

Statement on behalf of the Justice Action Coalition

**80th Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

6th Committee

**Agenda item 84:
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

**New York
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– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Thank you Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Justice Action Coalition, a multi-stakeholder, cross-regional group including 21 countries and 21 partners committed to advancing equal access to justice for all under SDG 16.3 and beyond.

This year, as we mark the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, we recall the enduring promise of the UN Charter: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to establish conditions under which justice can be maintained and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The Charter is more than a founding document, it is a living commitment to the rule of law as the foundation of peace, justice, and security among nations.

Yet today, our world faces profound challenges. Billions of people face justice problems that remain unresolved. We see heightened instability, widening inequality, and the erosion of trust in institutions at both national and international levels. We also face challenges for often marginalized segments of the population, including women, indigenous peoples and local communities, children and youth, and persons with disabilities. In this context, the rule of law and access to justice are not abstract principles; they are practical necessities to maintain peace, to promote development, promote and protect human rights, and to strengthen the social contract between States and their people.

A people-centered approach to justice has the power to transform entire systems, making them fairer, more effective, and more responsive to society's needs. Encouraging models of this approach are community-based justice mechanisms which are created in some countries in the form of participatory, multisectoral platforms that bring together state institutions, local authorities, civil society, and community representatives to improve access to justice. Their mission is to coordinate, strengthen, and expand conflict resolution and justice mechanisms, while fostering dialogue and trust between institutions and the people they serve. In doing so, community-based justice mechanisms bring justice closer to the people, ensuring it is not just an abstract promise but a lived reality in daily life.

Mr. Chair,

The theme of the 80th session of the General Assembly "Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights" is both a reminder and a challenge: that global commitments must be rooted in the lived realities of our citizens. For this reason, the Justice Action Coalition emphasizes the importance of a people and human rights centered approach to justice, an approach that makes the shift from providing justice for only a few, to one that delivers measurable improvements in justice for all.

A people-centered approach ensures that justice systems are accessible, fair, equal, and effective for all, without discrimination of any kind. It means addressing everyday justice problems that affect people's lives including: violence and crime, disputes involving land, housing and neighbors, unresolved family disputes, or

those related to access to public services, and legal needs related to employment or businesses. In so doing, we strengthen not only justice but also peace, stability, human rights, and sustainable development.

The Justice Action Coalition works actively to make this vision a reality. We promote the collection and use of data and evidence to understand the justice needs of people and to design responses that work. Quality people-centered justice data is essential to close gaps and measure progress. We call on governments, the UN System and partners to invest in open, interoperable data and to support shared standards so that reforms are tracked and scaled.

The Justice Action Coalition supports countries in adopting and scaling strategic, people-centered justice initiatives at the national level. This includes co-creating strategies with governments and stakeholders, facilitating access to international expertise and partnerships, and mobilizing financial support. We invite all Member States to join us in this effort, so that together we can ensure effective justice systems are responsive to people's needs, strengthen trust in institutions, prevent conflict, and advance peace, stability, human rights and sustainable development.

And, we promote increased and smarter financing for justice guided by frameworks such as the Justice Financing Framework. Delivering justice at scale requires predictable and sustainable investment in frontline services, aligned with national priorities and consistent with the principles of judicial independence and the rule of law. Justice, like health and education, requires sustainable investment if it is to serve as a true enabler of peace and development. We urge donors and governments to prioritize cost-effective legal assistance, information services and community dispute resolution as part of development and humanitarian spending.

Mr. Chair,

Eighty years after its founding, the United Nations remains the most important forum for advancing the rule of law and access to justice among nations and within them. As we look to the future, the Justice Action Coalition stands ready to partner with Member States, the United Nations system, and civil society to ensure that justice remains central to delivering for people and planet.

I thank you.