

**Statement by Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at 75<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly at the Sixth committee under Agenda Item No. 86: Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

*Theme: Measures to prevent and combat corruption*

**New York, 20 October 2020**

**Mr. Chair,**

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report under this agenda item.

I associate my statement with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non -Aligned Movement.

**Mr. Chair,**

Corruption and the rule of law are interlinked. While absence of rule of law in any society provides fertile ground for corruption, corruption and lack of good governance lead to further erosion of the rule of law.

The current pandemic has severely affected lives, livelihoods, societies, and economies, with adverse impacts on the governments' efforts to maintain good governance. When governments take recourse to emergency measures and restrictions during the pandemic, people's fundamental rights may be compromised.

With huge public resources being mobilized for containing and mitigating the virus, risks of corruption and fraud may increase. There may also be a serious gap in people's access to justice when the national justice systems are adversely affected.

In this context, we must remain vigilant over the possibilities of corruption and fraud and ensure that people's fundamental human rights are protected.

**Mr. Chair**

Nepal's constitution enshrines the basic principles of political pluralism, periodic elections, inclusion and proportional representation, fundamental freedoms and

human rights, and independent judiciary. This bears eloquent testimony of Nepali people's commitment to the rule of law at national level.

Following the achievement of political stability, Nepal is currently focused on ensuring good governance; and achieving economic development. Our good governance efforts take a cue from the 2030 Agenda, and the notion of comprehensive democracy that looks after not only political rights and freedoms but also the economic, social and cultural rights and wellbeing of people.

We pursue the policy of zero-tolerance against corruption. Utmost priority is laid on transparency and accountability in all public affairs.

We believe that that human rights, the rule of law and democracy are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The Criminal Procedure Code and Civil Code that came into effect in 2018 aim at strengthening rule of law and ensuring accountability in cases of both civil and criminal liability.

**Mr. Chair,**

Nepal stands for the principle of sovereign equality among States and for democratic, inclusive, just and fair international order.

Achieving the rule of law at the international level warrants that there is a balance between enjoyment of rights and fulfillment of obligations by all States in good faith.

Every nation, regardless of their size and state of development, should abide by international legal system and customary international law.

It is hard to defend and sustain democracies within the borders of nations, if the global community of nations is dominated by undemocratic mechanisms.

In fact, maintaining rule of law is about giving equal opportunities to everyone and 'leaving no one behind'.

We believe that the values and principles enshrined in SDG 16 and 2030 Agenda become even more relevant, particularly in overcoming the ongoing crisis and ensuring a just, equitable and sustainable recovery for all.

We recognize the importance of national ownership in rule of law landscape and underline the importance of strengthening national capacities of Member States, including through enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building.

We greatly appreciate the important role of the United Nations, in general, and UNODC, in particular, in preventing and combating corruption at the international level.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, sustainable rule of law efforts are those, which take into account the national and local realities, and keep people at the centre. Smart investment in and sustained empowerment of people is the only path to achieving rule of law at national and international levels.

I thank you for your attention.