

CROATIA

Statement by

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Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia

at the

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Agenda Item 3

The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Madam Chair,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would also like to add some remarks from our national perspective.

Distinguished Delegates, dear colleagues,

When addressing the contemporary rule of law challenges, we have to acknowledge the stark reality. At the national, as well as international level, the might has too often more leverage than right. There is a pushback against democracy, rule of law and human rights, and the COVID pandemic only made things worse.

Croatia therefore strongly supports Secretary General's Call to Action for Human Rights: a more just and inclusive world and a renewed social contract based on solidarity between governments and their peoples, as well as within the society. However, all that will remain just a set of attractive ideas should there be no major progress in the rule of law, which is crucial for their implementation.

Secretary General's annual report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities, reflects mentioned goals as aspirations. However, when we compare them with what the UN is actually doing to strengthen the rule of law on national and international levels, despite of some achievements mentioned in the report, there is a huge gap.

Can the UN do a better job strengthening and promoting the rule of law? The UN's rule of law activities are currently fragmented and the coordination between various actors is extremely difficult. When considering building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic, we should also reflect on how to provide more resources for the rule of law, as well as on how to ensure concerted action to bridge the gap between aspirations and reality.

Madam Chair,

The rule of law is the cornerstone for democracy, implementation of human rights and preventing atrocity crimes, nationally and internationally. Moreover, without it,

we cannot efficiently prevent climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, nor can we ensure sustainable development.

Croatia reaffirms its strong commitment to the rules-based international order and the international law, two essential ingredients for a peaceful coexistence and cooperation among states. We call upon all States to abide by international law and encourage all parties to resolve their disputes by peaceful means, through dialogue and negotiations and in conformity with international law.

We also fully support the principles of international justice based on an effective and impartial adjudicative mechanism. We support the work and the efforts of the International Criminal Court and call upon those member states yet to ratify the Rome Statute, to do so. The Court remains the most important instrument to fight impunity for the most serious international crimes.

Madam Chair,

Croatia is strongly committed to further advancing the rule of law at the national and international levels. On the EU level, we are supportive of the new mechanisms to uphold and promote the rule of law on an EU-wide scale, such as the Annual Report on the Rule of Law in the EU. It has an important preventative dimension, by providing a useful framework for open and constructive dialogue on the state of the rule of law within the EU and broader trends.

The fight against corruption must be imperative at the national, regional, and international level. We are pleased to inform that last month the Croatian Government adopted a new Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption for the period 2021-2030. Inclusion of citizens, media and civil society in the detection of corruption helps public authorities to work more responsibly, transparently and in an appropriate way to reduce the possibility of corruption.

Madam Chair, let me conclude.

Strengthening of rule of law at the national and international levels is a precondition for a better future not only for us, but also for the generations to come. Let us not betray them!

Thank you.