



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT

by

Mr. Peter NAGY

Legal Adviser

Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations

**74th session of the United Nations General Assembly
Sixth Committee**

**The rule of law at the national and international levels
(item 83)**

New York, 11 October 2019

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chair,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union.

Allow me, at the outset, to thank Assistant-Secretary-General Volker Türk for introducing the report on *Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities*, which addresses a very wide range of issues. It underlines the fact that virtually every area of human activity, including international relations has legal aspects or consequences. This, however, does not imply that the Sixth Committee is the appropriate forum for discussions and deliberations on all issues covered by the present report. Having said that, the United Nations must continue to place rule of law to the fore of its agenda. Rule of law – being a cross-cutting issue – has to remain an integral part of considerations and policies in all areas of action, including peacekeeping, security sector reform or the attainment of SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

let me now turn to some legal considerations pertaining to this year's subtopic *Sharing Best Practices and Ideas to promote the respect of States for international law*.

First of all, States create norms of international law while, at the same time, as the primary subjects of international law, are subject to those very rules. Ensuring respect for international law has to start internally in every State by making sure that State authorities know their obligations arising from international law and act in conformity with them. States must also be well-equipped and willing to ensure that individuals and entities under their jurisdiction do not act contrary to international law. Respect of international law goes hand in hand with its profound knowledge. In this regard, the activities of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law provide a vital contribution to disseminating information about international law and deepening knowledge of it.

Turning to the international level, Mr. Chair, I wish to stress that rule of law is at the heart of the current international order. In today's complex world, States and other subjects of international law are more than ever required to act in compliance with the relevant norms. Otherwise, the very foundations of the rules-based system may be irreparably damaged. Yet, we are, unfortunately, still witnessing gross violations of international law, particularly international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Touching upon inter-state relations, States are required to act in good faith and in an amical manner. Preventive mechanisms and approaches like good offices or mediation can be very important in avoiding disputes and conflicts potentially leading to violations of international law.

Should disputes between States arise, they must unconditionally be settled in peaceful ways. The International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the UN is indispensable for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Slovakia encourages all Members of the United Nations to join the 73 States that have done so, including Slovakia, to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ.

Mr. Chair,

Rule of law and justice in general cannot exist without ensuring accountability. Slovakia has always been convinced that bringing perpetrators of the most serious violations of international law to justice is a basic requirement for the solution of any conflict and for subsequent reconciliation efforts. There is a clear global trend of exercising victim-oriented international justice. Strengthening the rights of victims and establishing clear and simple procedures to obtain reparation for material and moral damages is of utmost importance. In this respect, a central role belongs to the International Criminal Court. I wish to call on Member States to join the 122 States Parties to the Rome Statute in the fight against impunity. Only a universally accepted Rome Statute, in combination with genuine cooperation by States, can eliminate the still existing impunity gap.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.