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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROMOTION
AND STRENGTHENING OF THE RULE OF LAW IN THE
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY**

New York,

February 19, 2014

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Madam President,

I wish to thank you and the delegation of Lithuania for organizing this open debate, presided over by Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius, on this important topic “The promotion of and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security.” We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Madam President,

Our forbearers recognized, in the UN Charter, the need to live in peace and harmony and expressed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. They reaffirmed the rule of law as one of the fundamental components that contributes to international peace and security.

Uganda therefore underscores the importance of putting in place an enabling environment in which the rule of law, in all its dimensions, is promoted and strengthened at the national and international levels. I would like to underscore four points.

First, it is essential to ensure that efforts to strengthen of the rule of law at the national level are nationally owned and primarily aimed at responding to the needs and aspirations of the people, taking into account national traditions and cultures. The involvement and participation of all citizens, in particular women and youth, is central.

We need to foster adherence to constitutionalism and democratic governance underpinned by strong institutions including the executive, civil service, judiciary, legislature, security, law and order sectors with the necessary checks and balances. The principle of equality of all before the law is fundamental.

Secondly, we concur with the observation in the Concept Note that many countries which have experienced conflicts in the past are prone to repeated cycles of violence, displacement, pervasive humanitarian crisis and instability. One of the ways of avoiding the recurrence is through supporting post-conflict countries to build strong national institutions that promote peace and security, as well as provide economic opportunities so that the population benefits from peace dividends.

We have seen many examples in Africa of post-conflict countries that are on a steady path to durable peace, stability and development through national efforts at building institutions supported by the sub-regional organisations, the AU, the UN and the wider international community. It is important to ensure early action to address gaps or weaknesses in the rule of law and a long-term commitment to implement the necessary reforms.

In pursuit of the rule of law, there is “no one size fits all”. That is why transitional justice mechanisms tailored to individual situations can be useful tools. In Uganda, we have seen the benefits of utilizing traditional methods such as “*mato-put*” which emphasize reconciliation rather than retributive justice, and have strong support of elders, traditional and religious leaders.

Madam President,

Thirdly, the importance of the rule of law as one of the elements of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace building cannot be overemphasized. Yet we need to recognize that such a situation does not occur in a vacuum. Therefore it may be necessary, in some post-conflict situations, to support a legitimate Government to exercise more effective control in order to ensure the sustainability of the gains attained through regional or UN efforts.

Fourth, at the international level we need to ensure that all member States adhere to, and respect international law. No country should have the prerogative to position itself above international law, apply it selectively or with double standards. We are concerned about instances of application of unilateral measures in international relations to pursue individual national interests. Moreover, the marginalization of many developing countries in global political and economic governance institutions should not be allowed to continue.

Madam President,

In conclusion, we call for greater efforts to promote and strengthen the rule of law in all its dimensions, at the national and international levels, in the maintenance of internal peace and security.

Thank you for your kind attention.

