





have created an impressive body of norms and laws. This is one of our Organization's proudest achievements.

And yet this framework is riddled with gaps and weaknesses. Too often it is applied selectively, and enforced arbitrarily. It lacks the teeth that turn a body of laws into an effective legal system.

Where enforcement capacity does exist, as in the Security Council, many feel it is not always used fairly or effectively. Where rule of law is most earnestly invoked, as in the Commission on Human Rights, those invoking it do not always practise what they preach.

Those who seek to bestow legitimacy must themselves embody it; and those who invoke international law must themselves submit to it.

Just as, within a country, respect for the law depends on the sense that all have a say in making and implementing it, so it is in our global community. No nation must feel excluded. All must feel that international law belongs to them, and protects their legitimate interests.

Rule of law as a mere concept is not enough. Laws must be put into practice, and permeate the fabric of our lives.

It is by strengthening and implementing disarmament treaties, including their verification provisions, that we can best defend ourselves against the proliferation – and potential use – of weapons of mass destruction.

It is by applying the law that we can deny financial resources and safe havens to terrorists – an essential element in any strategy for defeating terrorism.

It is by reintroducing the rule of law, and confidence in its impartial application, that we can hope to resuscitate societies shattered by conflict.

It is the law, including Security Council resolutions, which offers the best foundation for resolving prolonged conflicts – in the Middle East, in Iraq, and around the world.

And it is by rigorously upholding international law that we can, and must, fulfil our responsibility to protect innocent civilians from genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. As I warned this Assembly five years ago, history will judge us very harshly if we let ourselves be deflected in this task, or think we are excused from it, by invocations of national sovereignty.

The Security Council has just requested that I appoint an international commission to investigate reports of human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to report to the Council on its findings and recommendations.

lasting security. But we all know the present limitations of this new-born Union. We must give