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UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by Stephen Townley, Deputy Legal Adviser
69th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 82
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels
October 10, 2014

Thank you, Mr.. Chairman.

The United States welcomes this opportunity to follow up on the 2012 high-level meeting
of the General Assembly on the rule oflaw, as well as to discuss this year's particular topic: national practices in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice.

We welcome the Secretary General's report on strengthening and coordinating UN rule
of law activities and were pleased that consideration of the report was deferred until this session of the General Assembly to permit its fuller analysis. We agree that rule oflaw is, as the report suggests, multifaceted, cutting across the UN, and we are interested to exchange views on the most appropriate institutional means for the General Assembly and its Committees to address the topic. We would also stress at the outset that any modalities for addressing rule oflaw must take into account the broad range of legitimate stakeholders. These stakeholders include not only UN components, but also civil society players, such as national bar associations, businesses, and academics.

That said, during the pendency of that discussion, we also believe that we should seek
tangible, step-by-step progress in the various UN and UN-related forums where rule oflaw is currently discussed, whether formally or informally.

Thus, for instance, at the international level, we welcomed the issuance on August 7,
2014 by the Trial Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) of the verdict in Case 002/01. This marked an important step forward in efforts to secure justice and accountability for the people of Cambodia. But much more work remains to be done as the ECCC begins the second phase of Case 002; and the UN' s effort to support the ECCC requires bolstering.

We all know the essential role of good governance and open and accountable institutions
in ensuring inclusive and sustainable development. We welcome the recognition in the report of

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equitable economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger." It is also critical to highlight the importance of access to justice without discrimination, so that all people, including vulnerable individuals and members of vulnerable groups, can enjoy full exercise of their rights and the benefits of development. We have heard Member States from every region recognize the importance of these issues to development and we look forward to their prominence in the post-2015 development agenda.

At the national level, I am pleased to report that we have made progress on implementing
our pledges from the 2012 high-level meeting over the course of the past year. While there is no formal reporting process on such pledges, we hope we can all seize appropriate opportunities to discuss the steps we each have taken. A number of our pledges related to improvements in addressing domestic violence, and I'd like to speak to our work on that issue since we made our pledges.

Just last month, the United States commemorated the twentieth anniversary since the
passing of our landmark Violence Against Women Act, including by issuing a Presidential
Proclamation on the subject. In March 2013, the law was reauthorized. Its protections were
extended, as that Proclamation makes clear, to "make Native American communities safer and
more secure and help ensure victims do not face discrimination based on sexual orientation or
gender identity when they seek assistance. . . . [and to] provide our law enforcement officials
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we continue our collective pursuit