

AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT
79TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 84
“The rule of law at the national and international levels”
NEW YORK, 17TH OCTOBER 2024

Chairperson,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

Chairperson,

The African Group thanks the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/779/117, which provides valuable information on efforts to promote and strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels as well as on the coordination of United Nations rule of law assistance.

The African Group shares the view that the rule of law is interrelated and mutually reinforcing with several key contemporary issues such as peace and security, technology, the planet/**protection of the environment**, human rights and access to justice and that the advancement of the rule of law, at the national and international levels, is essential to handle these issues in a decisive manner. This is particularly crucial at a time when, thanks to the recent Summit of the Future, our Heads of State and Government have defined a vision of the future of international cooperation by providing a new momentum and renewing their commitment to addressing these issues which are essential for the development, well-being and prosperity of the humankind.

In this context, the African Group reaffirms its commitment to the rule of law both at the national and international levels and notes with appreciation the efforts and the assistance provided by the United Nations system during the past year. The rule of law is indeed a core component to achieve the pillars of our organization namely: peace and security, human rights and development.

Chairperson,

In resolution 78/112, the General Assembly invited Member States to focus their comments during the Sixth Committee debate on the rule of law agenda item on the subtopic “The full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system”. While we are pleased to note that several Member States, including from the African Group, continue to invest in participating in the international law-making and international law-enforcement processes, the African Group remains convinced that capacity building and technical assistance are central means to strengthen the rule of law at the international level and more specifically to ensure the effective participation of developing countries in the international legal system.

As noted in the Secretary General’s report, capacity building and technical assistance “form a cornerstone of the efforts to strengthen the role of international law in international relations”. On this aspect, we acknowledge that the UN has created conditions to facilitate the participation of Member States including developing countries at all levels in the international legal system by engaging in capacity-building and technical assistance activities.

We ~~are also~~ recognize ~~of~~ the efforts carried out towards mitigating financial obstacles and facilitating access to and participation of developing countries in the international legal system. Therefore, the African Group encourages the UN to continue promoting international law through its Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. We also urge the UN to continue strengthening its overall efforts in providing capacity building and technical assistance as appropriate and call on all Member States to support these efforts. Moreover, we believe that the said efforts should rest on three interrelated concepts in determining needs and priorities of requesting Member States namely: inclusiveness, effectiveness and national ownership.

Chairperson,

The African Group takes note of the efforts to promote the Rule of Law at the national level by the UN through supporting Member States in the advancement of justice, security, accountability, pertinent legal reforms, the fight against corruption, financial crime, terrorism, organized crime and the handling of environmental challenges which have an impact on our development agendas.

In the same vein, the African Group acknowledges the concerted actions aimed at ensuring the entrenchment of the rule of law at the international level. We note that significant measures have been carried out regarding the codification, development and promotion of international instruments, norms, standards and rules in various sectors including the law of the sea, transports, human rights, disarmament, investments, information and communications technologies. It has also been observed that the international courts and tribunals have increasingly been substantially engaged and continue to play an important role in maintaining the rule of law. The African Group appeals for the continued promotion of peaceful settlement of disputes in line with the principles of the UN Charter.

Chairperson,

As we welcome the efforts made in guaranteeing the full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system, we however remain concerned about the risk of leading the concept of sovereignty into a state of suspended ambiguity. We all recognize that international law guides conduct among states and within this broader framework lies the inter-related relationship among individuals. We emphasize the importance on creating inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies at whose heart is the commitment to: maintain peace and security; respect human rights; and achieve development through the respect of international law.

Therefore, our dedication towards participating in the relevant international law-making and international law-enforcement processes should not put our sovereignty in jeopardy or be misconstrued as yielding sovereignty due to recurrent and provocative foreign interferences. Instead, the participation of a state to the international legal system should be seen as the exercise of its sovereignty in its role to contribute to the achievement of the three pillars of our organization. Further, our common endeavors should be free from insidious and poorly articulated moral considerations that would give rise to the requirement of respecting the rule of law as a conditionality for some opportunities, which actually aims at a brutal conversion to imposed models of thought. We remain unequivocal on the importance of the rule of law to our states as an essential ingredient for the development, well-being and harmony of our societies.

Furthermore, as we reiterate our support to the vision of the Secretary-General for a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system contained in *Our Common Agenda*, we think that common efforts should be pursued in enhancing multilateralism which undoubtedly serves as a crucial institutional arrangement for the promotion of inclusiveness and participation of all in the international legal system and as a tool for the universality of international law.

We need a multilateralism that guides the international rule of law to protect a fair and just multilateral system, upholds the authority and unity of international law, offers more institutional public goods to all our countries through cooperation and mutual understanding, and improves the institutionalization of a global community with a shared future for humanity by enhancing global governance and ensuring that no one and no country is left behind.

We need a multilateralism that is free from power politics and prioritizes the international rule of law. Unfortunately, the crises and tensions that the world is experiencing today, one of the solutions to which could have been strict compliance with international law, which is clearly lacking, teach us that we are a long way from the desired prospects. It is for this reason that we need a renewal of our commitments for the respect of the rule of law.

I thank you for your kind attention.