening and coordinating UN Rule of Law activities. It demonstrates progress made towards strengthening the Rule of Law at national and international levels, highlights current and future challenges and points to important issues to address, to make the UN and its partners more effective in promoting a consistent vision of, and commitment to, the rule of law.

The Declaration of the General Assembly of 24 September 2012 on the Rule of Law at the national and international levels affirms the inter-relationship between the Rule of Law and the three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. It is also a foundation on which to build global visions, norms, standards and practices on the Rule of Law. Moreover, it signals that the Rule of Law is an important consideration in the formulation of the new Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law is not just a critical condition for peace, security, human rights and development. It is also a value in itself. What that value consists of must be continuously articulated and explained. No actor is better placed for that task than the UN, and particularly the General Assembly. It is therefore important that the UN intensifies its work to promote visions, norms, standards and understandings on the Rule of Law.

In doing so, we consider it important that the UN considers both current and future applications of the Rule of Law as concept and method. Strengthening the Rule of Law in law enforcement, justice, and corrections is obviously important and should retain a high place on the agenda, but above all, the Rule of Law is rightly to be regarded as a principle of governance, equally important wherever public authority is exercised or where individuals interact with the state and its agents. For example, without proper legal procedures in issuing birth certificates, ID-documents etc., individuals will not be able to enjoy even the most basic of rights.

The interdependence between the Rule of Law and gender equality should also be considered. Security Council resolution 1325 "Women, peace and security" underlines the central role of women in achieving sustainable peace, but whether they can actually contribute to and safeguard peace seem to depend on the existence of a degree of rule of law.

At the core of the rule of law agenda is also the fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Nordic countries are staunch supporters of the ICC, as well as the international ad hoc criminal tribunals, and attach great importance to the strengthening of the international criminal justice system. We likewise believe that Transitional Justice and mediation mechanisms should be considered when Rule of Law strategies are considered in the wake of conflict. The International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration have also an important role in upholding the rule of law. It is our firm belief that particularly the ICJ is an underused tool for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

At the programmatic level, there is need for more effective implementing mechanisms. We think that the promising Global Focal Point initiative ought to be expanded and deepened to cover as many aspects of the Rule of Law as possible, allowing for holistic approaches and ensuring maximum synergy. The UNDP and DPKO need to join hands with specialised agencies and other actors in order to put new concepts and tools to their most effective use.

Another important task is to seize on the 2012 Rule of Law Declaration and considerations in the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the need to include the Rule of Law on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

For the UN to lead in addressing these needs and challenges, and to foresee new opportunities along the way, it needs strategic and analytical capabilities. The role, capacity and outreach of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group are therefore critical. The on-going process of consultation should therefore be continued and expanded to establish linkages with a wide range of public and private stakeholders concerned with the Rule of Law.

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly believe the rule of law is critical for peace, security, human rights and development, and represents an important end in itself. Without the rule of law, states can neither realize positive policies, nor individuals enjoy their most basic rights. The rule of law should therefore be implemented in a comprehensive manner and constantly evolve. The UN has a unique and critical role here, as articulator of norms, promoter of shared visions and provider of effective assistance. We expect the UN to continue to pursue these tasks with vigor, and in a way which adequately reflects the broadness of the topic.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.