

Statement by Counsellor Jai Ho YANG

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

General Assembly Sixth Committee

The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/169), which provides us with a comprehensive and panoramic overview of United Nations rule of law developments and activities at the national and international levels over the past year. We commend the work and contributions of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit for conducting various projects, particularly to promote the efficiency of UN activities concerning the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to this year's first sub-topic, "Sharing national practices of States in the implementation of multilateral treaties," we recall the role of multilateral treaties as important tools not only for tackling various global and regional challenges, but also for promoting and advancing the rule of law across a broad range of subjects.

The international community continues to confront grave challenges such as war, global terrorism, violent extremism, severe violations of human rights, inequality, poverty, and climate change of unprecedented severity. The nature

and scale of these daunting challenges have called for concerted efforts by the international community as a whole, and multilateral treaties have been used as quite useful tools in these endeavors.

Given the lack of adequate enforcement mechanism in the international community, however, it is essential that each country take effective measures to ensure faithful implementation of these multilateral treaties. In this context, my delegation would like to briefly share some examples of our domestic enactment with a view to the full implementation of critical multilateral treaties.

It is quite encouraging that the Paris Agreement is on the verge of entering into force, most likely within this year. The Republic of Korea has long been one of the staunch supporters of mankind's common bid to curb drastic climate change. Serving as the host country of Global Climate Fund (GCF), Korea has also been playing a pivotal role in promoting the paradigm shift towards climate-resilient development pathways and combating climate change. Against this backdrop, my delegation is pleased to announce that the Korean Government is taking domestic steps to complete the ratification of the Paris Agreement as soon as possible within this year.

Mr. Chairman,

We are all aware that the unwavering efforts of the international community to end impunity for those who committed the most serious crimes have led to the adoption of the Rome Statute and the establishment of the ICC. In the follow-up of the active participation in the treaty-making process, the Korean Government enacted "the Act on Punishment of crimes under Jurisdiction of the international Criminal Court" in 2007, and fully reflected the principle of complementarity

enshrined in the Rome Statute.

As vividly described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ‘leaving no one behind’ is not only our guiding vision, but our historic promise to the world. As such, it is of great importance to share each state’s practices and lessons learned with other states which may suffer from a lack of resources or capacity, including expertise and experience. Indeed, an important contributing factor for advancing the rule of law is the positive spillover effect among Member States. In this vein, the Republic of Korea has committed itself to strengthening the rule of law at the international level through various programs and activities. As a case in point, we have been providing education and training for government officials and other professionals from developing countries in the implementation of international instruments on oceans, including UNCLOS.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning our attention to the second sub-topic for this year’s discussion, “Practical measures to facilitate access to justice for all, including for the poorest and most vulnerable,” we take this opportunity to refer to Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, which highlights the importance of providing access to justice for all.

It goes without saying that ensuring peace and security as well as respect for human rights serves as both the foundation of the successful implementation of the SDGs and its outcome. Strong and consistent rule of law is part and parcel of this process. In this vein, we would like to share with you some of our national efforts to ensure rule of law through the practices of providing free access to legal information and utilizing Electronic Litigation System.

Without adequate and efficient access to legal information, neither equal access to justice nor robust rule of law can properly work, especially in this fast-changing information society. Furthermore, free access to legal information enhances institutional transparency and provides the basis for equal opportunities for those who need to make use of law and legal procedures to protect themselves in diverse areas of social, economic, and environmental dimensions, thus helping create an environment conducive to the achievement of justice for all.

Based on this guiding philosophy, the Korean Government has established a system that puts a good amount of legal information available at the fingertips of the general public through the website of the Ministry of Government Legislation on laws, statutes, and regulations, and also through that of the Supreme Court on court cases, law articles, and court practices.

On another front, a state-of-the-art Electronic Litigation System has been in operation since 2010. With the introduction of this new system, parties can file various litigation documents electronically and actual trial proceedings are conducted in a court that is equipped with electronic facilities. The E-Litigation System is also eco-friendly and sustainable since it replaces the paper based litigation process. This transformative system of litigation has greatly increased efficiency, transparency, predictability, and cost-effectiveness for justice. As a case in point, the statistics of the Patent Court, the first court to utilize E-Litigation System, show that the time span between the complaint filing and the first court appearance has been reduced from an average of 130 days to 78 days.

Complementing these electronics-based practices is the mechanism of legal aid.

There are people who cannot afford electronic devices or who are simply not familiar with IT, especially among the poor and the vulnerable. That's why we still need robust legal aid mechanism to ensure adequate and meaningful access to justice for all. The Korean Legal Aid Corporation, established by the Government, plays an important role in such a noble enterprise by providing lawyers who are dedicated to offering free legal advice and low-cost legal representation.

Mr. Chairman,

We firmly believe that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the realization of inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, protection of all human rights, and peaceful coexistence and cooperation among states. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting and advancing the rule of law for a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. /End/