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70th Session of the General Assembly
Sixth Committee

Agenda Item 85: Rule of law at the national and international levels

Statement by Austria

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Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

International law and the rule of law are the foundations of the international system. Austria strongly believes that a rules-based international system with clear and predictable rules is an essential precondition for lasting peace, security, economic development and social progress. We call upon all Member States to actively promote an international order based on the rule of law and international law, with the United Nations at its core. This includes ratification and implementation of relevant international agreements, including international human rights treaties, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, including the International Court of Justice.

Accountability and the fight against impunity for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law are crucial. We must stop mass atrocities and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, including through international criminal justice mechanisms. Austria is a strong supporter of the ICC and has ratified the so-called Kampala amendments to the Statute of the ICC. We have already incorporated genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes into our national criminal code and the new amendment incorporating the crime of ag

to revitalise our debate on the substantive issue we are dealing with under the subtopic in this particular session.

Austria is very proud of the tradition of elaborating and negotiating multilateral treaties in Vienna and I would like to reiterate our strong support for multilateral treaties as the foundation of an international order based on the rule of law. In this regard, Austria attaches particular importance to the work of the International Law Commission, and especially its practice of inviting the views of States during the ongoing consideration of topics and elaboration of draft articles or guidelines. In our view, it would be beneficial for States to take advantage of this opportunity more actively, and to offer their views during the drafting of future multilateral instruments especially given the complexity of multilateral treaty-making processes - in order to ensure broad support leading to eventual adoption and wide ratification of new multilateral treaties.

As far as monitoring implementation and compliance with multilateral treaties are concerned, Austria strongly supports the work of the human rights treaty bodies, including their practice of elaborating general comments. We attach crucial importance to these and similar mechanisms, which enable States to ensure full implementation and compliance with multilateral treaties. In this regard, also the Universal Periodic Review in the framework of the UN Human Rights Council plays an important role, and we believe that it is essential that all States continue to cooperate with this mechanism. Austria is devoting a lot of time and energy to the preparation of its second UPR hearing, which will take place on 12 November 2012 in Geneva. Our delegation will be led by the Austrian Minister of Justice, which is a sign of the importance we attach to this review process.

Austria also supports mechanisms to review reservations to multilateral treaties, for example the European Observatory of Reservations to International Treaties and the reservations dialogue within the framework of the Council of Europe, which promotes reconsideration or withdrawal of reservations. Such a mechanism may be useful also in the context of the United Nations, since the complexity of reservations and of mechanisms monitoring the compliance with multilateral treaties merit particular consideration.

I would also like to express Austria's strong support for

