



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza  
Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See

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Agenda Item 86: **The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**  
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Mr. Chair,

In his 2015 Address to the General Assembly, Pope Francis noted that “The work of the United Nations ... can be seen as the development and promotion of the rule of law, based on the realization that justice is an essential condition for achieving the ideal of universal fraternity.”<sup>1</sup> The General Assembly, in its Resolution 72/119, echoed that insight by reiterating once again that “the promotion of and respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, as well as justice and good governance, should guide the activities of the United Nations and its Members States.”<sup>2</sup>

The Holy See welcomes this Assembly’s recognition that the rule of law at the international and national levels offers a firm foundation for a “peaceful, prosperous, and just world.”<sup>3</sup> At the heart of the Rule of Law lies the respect for all human rights as recognized internationally, together with their effective domestic implementation. In his Address to the General Assembly, Pope Francis expressed that concept using the Latin aphorism *iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuendi* – “Justice is the constant and perpetual will to render to each one his or her rights.”<sup>4</sup>

The UN Charter transposes that concept of justice into international law. The Charter in fact

include the adoption of adequate legislation and the provision of effective remedies at the

national level.<sup>7</sup> The major human rights Conventions impose similar obligations. Moreover, Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 16) echoes those legal obligations in calling on the Member States to provide “access to justice for all.”<sup>8</sup> In fact, the just application of the rule of law at the national level is nothing less than the full respect for human rights.

Mr. Chair,

The rule of law can only be effective if the observance of human rights rests upon adequate “effective, accountable and inclusive” procedures and institutions at the national level, as