



**REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

**7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of the State Parties to the  
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

14 to 22 November 2008

**General Debate**

**Statement by**

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Foreign Affairs**

**The Hague, 15 November 2008**

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of the Republic of Slovenia and at the same time underline our strong support for the statement made by France in the name of the European Union.

I wish to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your appointment at this important function. We have full trust that you will lead Assembly's work in a very competent and efficient manner. I would also like to thank the Judges, the Prosecutor, the Registrar, all officials and personnel of the Court for their hard work. We look forward to the work ahead of us in this year's Assembly session.

*(10th anniversary and universality)*

This year we mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. A historic event, which confirmed the principle that the most severe crimes known to humanity cannot and would not go unpunished. The ICC has been putting this principle into practice. We are very satisfied that the number of States Parties has grown to as many as 108 states and we hope that the states that have not yet ratified the Rome Statute will do so in the near future in order to achieve our final goal - establishment of a truly universal international criminal court. Therefore efforts to increase the number of states parties must continue.

*(Peace and justice)*

We commend the ICC for its achievements done so far. However the real work is only just beginning. There are many complex legal issues, but also practical ones, which the Court as the first truly international criminal court will have to face. It is our strong position that we need to ensure the Court's full independence, even though we are aware that it might be difficult for the court to be shielded from any political pressure. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that with the help, support and assistance by all States, the Court can and will continue to serve justice and peace.

We firmly believe that there can not be a lasting peace without justice. We believe the Court through providing justice contributes to the establishment of lasting stability and peace in the affected areas. We are not convinced by arguments that justice may represent an obstacle to peaceful settlement in the conflict areas. The Court should not only punish perpetrators for crimes committed but should also send a strong message that no such crime will go unpunished. The role of prevention and deterrence must not be underestimated.

Mr. President,

*(Cooperation)*

We are aware that cooperation between the Court and the States Parties is of key importance for the existence and functioning of the Court. Not only States Parties, but all states, United Nations and other international and regional organisations should in our view cooperate fully with the Court. Therefore we must strengthen the cooperation in practice. The orders of the Court, especially the arrest warrants, must be fully and unconditionally implemented. Slovenia remains fully committed to this principle and we have to this end adopted a special law, concerning Slovenia's cooperation with the Court. On 1 November this year our new Criminal Code entered into force. The new Code includes all

four crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court, including the crime of aggression and follows the Rome Statute in its definitions – where already available.

*(Victims Trust Fund)*

Slovenia commends the work of the Trust Fund for Victims. It is important to help the victims prior to the first trial before the Court is brought to an end. Let us never forget, that the victims are the most vulnerable group in the whole process. They cannot wait. They need justice in order to heal; they need all the support and protection possible. We must keep in mind that the prosecution of the most heinous crimes does not only mean punishment of the perpetrators, but also tries to speak for the victims. It brings justice to areas of conflict.

We will devote quite a substantive amount of time to the proposed budget. We would like to express our expectations that the current economic and financial situation will be taken into account and that financial provisions have to be met with the financial capability of Member States. In this regard we wish to thank all the members of the Committee on Budget and Finance for their excellent work and recommendations.

*(Review Conference)*

In the course of next few years a very important event for the future of ICC will take place. We all have great hopes and expectations of the 2010 Review Conference. The crime of aggression is without any doubt the most significant substantial part of it. But we must also not forget that there are other issues to be deliberated if we want to use the chance provided for in the Statute to even improve the statute itself and thus help the Court to become even more effective and efficient. We must therefore follow the decision and prepare the working documents for the Conference and use the time we have at disposal to prepare the conference as good as possible.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by expressing our hope that we will have a very constructive and productive discussion in the next nine days. We should all keep in mind that we are striving for a common goal: to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Only with joined and united support of the international community as a whole, the goal can be achieved.

Thank you.