

Introductory remarks by Volker Türk for the 6th Committee

8 October 2021, 1000100

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's annual rule of law report. At the outset, let me thank Qatar, Liechtenstein and Mexico for their leadership in facilitating the annual debate and resolution on the rule of law.

As is traditionally the case M

The pandemic has exposed deep structural inequalities, which have disproportionately impacted the lives and futures of women, minorities, and the most disadvantaged – from the distribution of wealth and resources to the protection of their human rights, access to justice and security, and the delivery of basic services.

These discrepancies in the level of dignity afforded to diverse individuals and groups that comprise our human family have further eroded public trust, especially among young people. It is clear that we need to act on this.

Madam Chair,

The United Nations efforts on rule of law reflect in large part our attempt to fulfill the promise of the United Nations Charter, and what it means to place dignity and human rights at the centre of our actions.

Increasing demands for justice and systemic change require urgent attention to the triple planetary crisis, the rights of future generations, the end of gender and racial injustice, accountability for egregious crimes, curbing corruption and exploring measures to address insufficiently governed digital spaces and the use of new technology. The Secretary-General has pointed this out repeatedly, including in the *Call to Action for Human Rights*.

These crises have led us to a crossroads where we can either, correct course, unite, and take a different path to a brighter future, or stay on the same perilous path that has led us to where we are.

Last month, at the request of the UN75 Leaders' Declaration, the Secretary-General presented to the General Assembly his vision on "*Our Common Agenda*" – in many ways a wake-up call to take urgent action to address these and other challenges facing us today and in the future.

Our Common Agenda recognises that the rule of law and human rights are central to our greatest challenges, and essential to solving them.

Our Common Agenda emphasises the renewal of the social contract by placing people at the centre of governance and justice; building trust by ensuring institutions listen and are responsive to the needs of those they are meant to serve, and concretely addressing drivers of inequality – economic, social, gender and others.

The broadening of people's access to justice and ensuring that the delivery of justice

Indeed, this Committee's important annual resolutions reiterate that human rights and the rule of law are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, in *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General calls for a new systemic vision for the United Nations engagement on the rule of law.

Building on the principle of people-centred approaches to governance and justice and a renewed social contract grounded in human rights, the vision will set out the cornerstones of a comprehensive approach that will seek to engage closely Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

With United Nations support, the Secretary-General is calling for all Member States to help to create a rule of law agenda that is a better fit for the everyday needs of people and that could deal effectively with future crises and challenges.

Against this backdrop I may suggest, the Sixth Committee may wish to consider as a subtopic for the next session, "*Promoting a people-centred rule of law at the national and international levels as the foundation of Our Common Agenda*".

Thank you.