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Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 85

The Rule of Law
Statement of the United States

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last year's High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly was an event that placed the rule of law at the center of what we do, and that meeting highlights the centrality of the rule of law to all of our work.

There has been exciting progress in the rule of law over the past year. The Secretary-General's initiatives such as the Joint Office of the Secretary-General and the High Level Panel of Experts are welcome, as well as developments such as the Arms Trade Treaty, which we are proud to sign two weeks ago.

The pledge document we submitted in Geneva is a good example of the strong support we place on rule of law initiatives abroad and at home. Our pledge to support the rule of law is a key part of our work. We pledge to support the rule of law through our bilateral programs, our advisors for police, justice and corrections, and our support for the rule of law through our bilateral programs.

I am pleased to report that we have made progress over the past year. For example, in the area of access to justice here in the United States, the Department of Justice announced a significant domestic access justice initiative on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Gideon v. Wainwright*. Every defendant in a criminal case has the right to an attorney, even if he or she cannot afford one. In *Gideon*, the Supreme Court recognized the significance of safeguarding due process. This constitutes a key part of our ongoing efforts to tackle the rule of law in my country's ongoing efforts to tackle the rule of law in the pursuit of equal justice for all.

In terms of access to justice, we have supported the rule of law through our bilateral programs. Principles and standards on access to justice were adopted by the General Assembly and continued our funding of public defender programs in several countries that provide criminal defense services to poor men, women and children in numerous countries.

