



# THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

335 East 45<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, N.Y. 10017  
Tel (212) 439-4000, Fax (212) 986-1083

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**Statement by Mr. Lee Moon-hee**

**Counsellor of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations**

**The rule of law at national and international levels**

**General Assembly Sixth Committee**

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**New York**

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Mr. Chairman,

Following the High-level Meeting and adoption of the Declaration on the Rule of Law in 2012, we have witnessed substantive progress in this field. In this context, my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, which presents a detailed overview of the UN rule of law activities and developments at national and international levels. We commend the work and contribution of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit in conducting various projects over the past year.

My delegation believes that the theme of this year's debate, sharing States' national practices in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice, is particularly relevant in advancing our joint efforts, as it provides an opportunity for all Member States to look back in their practices and to learn from others' experience in promoting the rule of law.

From our own experience, we have learned that a firm commitment to the rule of law and relentless efforts to implement it, have a positive impact in fostering economic and social development. In this vein, we would like to emphasize the linkages between the rule of law and the principles of the UN Charter and international law.

Given the complex and cross-cutting nature of the rule of law, it is essential to enhance coordination and coherence in our efforts to promote it. Here in the UN, we have successfully tackled such complicated and multi-faceted challenges through a variety of policy tools set out in the Secretary-General's report (A/68/213).

My delegation welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General, especially on developing a plan of action, or a strategy on furthering the linkages between the rule of law, human rights, peace and security and development. In this process, we could also render our discussions more productive by enlarging our engagement with various stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman,

As it became evident during the deliberations of post-2015 development agenda, access to justice is one of the important ingredients for sustainable development. Given that there is a close relation between access to justice and the rule of law, we believe that a holistic and comprehensive approach to the rule of law, encompassing all related concepts and principles, is required to achieve our common goal of nurturing peaceful and inclusive societies.

In this respect, I would like to share some of our experience and effort in promoting access to justice in the Republic of Korea. They rest upon the principles of openness, transparency of legal systems, and the responsiveness of judicial authorities.

In terms of openness and transparency, we put emphasis on access to information relating to judicial institutions and legal systems, with the conviction that the free flow of information is the cornerstone of a just judicial system. All court judgments and prosecutors' decisions are open to public physically and electronically; electronic litigation system is in place; and information on national laws is available at all times online and offline.

Second, bearing in mind that the cost of legal advice and representation can constitute one of the major obstacles in accessing justice, the Republic of Korea is offering proactive and pro bono legal support, consisting of, *inter alia*, appointment of free public attorneys, litigation aid, and free legal counseling.

Third, the Republic of Korea spares no effort to promote access to justice for the socially marginalized. To cite a few examples, courts and relevant institutions have launched special websites providing judicial information for foreigners and immigrants with limited knowledge of the Korean system and language. Various projects are up and running to increase the internet accessibility for people with disabilities, and ad hoc open courts in remote areas, with a view to minimizing the time to reach judicial institutions, are well in place.

In consistence with our joint efforts to promote the rule of law, we hope that our experiences of enhancing access to justice will further contribute in identifying the best practices, and deepening the linkages with the three pillars of the UN. We will continue to work with other delegations to discuss ways and means to this end.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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