

H.E. Mr. David Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
at the 19th session of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP)
The Hague, 14 December 2020

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to address the Assembly of States Parties today on behalf of Georgia, a founding member of the Rome Statute system.

This year, for the first time in ASP's history, we have to deliver prerecorded videos instead of in-person statement due to worldwide pandemic.

This format is far from ideal, but at this crucial juncture it is more important than ever that we share our views on the only permanent international criminal court.

Mr President,

It is not overstating to say that the existence of the ICC, the institution of "many firsts" of international criminal justice project, is a great achievement in itself.

While certain criticisms are leveled at the ICC, its achievements in prosecuting the core international crimes and in delivering reparative justice to victims, are highly appreciated.

In this regard, as a representative of a "situation country", I firmly believe that the justice will be delivered in a timely manner for the victims of the Russia's full-scale aggression against Georgia in 2008.

Mr President,

For Georgia, rules-based international order is of fundamental importance, which cannot be achieved without dedicated actors.

To this effect, we were in the forefront of establishing permanent international criminal court as a member of "Like Minded" group of states sharing the objective of establishing a strong Court.

Having this in mind, Georgia supports the Court's continued efforts to enhance its performance, efficiency and legitimacy.

In this regard, we note with appreciation 384 "concrete, achievable and actionable recommendations" regarding (i) Governance; (ii) Judiciary; and (iii) Prosecutorial Processes, identified by the Independent Expert Review.

We hope that this unprecedented review process transforms the ICC into a more resilient international court with improved performance.

Mr President,

At this ASP we will elect a number of key positions in the Rome Statute system in an almost complete turnover of leadership, including six new Judges and the Prosecutor.

Georgia attaches particular importance to the judicial elections, therefore we have nominated a Georgian candidate for the ICC judge.

I draw your attention that in line with the regulations, this year the States Parties will be required to select at least one out of two nominated candidates from Eastern Europe.

Therefore, I seize this opportunity to kindly ask all the delegations to support the Georgian candidate, Prof. Gocha Lordkipanidze to be elected as a new judge of the ICC, to ensure equitable geographical representation within the membership of the bench.

While his solid professional and personal qualities are publicly available on the ASP's webpage, I will only recall that Professor Lordkipanidze: (1) was nominated through an exceptional national selection procedure - he was evaluated by the former ICC Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova and the former ICC Registrar, Herman von Hebel, (2) he was unanimously endorsed by the Parliament of Georgia, which attests to the candidate's high level of legitimacy, (3) the ACN concluded that he is a qualified candidate for the ICC and (4) he demonstrated excellent performance at the public roundtable

Mr President,

Not only Georgia is one of the architects of the Rome Statute system, it has established itself as a role-model in cooperating with the Court.

We believe that Georgia deserves to be represented in the judicial bench of the ICC for the first time for what it did and what it can do with the ICC and in the ICC.

Thank you.