



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Mahe 'U. S. Tupouniua
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
On Agenda Item 84: The rule of law at the national and international level,
At the Sixth Committee of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, Thursday, 05th October 2017

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as Chair and we wish to assure you of my delegation's full support. It is always very heartening for my delegation to see a fellow small island developing State, Chair such an important committee as the Sixth. We likewise wish to congratulate the members of your Bureau for their election to their various posts.

Mr. Chairman,

In the debate preceding the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 71/148 of the 13th December 2016, member States were invited to focus their comments on the subtopic entitled "*Ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law*". I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities" and the "Review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations" which we fully welcome.

Mr. Chairman,

Tonga wishes to commend the work undertaken by the Secretary-General and the work of the Office of Legal Affairs and its specialized divisions in ensuring the dissemination of international law through the "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law", the electronic treaty database, audiovisual library, and other online resources and capacity-building programmes, which my country, as a small island developing State, has benefitted from. As such we would like to see the allocation of appropriate support to ensure the continuation of such programmes and initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

The dissemination of international law is even more critical today in light of the increasing complexities of global issues and challenges, extending from climate change, degradation of ocean health, cyber security, and terrorism, all of which demand integrated and cooperative responses at all levels. As such, trainings and capacity-building initiatives which guarantee a better appreciation and awareness of international law, and the capacity to apply and understand sophisticated and cooperative responses set out under international law is necessary for all key players, including a small island developing States like Tonga, to sufficiently address these complex challenges and to restore international respect for the rule of law and promote the further development of the three main pillars of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development is a priority for Tonga and we share the view that the rule of law at the national and international level plays a critical role in ensuring an enabling environment that fosters the achievement of the goals and the facilitation of genuine and durable partnerships. We share the view that the United Nations must do more, to support the rule of law elements of the universal agenda and foster external partnerships to ensure the successful delivery of the Agenda. We also wish to support the proposal made by the Deputy-Secretary-General yesterday, for the inclusion of the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the agenda of the Sixth Committee at its 73rd session. This will provide the opportunity for member states to speak to and share best practices on how they utilize existing, or develop new legal frameworks at the national level to ensure the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Tonga, however, recognizes that there are existing gaps under international law, or rather slow progress, in the development and strengthening of international law, to address particular or specific global issues, and thus can be regarded as an impediment to this effort. It is therefore essential that the dissemination of international law to member States include information on these gaps, and guidance on actions, which can help garner political and financial support at the international level to address these gaps.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, Tonga reiterates the importance of the need for further dissemination of international law at the national level to better promote the rule of law. We wish to highlight the importance of genuine and durable partnerships within the United Nations, and with partners, within and amongst States, which will ensure that a small island developing State like Tonga is equipped with the appropriate capacity and institution to engage and cooperate in promoting the rule of law at all levels. As such, Tonga would like to acknowledge and thank partners within the Pacific Island region, and from further abroad, who continue to collaborate with Tonga, in making this a reality.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.