

GENERAL DEBATE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
NINTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES, NEW YORK, 6-10 DECEMBER 2010
STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
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MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Mr. President,

Since this is the last session under your chairmanship allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on extraordinary manner in which you have conducted your responsible task and for your tireless efforts in guiding our work last couple of years. Our gratitude goes also to Vice-Presidents , Rapporteur and other members of the Bureau.

As Croatia aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union, please allow me to highlight just a few points that in our opinion deserve full attention of the Assembly.

Mr. President,

This is the first session of the Assembly of the State Parties after successful Review Conference in Uganda. Croatia is honored that it could participate in the work of the Review Conference with so many representatives of the States parties, observers, international organizations and NGOs.

We are in particular pleased that the first Review Conference took place at the soil of Africa and that has demonstrated renewed commitment for the development and strengthening of the International Criminal Court. Once again it was confirmed that Rome Statute and the ICC are crucial tools for the strengthening the international justice.

The inclusion of the crime of aggression in the Court's jurisdiction through the adoption of the amendments to the Rome statute represents a giant step forward for the development of the International Criminal Law which Croatia strongly supports.

My delegation congratulates Seychelles for ratifying and welcomes Bangladesh, Moldova and Saint Lucia as the new State Parties to the Rome Statute. We call

upon other States that have not yet ratified the Statute to consider doing so in the near future. Universal ratification of the Rome Statute is crucial to the Court's success. We have to be aware that impunity for the most serious crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, poses a global challenge which requires a global response.

Mr. President,

Although we have already achieved significant results through the implementation of the Rome Statute and adopting its amendments as well as though the life of the Court, the international community has still very high expectations for the Court. Nothing can serve the interest of justice better than a functioning and credible Court. The success of the Court itself will be measured on the basis of the quality of its work and application of the highest standards.

However the first cases in the trial stage and pre-trial proceedings, the opening of more and more new investigations, were not an end in itself. It remains our common responsibility to effectively prevent conflicts, protect and promote human rights, uphold the international humanitarian law and the rule of law in general. Without putting an end to impunity, these efforts would remain incomplete. Without putting an end to impunity a process of reconciliation in post-conflict countries could not be achieved.

Mr. President,

Croatia is of the view that the key issues for our successful future activities of the ICC are complementarity, cooperation and attention to the victims and affected communities.

Complementarity is crucial for the effective functioning of the system created under the Rome Statute and all States have the duty to exercise their national criminal jurisdiction to prosecute international crimes.

Complementarity between the Court's activities and national criminal jurisdictions requires cooperation between the court and states for the arrest and surrender of suspects as well as cooperation between States in investigations and prosecutions at the national level. Unfortunately we note with great concern that currently 7 arrest warnings are still awaiting their execution.

State cooperation and support are indispensable for making justice operational. However, it is of paramount importance that all States, not only those directly

involved in cases before the Court but also non-State parties, cooperate with the Court and with each other.

National courts and bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, local victim's groups, women's associations and others play significant role in protection of the victims and their interests. But whenever State is unable or unwilling to protect the rights of the victims it is up to the ICC to take action. This is why Croatia consider so important and welcomes the activities of the Trust Fund for Victims.

Last but not least: prior to proceeding with the consideration and adoption of the budget, my delegation wishes to underline that having sufficient and transparent budget as well as receiving contributions from State Parties on time is of great importance for the work of the Court.

Finally Mr. President, as the representative of the country which strongly advocated the establishment of the ICC and was also the first country of the Southeast Europe which ratified Rome Statute, let me reiterate Croatia's strong support to the Court and its activities and to wish successful work to this Assembly.

Thank you.