

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR CHITSAKA CHIPAZIWA ON THE RULE OF LAW AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor in this Committee, allow me to congratulate you and your Bureau on your election to lead the work of this Committee. I am confident that under your stewardship the Committee will execute its mandate effectively and diligently. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation in the exercise of your functions.

I align my delegation's statement to the statements delivered by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement and Egypt on behalf of the Africa Group. The theme "The rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes" addresses issues that are at the core of the founding principles of our Organization as enshrined in the Charter.

The three pillars of the UN agenda, development, peace and security and human rights are inextricably linked with the rule of law. Settlement of disputes by peaceful means is an integral element of that nexus. The Charter provides a sound framework for the peaceful conduct of relations between States. The UN should continue to be guided by principles of sovereign equality of states, non interference in the internal affairs of States, support for self determination, non aggression, peaceful co-existence of states and respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Guided by our commitment for nations to live in harmony, the UN should continue to champion resolution of conflicts by peaceful means within the confines of international law. Small states like ours depend on the rule of law for protection against arbitrary actions by the rich and powerful.

As agreed to in the Declaration on the Rule of Law at national and international level adopted by Heads of State and Government on 24 September 2012, States must refrain from the threat of, or use of force to solve disputes. The tendency to be trigger happy only undermines peace and security. Recent experiences amply demonstrate that heavy handed

interventions do not bring about sustainable solutions, but only cost more lives, destroy and degrade economic and social infrastructure and often leave behind more unstable situations than those they intended to solve. More often than not, the locals are left to pick up the pieces from a trail of destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

The Declaration on the Rule of Law also cautioned States to avoid the use of unilateral measures against other States. Regrettably such measures which are employed by powerful states against weaker ones to achieve narrow political objectives and undermine socioeconomic development efforts. As we frame out the post 2015 development agenda with a focus on eradicating poverty and transforming our economies, we hope developing country efforts will not continue to be hindered by these unilateral coercive measures.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe supports international efforts to end impunity and to hold those responsible accountable. We are, however, concerned that the international criminal justice system has operated in a selective manner. The impression created is that it is only focused on soft targets in the developing world, mainly Africa. These perceptions undermine confidence in the system. Testimonies from those in countries where it has been applied suggest that it has neither facilitated peace nor reconciliation. For the system to be credible it has to be seen to apply universally and equally to all.

At a national level we are committed to enhancing the rule of law through strengthening law and justice institutions. Our new Constitution has strengthened the separation of powers and enhanced the independence of the Judiciary. Independent watch-dog bodies and Commissions, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights, the Anti Corruption and the Media Commissions have been established to protect the rights and interests of citizens. We believe that the UN as an appropriate forum for sharing of best practices and capacity building can be of assistance in facilitating cooperation in these areas.

I thank you for your attention.