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**Introduction of the report of Secretary-General on
strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities
before the Sixth Committee**

Remarks by the Deputy Secretary-General

7 October 2022

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Before I proceed with my remarks, I should like to thank you Mr. Chair, along with the Bureau, and the delegations of Liechtenstein and Mexico for their leadership in facilitating the annual debate and resolution on the rule of law.

Distinguished Delegates,

If there is one overarching principle that the United Nations must promote, it is the rule of law. It was endorsed in SDG Goal 16 and as the backdrop to all other goals.

Our work cannot stop, nor slow down, until accountability to the law is ensured by all;

... until there is full respect for human rights norms and standards;

... until governance guarantees the supremacy of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, independence of judiciary, and transparency;

... until there are safe and open spaces for the flow of reliable and fact-based information; and

... until equality between all human beings is universally achieved.

Reaching these goals is the only viable path to global peace and prosperity.

Distinguished delegates,

The report which I have the honour to present addresses the achievements as well as the challenges to the rule of law at the national and international levels in the past twelve months.

Challenges persisted on almost every front, from grievous violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including conflict-related sexual violence, to impunity for such crimes. Over the past year, we've seen the erosion of the independence of judicial institutions and widespread attacks against democratic foundations such as independent media and civic space, and we continued to witness ruthless consequences of the climate emergency, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Organization has endeavored to respond to these challenges by assisting Member States who requested assistance to tackle corruption, advance security, counter terrorism and crime, strengthen

access to justice for all and advance transitional justice mechanisms through gender-sensitive and survivor-centered approaches.

The Report of the Secretary-General highlights examples of concrete assistance that the Organization has provided to these efforts.

Some of the assistance and capacity-building efforts that the United Nations provides have immediate, visible impact; some are long-term projects whose potential is yet to be realized. All are genuine collaborations at the request of Member States and with respect for local customs and national ownership.

At the international level, the Report updates on the continued activity to further international law, documenting the work of the International Law Commission, and indicating developments regarding multilateral agreements deposited with the Secretary-General. The United Nations continued to provide capacity-building assistance in relation to international instruments, norms, standards and rules. The peaceful settlement of disputes is a cornerstone of our Charter and international and hybrid courts are key actors in strengthening the rule of law.

Distinguished delegates,

Against the backdrop of the most serious threats of nuclear war in our lifetime, the global climate emergency, and the immense devastation caused by infectious diseases, it is clear that the entire

global community must commit to effective multilateralism to ensure a better future.

In Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General set out practical initiatives to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and bring about a meaningful change in the lives of people we serve.

To help mend the social contract and rebuild trust, the Secretary-General announced in Our Common Agenda a new vision for the rule of law, seeking to redouble the commitment of the United Nations in supporting Member States' efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

After months of inter-disciplinary and inter-stakeholder consultations, and informed by Member States through consultations on Our Common Agenda, the new vision is being developed to reinforce the centrality of the rule of law to all United Nations activities, and call upon the entire system to strategically integrate rule of law principles as we work together to achieve the SDGs.

The new vision bolsters interlinkages between the rule of law and peace, development, human rights and international law; and promotes people-centric, data-based, gender-sensitive, and forward-looking approaches. The new vision does not seek to redefine terms and is firmly grounded on agreed documents, including the landmark 2012

Declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels.

In furtherance of the Secretary-General's new vision, I will spearhead a revitalisation of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group to ensure direction and synergy at the highest level across the Organization.

Distinguished Delegates,

The achievements of the United Nations rule of law cohort outlined in the Secretary-General's report serve as a reminder of what is possible when political will and resources are brought together to make a tangible difference in people's lives. They serve to motivate us to go the extra mile in promoting people-centred approaches to governance, helping rebuild trust and accelerating progress towards sustainable development, while leaving no one behind.

I wish to thank you for your unwavering support to the United Nations rule of law programming, and your efforts to make governance rule of law compliant and meaningful in the lives of people.