



SLOVENIA

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MS DARJA BAVDAŽ KURET

**Minister for Development Cooperation
in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

**Fourteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the
International Criminal Court**

General debate

The Hague, 18 November 2015

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Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address this Assembly today on behalf of Slovenia. Let me begin by expressing Slovenia's appreciation for your valuable leadership, Mr President, and express our full support to your important role. We would also like to warmly thank the Court and its staff for their hard work.

In only a few days' time, we will mark the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Nuremberg trials. Seventy years later we not only pride ourselves with the existence of the permanent international criminal court but with notable progress and achievements of the Court.

However, despite many accomplishments, including since our last Assembly session, continuous occurrences of atrocity crimes as well as challenges in combating impunity, remind us of the need to do more. This is an important priority for my government.

It is worrying that many victims of dreadful crimes remain out of the Court's reach, the consequences of which we continue to witness in several situations, including Syria and Iraq.

With a number of tragic events caused by terrorist acts around the globe, including the latest in France, we are further reminded of the need to search for solutions to remaining accountability gaps. While currently terrorist acts as such go beyond the remit of ICC, lack of universality often prevents it from addressing such acts even in the context of the Rome Statute.

Promoting universality should remain one of our key priorities. I am pleased to inform that Slovenia's determination to promote ratification of the Rome Statute and the Kampala amendments is reflected in our new Foreign Policy Strategy adopted this year.

With a view to promoting universality, Slovenia's Foreign Minister, Mr Karl Erjavec, also joined other members of the Informal Ministerial Network supporting the ICC in adopting the Action Plan on universality earlier this year.

Moreover, my government organized two international conferences which put international criminal justice high on the agenda: the *Rights for Peace: Challenges and Opportunities* conference in April and the annual international Bled Strategic Forum in September. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the Court and the Prosecutor for their participation and valuable contribution at the two events.

Mr President,

Slovenia is committed to jointly searching for solutions to the existing challenges. This, however, requires inclusive and constructive dialogue while having due regard for the judicial independence and integrity of the Court. These are two fundamental principles that should guide all our discussions, also at this Assembly session.

We look forward to participating in this year's discussions on a number of important issues, including efficiency and effectiveness of Court proceedings as well as cooperation and complementarity.

Efficiency and effectiveness of Court proceedings, high quality justice delivered in a timely and cost effective manner contribute importantly to the positive perception and legitimacy of the Court. We therefore commend the determination within the Court to continue enhancing its functioning.

High quality justice goes hand in hand with highly qualified judges. In this respect, Slovenia recognizes the valuable role of the Advisory Committee on Nomination of Judges and congratulates its newly elected members. We are glad that Slovenia's candidate dr. Ernest Petrič will continue to work for the second term in the Advisory Committee.

While the Court can do a lot to enhance its efficiency, its success depends largely on cooperation by the international community, in particular States Parties. It is imperative that States Parties comply with the Rome Statute obligations, including on full and prompt cooperation with the Court. With 12 outstanding arrest warrants, we welcome the focus of this Assembly session on the way forward with respect to cooperation.

Moreover, recalling our intervention at last year's Assembly session, we are pleased to note that a dialogue on voluntary agreements with the ICC will be held at this session. I am convinced this will offer valuable information to States Parties that might be exploring the possibility of concluding voluntary agreements.

Allow me now to turn to the principle of complementarity. It is essential to focus on improving national legislation, capacity building and inter-State cooperation in order to enhance domestic prosecution of atrocity crimes.

Slovenia is actively engaged in these efforts, in particular through the initiative to adopt a new international instrument on mutual legal assistance and extradition between States for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, that is the MLA initiative.

I would like to invite all States to join in and further invite you to attend the side event on the MLA initiative co-organised with Argentina, Belgium and the Netherlands, which will take place at lunchtime tomorrow.

My delegation would also like to commend the focus of this year's complementarity discussions on sexual and gender-based crimes. It is encouraging to note increased determination by the international community to address these crimes, where we also welcome the Policy Paper by the Office of the Prosecutor.

We need to keep these important issues high on our agenda. In September my government, too, contributed to these efforts by hosting an international conference where a panel discussion was dedicated to this important issue.

To conclude, the ICC, as an important tool for prevention and prosecution of atrocity crimes, deserves our strong political commitment as well as constructive engagement in further strengthening its role. With this in mind, we look forward to working constructively with all the participants to achieve a successful outcome of this Assembly.