

STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY GHANA TO THE SIXTH  
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE AGENDA  
ITEM 86 "THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS" – 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 20 20

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by distinguished representatives of the Republic of South Africa on behalf of the Africa Group and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary General dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2020, which highlights developments and activities with respect to the rule of law both at the national and international levels over the year under review, particularly, in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic. We express our appreciation to the Rule of Law Unit and also welcome the information provided in the report on the subject related to the codification, development and promotion of an international framework of norms and values, highlighting the treaty actions that were undertaken by Member States in the past session.

We take note with satisfaction that emphasis was given to key areas including building capable and accountable justice and security institutions; security-oriented security and armed violence reduction; access to justice for marginalized groups; security and justice for women and girls; and the culture of lawfulness, the promotion of the rule of law

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to focus our statement on measures taken by the Government of Her Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo within Ghana's legal and justice system in line with our national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, next to the health and economic sectors, the legal and justice sectors in many countries

affected by the pandemic played a prominent role in COVID-19 responses. This underscores the central role of the justice sector in normal life both in times of peace as well as in health emergencies such as we have seen.

Under the aegis of Ghana's abiding respect for the rule of law, Government of Ghana had to introduce a raft of legal interventions under the Public Health Act and Immigration Act, as well as trigger into action clauses of the Constitution dealing with emergency powers and limitation of rights in the Ghana's-rea-aching COVID-19 related responses.

As a safety measure against the spread of the disease, the imposition of Restrictions Act, 2020 (Act 1012), was passed by Parliament and assented to by the President on March 21, 2020. This piece of legislation was enacted to provide powers to the President for the imposition of restrictions in accordance with the constitutional provisions on fundamental human rights in the event or imminence of an emergency, disaster or similar circumstances to ensure public safety, public health and protection.

For better public appreciation of containment and preventive measures put in place, Government provided clarity on the constitutional and legislative basis for decisions taken to enforce the guidelines and protocols issued by the World Health Organization. Government mobilized the police and other related agencies to enforce the protocol of social distancing by stopping gatherings and meetings and to offer free bus tickets. These agencies are also being used to help health officials trace, track, and quarantine people who may have been in contact with others testing positive for the virus.

Elsewhere in the justice sector, many prisoners have been released, ostensibly to avoid overcrowding and its health risks if the virus finds its way to the prisons.

Mr. Chairman,

The pandemic heightened

misdemeanors under the old law. The amended law reiterates existing provisions for various provisions of the previous law but substitutes the relevant provisions by providing specific for stiffer penalties to bring them within the category of first or second degree felony. Corruption, undoubtedly, constrains the economic growth of a country as it reduces revenue to the state and distorts economic development by rewarding the dishonest rather than most competent.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I wish to reiterate Ghana's commitment to the rule of law which underpins Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Ghana's commitment is further expressed in her readiness to embrace every opportunity to further develop national capacity in the Rule of Law. These challenging times of COVID-19 have been no exception and it is our hope that lessons learnt would continue to inform national and international perspectives and best practices in furtherance of the rule of law in all situations.

I thank you.