



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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GENERAL DEBATE

Statement delivered by Ms Maria Telalian
Legal Advisor, Head of the Legal Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour for me to address this Assembly today on behalf of Greece. My delegation aligns itself fully with the statement made earlier by Austria on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Let me first express our sincere gratitude to you, Mr President, for all your efforts during the first year of your mandate. Let me also congratulate Vice-President Horslund and the new members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims and the Advisory Committee on Nominations for their election.

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. On this occasion Greece, having wholeheartedly supported the establishment of the Court from the very beginning, would like to renew its commitment to the Court, a key actor in providing recourse to justice for victims and ending impunity for perpetrators of the crimes that shock the conscience of humanity. We also welcome the historic activation last July of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression which completes the regulatory framework of the Rome Statute and reinforces the prohibition and prevention of the illegal use of force in international relations, thus contributing to the strengthening of the relevant principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. On our side we are at the final stages of the process of the ratification of the amendment on this crime.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the many significant achievements of the Court to date, the Court nevertheless faces a number of serious challenges today. These challenges include, among others, the lack of cooperation with the Court as well as the lack of universality, as a result of which the perpetrators of mass atrocities in many parts of the world are left unpunished, thus leaving the victims of such crimes without protection and without remedy for the harm suffered. It is therefore the duty of the international community to make a stronger commitment to the Court and assist it in efforts to address these challenges.

Greece, a staunch supporter of the Court, wishes to express once again its unconditional support to the ICC and the integrity of its Statute. We stand by the side of the Court in the fulfilment of its tasks and we take this opportunity to reiterate our full respect for its independence. The Court

should continue to deliver international justice with full judicial and prosecutorial independence.

Likewise, we deeply regret the recent withdrawals of certain States from the Rome Statute, which may seriously undermine the international justice system as well as expectations for national measures to establish accountability and redress for victims. They also undermine the efforts to ensure universality of the Rome Statute and effective cooperation with the Court. We therefore call on these States to review their decisions to withdraw from the Rome Statute and renew their support to the Court and its independence.

Mr. President,

The fundamental principle underpinning the ICC is the principle of complementarity, which however will only be fully realized with the adoption by States of effective national legislation implementing the Rome Statute. Yet, only about a half of States Parties have adopted such legislation. We take, therefore, this opportunity to appeal to all States that have not yet done so to join the Rome Statute and adopt the necessary domestic legislation in this regard.

It is also equally important for States to ensure full cooperation with the Court in its own investigations and prosecutions, in order for the latter to successfully fulfil its mission. Similarly, in the case of Security Council referrals, we are of the view that the Security Council should provide the Court with full support in order to enable it to conduct effectively its investigations and prosecutions in the referred situations, making thus full use of the possibilities the Rome Statute offers in the fight against impunity.

Mr. President,

Regarding this year's budget of the Court, let me first point out that Greece has always been fulfilling its financial obligations towards the Court and notes with concern the high amount of arrears. We appreciate the efforts of the Court to identify savings and efficiencies and we would like to encourage it to make more efficient use of its resources.

Mr. President,

In concluding, I would like to stress that despite the many challenges facing the ICC today, it is obvious that the Court is the only permanent international judicial institution that can deliver justice by holding accountable the perpetrators of atrocity crimes, when States are unwilling or unable to do that. It is, therefore, crucial to allow it to fulfil its mandate in accordance with its statutory framework and without hindrance and outside interference.

I thank you Mr. President