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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by:

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The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Israel welcomes the opportunity to engage in a meaningful and professional exchange of views regarding the rule oflaw, an important issue on both the national and international level.

The maintenance of and respect for the rule of law is key to the promotion of stability and human rights. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that while this concept is continuously debated in various UN fora, much remains to be discussed.

Mr. Chairman,

On the national level, the rule of law is the essence of any democracy. Good governance and a robust, independent and impartial judiciary are indispensable for the proper maintenance of the rule oflaw.

In a region known for intolerance and suppression, Israel stands out for its commitment to the rule oflaw.

As our President of the Supreme Court said: "The Israeli legal system is a young system, but one with deep historical roots that reflect its Jewish values. It is a legal system that guards its democratic nature despite the existential struggle it has faced since its founding."

Our Declaration of Independence ensures that the majority governs while minorities enjoy equal rights. Pluralism and democracy are the cornerstones of our system of government structure.

While still too many nations in the region relegate women to the margins of society, Israeli women are leaders in every field and discipline: from the courtroom to the classroom and from operating rooms to boardrooms. Already in the 60th's, more than forty years ago, Golda Meir became Israel's Prime Minister - making my country the third in the world to elect a woman to its highest office.

Israel's commitment to the free exchange of ideas has made it a destination of choice for reporters, academics and human rights activists.

Israel's commitment to freedom means that the burden of condemnation falls disproportionately on Israel. It also means

Mr. Chairman,

Israel's Basic Law guarantees judicial autonomy to Israel's courts, including its Supreme Court. This assurance has enabled our judiciary to become internationally renowned for its groundbreakingjudgments on various issues relating to the rule of law.

Our Supreme Court continually conducts careful, but rigorous scrutiny and review of parliamentary legislation, executive policy and administrative action.

Israel also appreciates the importance of access to justice. We have strict rules that grant broad standing rights before our Supreme Court, and that allow citizens and non-citizens alike, as well as civil society organizations to petition the High Court directly, as a court of first instance.

Mr. Chairman,

On the international level, maintaining the rule of law requires an effective multilateral system, founded on international law. In this regard, we support the continuous work of the International Law Commission and the UN Committee on International Trade Law in the development of international law.

We take note of the Secretary-General's recent report concerning the rule of law, which provides a useful basis for our current discussion and to the importance of multilateral treaties in this respect. Each year Israel signs and accedes to dozens of bilateral and multilateral agreements and conventions on issues ranging from space to transportation and from science to environment. Multilateral treaties are a valuable tool in the promotion of the Rule of Law and in international relations in general. Such treaties contribute to stability, transparency and legal certainty in the international sphere.

With respect to the contribution of international tribunals to the rule of law on the international level, we join other delegations in emphasizing the importance of the principle of complementarity and stress that it is the primary responsibility of States to investigate and

prosecute violations of internationalh7

law.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel supports the ongoing UN activities and initiatives for capacity-building and technical assistance as detailed in the Secretary-General's report. Israel has been intensively engaged in providing technical assistance in many regions around the world. Israel cooperates closely with African and East European countries in capacity-building efforts, and has organized seminars and training sessions for judges, prosecutors and investigators, in the fields of public defense, counterterrorism, incitement, and countering the funding of terrorism. We believe that these activities contribute to further develop the rule of law.

In closing, I would like to reiterate Israel's commitment to the rule of law on the national and international levels. This is an important topic and we look forward to continue the discussions on this matter in the Sixth Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.