



SLOVENIA

STATEMENT

BY

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the International Criminal Court**

General debate

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Mr President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my country's appreciation to President O-Gon Kwon for his leadership. In addition to the statement, delivered by the Austria on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, let me express Slovenia's unwavering support to the International Criminal Court and the rule of law in general. Slovenia is active in both multilateral and regional fora. We strive to promote support for the Court's work through bilateral contacts, as well as our own events and initiatives. Slovenia will, at this Assembly of State Parties, show its support also by signing the Agreement on Enforcement of Sentences with the ICC.

2018 was a landmark year for the ICC, both due to the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute and the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, which supplemented definitions of atrocities as originally envisaged under the Rome Statute.

Slovenia joined others in commemorating the 20th anniversary by organising a round table in Ljubljana in June and a special panel at our most prominent annual foreign policy international conference, the Bled Strategic Forum, held in September. At the latter, Ms Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the ICC was presented with the Bled Strategic Forum Distinguished Partner 2018 Award. I would especially like to thank President Kwon for his participation at the panel discussion.

Regarding the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, Slovenia was the second state that both ratified and implemented the amendments. We welcome the activation of extended jurisdiction over crimes of aggression. We also support other adopted amendments to the Rome Statute and call on all State Parties to ratify them.

Mr President,

Like other international organisations, the Court is not free of challenges. It is important to appreciate the complexity of establishing a court that prosecutes high-ranking individuals in a complex international context. Given its increasingly active role and developments in the international arena, which challenge the concept of multilateralism, it is imperative to continue to support the Court's work and its independence. The Court needs and deserves our strong political commitment, as well as full and prompt cooperation.

We regret the fact that 15 arrest warrants issued by the Court remain outstanding, some of them for several years. Slovenia therefore calls upon all States to abide by their international commitments.

Slovenia would also like to stress the importance of our work towards the universality of the Court. This requires universal ratification of the Rome Statute and for its standards to be incorporated into all national legal systems.

Looking forward we see a just, functional and effective Court. In this context, Slovenia considers that the increased cooperation between the UN Security Council

and the ICC would contribute significantly to the prevention of atrocity crimes, as well as to the Court's effectiveness and credibility. The role of the Council and the Court are inherently inter-linked, and the overall work of the UN is crucial in fulfilment of the Court's mandate. This is why support for the ICC and international law more generally are also among Slovenia's foreign policy priorities as well as among our priorities at this year's 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. Slovenia also supports initiatives within the United Nations that call for the non-use of veto right in the Security Council concerning the situations involving atrocity crimes and referrals of cases to the ICC.

There are many important tasks before the States Parties in the upcoming years. One of the most important ones will be the selection process for new Prosecutor. We should all strive for a merit-based, inclusive and transparent process.

The Office of the Prosecutor should continue to investigate and prosecute all crimes in its mandate, including sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children.

Another important discussion ahead of us concerns the budget. The Court's effectiveness is closely related to the allocation of sufficient financial resources and their effective use. At the same time, it is crucial that the outcome of the budgetary process does not impede the Court's mandate.

Equal participation and leadership of women in decision making and action in the area of international criminal justice will stay an important issue.

Slovenia is pleased to note the positive developments regarding reparations to victims. Assistance to victims and reparations for their suffering are essential for justice to be truly meaningful. The Trust Fund for Victims plays an important role in this respect. Slovenia will continue to financially support the Trust Fund and will contribute to the Fund also this year.

Mr President,

Taking into account the complementary role of the ICC, Slovenia recognizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of national jurisdictions to prosecute perpetrators of the most serious crimes. This is one of the reasons why Slovenia, together with Argentina, Belgium, the Netherlands, Mongolia and Senegal, will continue its efforts aimed at the adoption of the *Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes*. We are pleased that 60 States, including States not Parties to the Rome Statute, have already joined the so-called MLA initiative and that the first draft text of the Convention has been presented. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the participating States and invite all other States to join the initiative.

Mr President,

The Assembly sessions provide an important occasion to revitalise our strong commitment to the Court, evaluate new developments and discuss ways to

strengthen it. This year, in light of the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute, and the variety of the Court's challenges, it is more important than ever to show the continued relevance of the Court and its significance in attaining justice for victims worldwide. We therefore call on all States to use the opportunity of this Assembly session to work constructively and to display a strong commitment to the Court in the future.

Thank you.