

**Statement on behalf of  
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden**

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**6th Committee**

**Agenda item 85:  
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

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Mr. Chairman,

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

The Nordic Countries would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report “Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities” of 1 August 2017. The report highlights the UN’s work and commitment to deliver more targeted support to member States and to enhancing the impact of rule of law efforts on people’s lives.

The Nordic countries have always been staunch supporters of a strong rule of law agenda – also in the UN. Pressure on and attempts to undermine the rule based international order underscores the need to further disseminate international law and ensure the strengthening of the rule of law. Never has it been more important to ensure the strengthening of a rule-based international order and to safeguard and promote the full enjoyment of human rights for all.

There is a firm interrelationship between the rule of law and the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. The Declaration of the 2012 High-Level Meeting also stated that human rights, the rule of law and democracy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This vision must guide all our actions today.

The impact of conflicts and atrocities as well as acts of terrorism, violent extremism and attacks on democratic governance and effective legal systems in the world continue to challenge the rule of law. The Secretary-General raised in his report such major global concerns as climate change and mass human displacement. The interlinkages of climate change, environmental degradation and conflict are becoming more broadly understood and recognized as threats not only to peace but increasingly also to all social and economic development. It is therefore important to take a comprehensive approach to current global problems and realities, and to base all responses on the rule of law.

International challenges require a stronger and more concrete commitment to the protection of human rights and democracy. It is of great importance to reiterate that the rule of law is both a principle of governance, encompassing democracy, good governance and human rights, as well as an indispensable means for the achievement of crucial common goals, including peace and security, equality and the promotion of economic and social development.

As we know, all persons are equal before the law, and everyone is entitled to equal protection by law without any discrimination, including disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable groups – let us make sure that this is also a reality!

On the subtopic of “ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law”, the Nordic countries commend the UN’s efforts through the Office of Legal Affairs and its specialized divisions and look forward to today’s discussion. The issue of how to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law at both the national and the international levels is a key priority for the Nordic countries.

The International Law Commission will celebrate its seventieth anniversary next year. The Nordic Countries pay tribute to the ILC for its strong contribution to the rule of law over all these years through its work on the progressive development and codification of international law.

The rule of law is considered as one of the key dimensions that determine the good-quality governance of a country. Assisting justice systems worldwide in the dissemination of knowledge of international law, including human rights law and standards, is crucial for the strengthening of the rule based order. While the rule of law at the national and international levels is at the core of this agenda item, we wish to emphasize the important role of the UN in supporting the national Governments in their efforts to reach sustainable development and economic growth.

The Nordic countries rely on a rule based and stable foundation for international cooperation. Therefore, we are strong advocates for the promotion of the rule of law through our multilateral and bilateral collaboration as well as through our strategic partnerships.

As reiterated in the Secretary-General’s report, Member States must build consensus and work in solidarity with each other to address the most pressing priorities outlined in the report. Partnerships can play an important role in advancing cooperation and improving results, and we must mobilize all means possible and foster partnerships and cooperation to ensure proper implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including on its relevant aspects of the rule of law. The 2030 Agenda has provided us with a new framework for linking the rule of law work more concretely to the goals aiming at eliminating poverty and inequalities as well as creating just, inclusive and strong institutions.

Supported by the Nordic countries, Denmark has presented its candidature for a seat at the UN Human Rights Council in 2019-2021, and in this specific context, we will work for a world in which human rights and the rule of law constitute the cornerstone of international structures of society.

Fighting impunity and ensuring accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community is a fundamental pillar of the rule of law. The Nordic countries have consistently strived for this end, and we reaffirm our strong support to the international courts and tribunals in their work for peaceful settlement of disputes and promotion of access to justice.

To achieve lasting peace, those responsible for violations of international law, including violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, must be held accountable. Impunity is not an option. Therefore, the Nordic countries are strong proponents of the International Criminal Court as a court complementary to national jurisdictions.

Moreover, we support other mechanisms, which aim to assist in the fight against impunity and bring justice to victims of atrocity crimes. For instance, we support the work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on Syria. The Nordic countries have all contributed financially to the IIIM, or pledged to do so, and we encourage other states to also support the IIIM in order for the mechanism to fulfil its important task to collect, save and categorize evidence for future investigations and trials.

The UN together with its member states must continue to advance the rule of law actively and with high ambition, as all human beings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect afforded through the enjoyment of human rights and the rule of law for all.

The Nordic countries will continue to be strong advocates and supporters of a stable and rule of law based international order, which in a world of complexity will be achieved by strong emphasis on partnerships and international cooperation.

Thank you.