



Permanent Mission of the I.R. of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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**At the Sixth Committee under agenda item 84:
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

6 October 2016

NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to thank the Secretary General for his report "Strengthening and Coordinating United Nations rule of law activities," - in document A/71/169.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law is the fundamental pre-condition for achieving a rules-based international order, in which citizens can live peaceful, secure, and dignified lives. In that respect, it provides the very foundation upon which stable and prosperous societies are built. We are pleased that the subject of rule of law at national and international levels remains an essential topic in the agenda of the United Nations.

This is also a fitting opportunity to highlight the centrality of the United Nations' role in achieving a world where the principles of peace, equal opportunity, justice, and prosperity prevails.

Mr. Chairman,

In Afghanistan, our efforts to advance the rule of law has been a challenging task, owing to the tragic legacy of more than twenty years of conflict we inherited in 2001, when we began a new chapter in our modern history. It has also been a constant conflict between legitimacy and illegitimacy, legality and illegality. Whereas the National Unity Government and preceding administrations have sought to strengthen governance and transparency in our society and institutions, extremist groups sent to Afghanistan from outside our borders have defied our constitution and engaged in a reign of terror, aimed at undermining our stabilization. In doing so, they violate fundamental principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including international law and international humanitarian law.

Since its formation two years ago, the Unity Government has worked to consolidate the rule of law as a cornerstone of our strategy to achieve a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan. Over the past two years, we have conducted a major overhaul of our State and local institutions to promote transparency and accountability in all affairs of the Government. We have done so knowing that the rule of law is the ultimate guarantee for our long-term stability.

In the area of civil service, we have established a merit based process for the appointment of senior officials. A number of capable officials who place Afghanistan's national interest above all other considerations, have been appointed to key positions, including the judiciary. In that process, more than 600 judges were replaced, with some being

prosecuted for illegal activity. We have created a National Council on the Rule of Law, which is fully operational with a mandate to address all forms of administrative corruption. In addition, we have also begun to reform our electoral institutions to consolidate the democratization process. In the sector of public finances, we have established the National Procurement Commission to ensure transparency in all Government contracts.

Yesterday, at the international Brussels conference on Afghanistan, we opened a new chapter in our partnership with friends and allies to build on what we have collectively achieved so far. At the conference, we provided an update on our reform efforts. The international community made new pledges of assistance to help us implement our National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), which constitutes our overarching strategy to advance social, economic, and institutional development.

Mr. Chairman,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to highlight the central role of the United Nations in coordinating the international community's support to Afghanistan over the past several years, which has had a profound contribution to our rule of law efforts:

1. Promoting fundamental rights and freedoms for all our citizens, especially women and children;
2. Enhancing capacity in our State institutions for effective delivery of services;
3. Strengthening democratic values and principles in our society;
4. Laying the foundation for an Afghanistan that is governed fully by the rule of law, and is self-reliant in providing for our own security and development needs.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced that security, economic development, and the rule of law are reinforcing in nature, and thus inextricably linked to each other. That said, continued violence in Afghanistan in the form of terrorism and violent extremism remains the dominant challenge facing our stabilization and rule of law efforts. We have initiated a comprehensive strategy, comprising both a military and peace-building component, to overcome this obstacle and achieve durable peace for our people. While continuing our fight against terrorism, we are also pursuing peace and reconciliation with reconcilable armed opposition groups, who are ready to shun the path of violence, become law abiding citizens, and adhere to the provisions of our constitution.

We are also focused on building a broad-based economy that will empower our citizens with job opportunities, and instill renewed confidence in our cities, districts, and villages throughout Afghanistan. To achieve this, we have already taken important steps in

strengthening regional connectivity to substantially increase the volume of trade and transit with our neighbors, and invested in modernizing our agricultural sector. In addition, we have also developed new policies to make the most of our vast natural resources, which can serve as a key pillar of our future economy.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law provides the very foundation for a rules-based international order, in which States meet their respective obligations to abide by the principles of the UN Charter. In this context, it is imperative that States meet their commitments within the framework of multitudes of international treaties and conventions related to peace and security, human rights, and social and economic development. For our part, we are sparing no effort to implement our commitments under all international instruments that we are party to.

Mr. Chairman,

Just fifteen years ago, Afghanistan began its state-building efforts from sub-zero. We were a country forgotten by the global community, whose social fabric was decimated in various aspects. Yet we are a resilient nation, which has overcome adversity throughout history. Over the past decade and half, we have come a long way and regained our place among the responsible community of nations that is committed to the full implementation of the rule of law and other universal principles enshrined in the UN Charter. We are confident that with the continued support of the United Nations and other international partners, we will realize the vision of a peaceful and prosperous future for our people.

Thank You.