

Statement by
 Delegation of Sri Lanka
 Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN in New York
 Before the Sixth committee of the United Nations General Assembly 71st Session
 Agenda Item 4: Rule of Law at the National and International Levels
 New York
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Mr. Chairperson

The Rule of Law lays down the essential framework for all societies both domestically and internationally. It must be the common responsibility of all member states to strengthen the Rule of Law at the national and international levels and Sri Lanka supports all efforts being taken in fulfilling these goals.

Sri Lanka takes note of the Report of the Secretary General on the Strengthening and Coordinating of the UN Rule of Law Activities. We welcome the focus of the present debate on sharing national practices of states in the implementation of multilateral treaties and practical measures to facilitate access to justice for all including for the poorest and most vulnerable among us.

As a nation that has suffered a dark period under the yoke of terrorism and an accompanying culture of impunity we are actively conscious of the value of a nation built on the principles of democracy and the Rule of Law. Indeed we believe it to be the fulcrum upon which a fair and just society rests. Without the rule of law working in tandem with the

independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers can be no advancement of peace, development or human rights.

Since the change of administration in 2015 Sri Lanka has undertaken significant and compelling reforms to restore and strengthen the rule of

Sri Lanka passed a Right to Information Act in August this year that will ensure freedom of information. We have taken vital steps towards reconciliation by setting up an Office of Missing Persons to address disappearances and extra judicial activities under a culture of impunity that prevailed before January 2015. We will also be setting up a Truth Seeking Mechanism under the reconciliation process based on the four pillars of truth, justice, reparations and non-recurrence.

We believe that achieving justice in times of transition from conflict and/or state repression, through accountability, redressing victims and recognizing the rights of victims, promotes civic trust and strengthens the democratic rule of law. We believe that States have a duty to guarantee that violations will not recur, and a special duty to reform institutions that proved to be incapable of preventing the abuses.

A break down in the rule of law will lead to social divisiveness and generate

justice for all, and building

At the international level, if the rule of law is to be effective, it must be based on an international order grounded in international law, and in particular the principles enshrined in article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, namely the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference, the prohibition on the threat or use of force and the obligation to settle international disputes peacefully. These principles are the cornerstones of the international legal order and must be respected as international rules are made and implemented.

We wish to emphasize the critical role played in strengthening international rule of law by the principle of sovereign equality, which ensures that all states have an equal opportunity to participate in the international law making process. It is also a principle that protects all states, especially developing countries, from the harshness of an

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In conclusion Mr. Chairperson, Sri Lanka will continue its efforts to reinforce the rule of law within its domestic legal system and looks forward to contributing actively and decisively efforts to strengthen the rule of law at the international level.

Thank you