

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

5 October 2017

New York

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/268), 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 deliver more targeted support to Member States and to enhance the impact of rule of law efforts on people's lives.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community continues to confront grave challenges such as climate change, global terrorism, severe human rights violations, inequality, poverty, and the huge displacement of refugees and migrants. The nature and scale of these daunting challenges have called for concerted efforts by the international community as a whole, and it goes without saying that these efforts should be grounded in a rule-based international order. As we are all well aware, 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, and there is no denying that rule of law is part and parcel of this process.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to this year's sub-topic, "Ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law", we recall the significance of disseminating international law and devising efficient means to do so. This will not only help address various global and regional challenges, but also promote and advance the rule of law in a deeper and wider way.

Nevertheless, it is a stark fact that many states are facing the scarcity of resources for dissemination of international law, and the need for enhanced capacity-building is ever more than real. In this context, we would like to commend the activities and achievements of the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, in particular those activities which are of special benefit to persons from developing countries. We also take note with appreciation that the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs continued to disseminate legal publications and information through online, along with the publication of a handbook.

While these activities are laudable as such, they can never be sufficient, and Member States also have to play their due part for the dissemination of international law at both national and international levels. Let me share some of Korea's efforts to this end.

First of all, we have various institutions and research organizations focused on international law issues. They frequently hold workshops and seminars on

specific topics of international law and publish academic journals regularly. For example, the Center for International Law, the youngest among the institutions, was established in November 2013 under the auspices of Korea National Diplomatic Academy and launched the Seoul Academy of International Law in 2016 with a view to training and educating those working in the field of international law annually with up-to-date theories and practices on current international legal issues such as peace and security, international investment law, the law of treaties, and the international law in East Asia. In 2017, it provided 9 courses lectured by world-renowned scholars and practitioners for 46 participants including diplomats, legal practitioners, scholars and researchers from 24 countries in Asia and the Pacific for two weeks. We believe this institution will find its unique niche by fulfilling the need for general international legal theories and practices, while simultaneously addressing the needs for international law in a regional, more specifically Asia-Pacific context.

Secondly, the Republic of Korea has committed itself to strengthening the rule of law at the international level through various initiatives. As a case in point, we have been providing education and training for government officials and other professionals engaging in ocean policy-making procedures from developing countries, inter alia, in the Asia-Pacific region in the implementation of international instruments on oceans, including UNCLOS.

We have also contributed to various activities for dissemination of international trade law by the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific since 2011. These activities are undertaken with an aim to provide capacity-building and technical assistance for States in the region, as well as to support public, private, and civil society initiatives to enhance international trade and

development. My Government will continue to support the operation of the Regional Centre by 2021, and will also continue its provision of a legal expert for technical cooperation and assistance.

We have been active in the dissemination of international criminal law as well. For instance, my government, in close cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the European Commission, hosted the eighth ICC high-level regional seminar last April on the theme “The ICC and Asia: the joint quest for justice, accountability and prevention.” At this seminar, participants discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in international criminal justice matters and increase ratification of the Rome Statute in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

In the process of our joint efforts to promote the rule of law, it is worth reiterating the important role and great potential of advances in IT technology. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the United Nations to highlight the utility of its electronic database and resources for providing easy access to information and disseminating legal publications and material. We further encourage both the UN and Member States to exert more efforts to effectively and creatively tap the possibilities stemming from the technological progress in the years to come.

Before closing my remarks, I would like to emphasize the indispensable role of education as one of the cornerstones of the efforts to promote the rule of law and disseminate international law. As far as I know, many states run basic education programs on legal matters, including rule of law, as part of civic

education from as early as elementary school. This is undoubtedly conducive to the promotion of rule of law. However, in most cases, these programs are mainly focused on domestic laws and systems. It would be much more desirable if states could include fundamental principles and concepts of international law in these programs. By doing so, we could sensitize our future generation from early on to the interconnectedness of the world, the vital role of the rule of law, and the close linkage between the rule of law and universal values of the international community such as the three pillars of the United Nations. As they have more confidence in them, the prospect for a more peaceful, prosperous, and just international community would come closer to realization.

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 the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for the protection of human rights, for sustaining peace and preventing conflicts, and also for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among states. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting and advancing the rule of law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. /End/