



SLOVENIA

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STATEMENT

BY

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Agenda item 86

The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Mr Chairman,

Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. In addition, we wish to contribute to this important debate in our national capacity.

Allow me to begin by welcoming the Secretary-General's reports under this agenda item. Strengthening and promoting the rule of law, including respect for international law, has been one of Slovenia's long-standing priorities. Slovenia recognises the fundamental role of the rule of law in international peace and security, sustainable development, respect for human rights and accountability for international crimes. Appreciating the far-reaching importance of the rule of law should constantly motivate us all to do more and to do better.

Mr Chairman,

Slovenia is pleased that this year's report, too, attests to the instrumental contribution made by the United Nations to strengthening the rule of law at the national level. Much of this work accords with my country's priorities.

To give two examples, first as regards security and justice for women and girls, equal opportunities with special focus on gender equality were set as a thematic priority of development cooperation of Slovenia in the new Resolution on International Development Cooperation adopted last year. This focus will increase the already extensive emphasis on gender equality in our bilateral development cooperation efforts. In light of the geographical priorities of Slovene development cooperation, we are currently promoting women's empowerment in the Western Balkans, Middle East and Africa.

Secondly, we are also contributing our share to the security and armed violence reduction around the world. This year we celebrate 20 years of operation of the Slovenian government-led non-profit organization "ITF Enhancing Human Security" whose mission is enhancing safety and enabling the recovery and development of conflict affected countries by addressing the immediate and long-term impact of mine and other hazards following armed violence. The ITF today operates in 31 countries, having cleared more than 139 million square meters of mine-affected land.

Mr Chairman,

Efforts to strengthen the rule of law at the national level should go hand in hand with the promotion of the rule of law at the international level. Thus the UN's contribution to the rule of law at the international level is also of paramount importance. Respect for international legal rules and the fulfillment of international legal obligations are the very foundation of international relations based on the rule of law. This includes decisions and awards by international courts and tribunals, one of which is the final award issued in 2017 by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the case between Slovenia and Croatia, which has been recognized in this years' Secretary-General Report.

International and hybrid courts and tribunals play a central role in the peaceful settlement of disputes. They have the jurisdiction and authority to decide on violations of international law, including with a view to maintaining their impartiality and independence. Any failure to respect the decisions of international courts and tribunals constitutes a failure of respect for the rule of law. This is Slovenia's general and principled position, which we follow also

regarding decisions that present a considerable financial burden and do not necessarily accord with our arguments, views or desired outcomes. In the same vein, Slovenia has abided by the final and binding decision of the Arbitral Tribunal that determined the land and maritime boundaries between Slovenia and Croatia, and Slovenia expects its full implementation.

Mr Chairman,

The most evident and dreadful consequences of the failure to uphold the rule of law include gross human rights violations and atrocity crimes. As a long-standing supporter of the International Criminal Court, Slovenia encourages all states that have not done so to consider joining the Court.

We have recently reiterated our support to the ICC by commemorating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute this year at a round table hosted by the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana and attended among others by ICC's first president Mr. Philippe Kirsch, as well as at our most prominent yearly foreign policy related international conference, the Bled Strategic Forum, held for the 13th time this year, where Ms Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the ICC, received the Bled Strategic Forum Distinguished Partner 2018 Award, whereas Mr O-Gon Kwon, President of the Assembly of States Parties of the ICC, featured among speakers on a special panel dedicated to the ICC anniversary.

Being concerned with certain recent strong negative statements undermining the ICC's role as an independent and impartial international court, we renewed our political support to its independence by joining the statement of a group of states initiated by Liechtenstein in that regard.

In relation to the prevention of gross human rights violations and atrocity crimes, let me take this opportunity to express Slovenia's full support for the work of the UN Secretary General and his Special Advisers and their team regarding R2P and the Prevention of Genocide. We welcome the inclusion of R2P as a supplementary item on the Agenda of the 73th Session of the UN General Assembly. We support the idea of regular inclusion of R2P in the agenda of UNGA.

We welcome the UN SG's 2018 Report entitled "The Responsibility to Protect: From Early Warning to Early Action" and his conclusions and recommendations as well as all efforts to improve the system-wide capacity of the UN to prevent and respond to serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, especially those violations that may lead to mass atrocity crimes. Prevention remains to be key and utmost should be done to prevent mass atrocities. If they do occur, ensuring accountability for mass atrocity crimes continues to be an efficient way to prevent their recurrence. Involving legal, moral and political responsibilities can help close the gap between commitment and reality.

With regard to our efforts in this field, Slovenia organizes bi-annual regional R2P Focal Points' meetings and academic conferences on R2P since 2013. In 2017 Slovenia hosted the Third European R2P Focal Points Meeting where the Chair's Statement to Orient European Action on the Responsibility to Protect and the Prevention of Mass Atrocity Crimes was endorsed with the objective to implement the R2P more effectively on our continent (Europe).

Mr Chairman,

To conclude, the rule of law is the best guarantee for freedom, dignity and prosperity of all people. It is an essential prerequisite for successful cooperation between nations, peaceful settlement of disputes as well as stability, predictability and progress in international and bilateral relations. As such, it deserves our unwavering commitment. Slovenia stands ready to contribute to strengthening and promoting the rule of law at both the national and international level.