

**Statement on behalf of Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, France,
Germany, Japan, Liberia, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden,
Switzerland; members of the Justice Action Coalition**

**77th Session
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**Agenda item 85:
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Japan, Liberia, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and my own country Costa Rica. We represent the [Justice Action Coalition](#): a multistakeholder coalition of around 20 countries as well as partner organizations championing equal access to justice for all as part of SDG16.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which reiterates his vision for a “multilateralism that is more networked, more inclusive and more effective to address twenty-first century challenges”. Such multilateralism depends on the rule of law ensuring strong bonds between and within States. We are pleased that in Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General heeds the call of the Justice Action Coalition in recognizing justice as “an essential dimension of social contract”, and the commitment to put justice at the gravitational center of Our Common Agenda. If international law are the rules to which we shall abide, justice is the fabric that sustains and breeds our society. Injustices undermine the rules of coexistence, void of content and purpose the social contract. Conversely, The social contract is strengthened by meaningful and effective justice-service delivery. We recommend this will be reflected in the upcoming new UN vision for the rule of law in support of efforts to put people at the center of justice.

Mr/Mme Chair,

This approach is paramount when facing the challenges of the present and the future. Peace and security are under pressure of complex protracted and new violent conflicts. The unjustified and unprovoked military aggression of one permanent Member of the UN Security Council against a peaceful neighbor remain in blatant violation of international law, and with severe consequences far beyond the borders of Ukraine.

And during the past years, the coronavirus disease pandemic has caused major disruptions which continue to impact people, communities and nation states across the world, altering our ‘way of life’ and establishing a ‘new normal’. While exposing inequalities, exacerbating injustices and contributing to a wave of protest and unrest, the pandemic and its impact have also demonstrated our interdependency and highlighted the need for stronger international cooperation. We strongly believe that preventing conflict, sustaining peace, promoting the rule of law and effective access to justice for all are crucial to building back better. Peace is not in fact the absence of differences or potential conflict, but rather a function of how these differences are brought to the rule of fair and prompt justice, whether in the community level, the State level or at the international sphere.

Achieving SDG 16, and in particular achieving justice for all to ensure that people have the guarantee of their fundamental rights, requires a robust independent judiciary. Only an independent judiciary can guarantee that in our societies anyone can have access to justice. An independent judiciary is a requirement for a society of equal opportunities where we leave no one behind.

Mr/Mme Chair,

Already prior to the pandemic, the Justice For All report revealed that globally 5.1 billion people lacked meaningful access to justice. Data also shows that some groups, including for instance women, children and youth, are more likely to suffer injustice than others. We have a collective responsibility to close this ‘global justice gap’ and not to leave anyone behind. That is why, in May of this year, our ministers launched the [2023 Justice Appeal](#), calling on all justice actors – state and non-state – to come to the SDG Summit in September 2023 with data and evidence to demonstrate their commitment and contributions to closing the global justice gap.

We further wish to voice support for the sub-topic “using technology to advance access to justice for all” suggested by the Secretary-General for the next report. We are convinced that technology can be used and harnessed to serve the interest of people and promote access to justice for all. It can be a gamechanger in ensuring scalable, transparent, innovative and data driven transformation of justice systems so long as principles of openness, inclusiveness and accountability are built into the design.

The Justice Action Coalition serves as a platform to encourage and support member states to collect relevant data and use it to formulate people-centered justice systems and policies. Through the use of data we can better ensure that justice support interventions match the needs and priorities of the people. Together we can identify good practices and lessons learned – and share what works, and what does not, in specific contexts. Technology, if used responsibly, also allows for pilots of new approaches and shaping justice service delivery to reach as many people as possible.

Justice does not begin nor it ends in a courthouse, it has to be a means to empower people. We strongly believe that taking a people-centered approach in harnessing technology for justice will enhance and promote respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, leading to more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We look to the United Nations as an essential partner in this effort.

I thank you, Mr./Madam Chair.