

**Permanent Mission of India to the UN
New York**

**6th Committee of the 78th Session of the UNGA
(Agenda Item 83)**

The rule of law at the national and international levels

India Statement

Let me first thank the Secretary-General for his report A/78/184 on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities. We are happy to note that there continues to be progress towards a more comprehensive and joint approach among United Nations entities to support the rule of law in line with national priorities and plans.

2. We align ourselves with the statement made by Iran on behalf of NAM. In our national capacity, we would like to add the following observations;

3. India strongly adheres to the rule of law both at the national and international levels. At the national level India considers the advancement of the rule of law as an essential tool for the protection of democracy, promotion of sustainable economic growth and development, poverty and hunger eradication and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

4. At the international level we see the promotion of the rule of law -the most important tool for promoting harmony, and ensuring development, peaceful co-existence and cooperation among States and strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman.

5. The Indian Constitution is firmly rooted in rule of law principles, ensuring separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the Government and making each one accountable for their actions; ensuring adherence to the provisions of the Constitution by the authorities; making Central Government responsible for the implementation of the international treaties and agreements to which India is a party; guaranteeing to the people equality before law and equal protection of law without any discrimination whatsoever; and ensuring the promotion and protection of individual rights and fundamental freedoms, etc.

6. Our judicial system oversees that the rule of law is enforced rigorously at the national level. At the executive level the Government has adopted many milestone social development programmes, aimed at poverty alleviation and ensuring inclusive growth so that the benefits of development reach every section of the society. The legislature is also not lagging behind in its efforts to adopt appropriate legislative measures for the protection and upliftment of vulnerable sections of the society.

7. India is thus firmly committed to implement the rule of law at the national level so that the ideals of democracy, human rights, human dignity and peaceful co-existence, which are the cornerstones of a civilized society, can be achieved and further promoted.

Mr. Chairman

8. As per GA Resolution 77/110 on the “Rule of law at the national and international levels”, the focus of our debate in this session is on the subtopic “Using technology to advance access to justice for all”.

9. In this context we would like to inform this forum that more than a decade ago, India launched the “**e-Courts Mission Mode Project**” for digitization of the courts with the aim of improving access to justice by using technology. The project is being implemented in association with the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India and the Department of Justice.

10. The first phase of the project was implemented between 2011-2015 and the second phase began in 2015 under which more than 18,000 District and Subordinate courts were computerised. Phase II formally came to an end on 31st March 2023. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the e-Courts Phase-III aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts.

11. The responsibility for the planning, policy and implementation of the e-Courts project is vested in the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India, headed by the Chief Justice of India. With the objective of bringing uniformity and standardization in the conduct of the proceedings of courts by video conferencing, an overarching order was passed by the Supreme Court of India on 6th April, 2020 giving legal sanctity and validity to the court hearings done through video conferencing. The rules for video conferencing, framed by the Supreme Court, have been circulated to all the High Courts for adoption after local contextualization.

12. The High Courts and Subordinate Courts in India, have conducted more than 27 million virtual hearings till 30 June 2023. The Supreme Court of India held close to half a million hearings through video conferencing till 31 May 2023. Video Conference facilities have also been enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 prisons.

13. As part of the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign, several initiatives have been undertaken to educate the judicial officers, lawyers and the public. The e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India has conducted training and awareness programmes on information technology covering more than half a million stakeholders including Judges of States, court staff and lawyers.

14. Initiatives have been taken to enable and equip the court with ~~for~~ the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). A new e-filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features. Draft e-filing rules have been formulated and circulated to the Courts for adoption. A total of 19 High Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 30th June 2023.

15. To bridge the digital divide, 819 e-Sewa Kendras (e-Service Centers) have been rolled out with the intention to help or assist lawyers or litigants with ~~who need~~ any kind of assistance ranging from information-to-facilitation and e-Filing. As part of the **Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice (DISHA)** scheme, the **Tele Law programme** was launched by the Government of India in 2017. The programme provides an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections of society in need of legal advice and consultation, with the empaneled lawyers via video conferencing, telephone and chat facilities, which are made available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs), and through Tele-Law mobile App.

16. Our online access to legal system and virtual hearing of cases have helped in ensuring an easy, accessible and affordable judicial justice system for the people belonging to socially and economically weaker sections.

Mr. Chairman

17. Rule of law at the international level also entails reform of our international institutions of global governance, including those charged with the responsibility of maintenance of international peace and security. Reform of the United Nations, with the Security Council at its core, is needed to uphold the rule of law at international levels and ensure effective multilateral actions. There is an urgent need to ensure rule of law, by making Security Council more representative by providing enhanced representation to developing countries in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

18. We hope that the international community will be able to transform the UN to meet the emerging global challenges of the 21st Century.

19. India remains committed to advancing the rule of law and partnering with the UN and other Member-States in advancing this critical endeavor.