



**Eighteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the International Criminal Court**

**Statement by
H.E. Ms. Aiga Liepiņa
Ambassador of Latvia to the Netherlands**

Mr President, Colleagues,

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and would like to highlight the following in its national capacity.

Mr President,

Effective multilateralism and the rules based international system has been a long-standing priority for Latvia's foreign policy.

We are committed to uphold and defend the principles and values enshrined in the Rome Statute to fight the impunity and strengthen accountability for most heinous crimes. To succeed in this endeavor, the International Criminal Court needs a strong support of the international community.

My delegation regrets the withdrawal of one State Party from the Rome Statute in March this year. We believe that the difficulties encountered between individual countries and the Court must be solved without undermining the Court's relevance within the international judiciary system. Latvia warmly welcomes Kiribati's accession to the Rome Statute and looks forward to other states to follow suit.

While the Court continues to encounter multifaceted challenges, both externally and internally, it is very important that we all contribute to enhance its performance. All stakeholders must keep up their efforts to strengthen the Court's independence, efficiency and effectiveness.

In this context let me thank the President and Vice Presidents of the Assembly for their role in coordinating the efforts for the review process of the Court. We see this session of the Assembly

as a unique opportunity for the State Parties to adopt measures that will further strengthen the Court's role in the international justice system.

Mr President,

As we head towards the elections of the Prosecutor and 6 judges of the ICC next year, the States Parties have an urgent responsibility to ensure that the best qualified candidates are nominated and elected to the judiciary. My country Latvia supports the adoption of a resolution in this regard and calls on all the State Parties to ensure its full implementation.

That would be an important but not the only step we should take at this point. Therefore, we have a high hope and trust by commissioning the independent expert review to present us, the Assembly, with a set of recommendations how to make the Court and the Rome Statute system stronger.

My delegation welcomes the Court's Strategic Planning documents for the period of 2019-2021. We see important improvements to the overall performance, and good governance. We encourage the Court to consider further measures to achieve greater efficiency, including the budgetary one.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to call on States Parties that are in due for payment of their annual contribution to pay their contributions and to settle their outstanding arrears without further delay.

Mr President,

I would also like to echo all statements made at this Assembly that highlighted the importance of securing equitable geographical representation amongst the officials of the Court. Latvia in particular welcomes the efforts to integrate the gender perspective into the Court's bodies. We are convinced that an equitable geographical and gender representation provides for greater legitimacy and strengthens the overall capacity of any organisation to fulfil its mandate. It is also vitally important for the ICC.

And, to conclude, during these days we have heard a strong collective commitment to strengthen the Court's delivery of justice and thus - contribute to the sustainable peace. Let me once again repeat my country's readiness to engage in constructive discussions in this Assembly aimed at adopting concrete measures that will contribute to this common goal.

Thank you.