



**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Te Aka Aorere**

United Nations General Assembly: Sixth Committee 2022 – 77th Session

**CANZ Statement delivered by New Zealand
Zoe Russell, Second Secretary**

6 October 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of Australia, Canada and my own country, New Zealand. As it is my first time taking the floor I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. You can count on our full support.

The rule of law is at the heart of the international rules-based system. It is central to the maintenance of international peace and security, justice and accountability, political stability and the promotion of human rights. At a time of immense pressure on the international system, where the challenges we face are vast in scope, scale and complexity, it is essential that all States observe and respect fundamental rules of international law.

Respect for rule of law has been integral in guiding our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in times of emergency or crisis, our actions must be based on the rule of law. CANZ countries, like others, have responded to the pandemic by taking extraordinary measures to protect public health and well-being. Compliance with existing human rights protections is imperative even in emergency circumstances. CANZ countries have been guided by the parameters provided by human rights frameworks in each of our respective responses to the pandemic.

The pandemic has also had profound impacts on our justice systems, with the physical closure of courts and tribunals. CANZ countries have worked to find new ways to maintain access to justice and the courts which previously been thought of as impossible or impractical, including the use of new technologies in conducting legal proceedings. While these innovations create new pathways for ensuring access to justice for all, it is essential that we sustain their effectiveness in the long term.

CANZ countries are committed to the promotion and protection of effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions that uphold the rule of law at national and international levels. We stand behind rules-based multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. The rule of law is founded on States upholding their international obligations in good faith.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities, which canvasses the enormous scope of work undertaken to promote and advance the rule of law within the United Nations system. CANZ countries encourage all States to engage in this essential work.

We recall our commitment to Our Common Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Agenda 2030 recognises the essential role of the rule of law and good governance and of transparent, effective and accountable institutions in sustainable development.

A rules-based system for the peaceful resolution of international disputes and accountability is a fundamental pillar of the rule of law. CANZ countries acknowledge the crucial work of independent, professional and recognised international courts and tribunals in maintaining the rules-based international order.

We look to the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and support its vital role in promoting the rule of law through the peaceful judicial settlement of disputes between States in accordance with international law. The Court's role in developing and clarifying international law is essential to the international rules based order. It is imperative that countries respect and abide by the Court's binding decisions. We call on all countries which have not done so to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

As States Parties to the Rome Statute, we are long-standing and active supporters of the International Criminal Court. The International Criminal Court contributes to the fight against impunity by ensuring the prosecution of the most serious international crimes where national authorities are unable or unwilling to do so. CANZ countries are committed to supporting the International Criminal Court in its work in accordance with the Rome Statute to ensure that those responsible for international crimes are held accountable.

We support the Court's important work of maintaining the rule of law through pursuing accountability and bringing justice to victims. We call on all countries who have not done so to ratify the Rome Statute.

CANZ countries emphasise the interrelated nature of the rule of law at the national, regional and international levels. We recognise that accountability begins at the national level, with the primary responsibility for the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes of international concern lying with States. All States must continue to strengthen their national accountability processes and criminal justice systems.

The importance of respecting and promoting our existing international humanitarian law obligations cannot be overstated at a time of protracted armed conflict in many regions. Compliance with international humanitarian law rests on the effective implementation of measures within domestic legal frameworks. CANZ countries encourage all Member States to implement international humanitarian law at the national level.

The rule of law must also be strengthened in the context of arbitrary detention in State to-State relations. In recent years, there have been a number of cases in which the detention of foreign nationals has been used to exert diplomatic leverage between States, undermining the rules-based international order. CANZ countries encourage all Member States to speak out against this practice, to pursue just treatment of citizens of all States in their judicial and criminal proceedings, and to work together to put an end to this regrettable practice.

The rule of law is a marker of functioning national and international systems. It must guide our activities in the context of new challenges emerging from rapidly developing technologies and which involve non-traditional actors to ensure global stability, peace, security and prosperity for all. This includes cybercrime and artificial intelligence; terrorism and violent extremism online; and ensuring the sustainable, responsible and peaceful use of outer space.

CANZ countries stand strongly behind the rule of law at national, regional and international levels, which will continue to guide our actions.

Thank you.