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General Debate**

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Statement by H.E. Mr Peep Jahilo

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia

Madam President,
Members of the Assembly,
Distinguished delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today, to reaffirm Estonia's support for the International Criminal Court. The Court is a monumental achievement in the fight for accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. I would like to thank the Court for its excellent work towards justice, peace and reconciliation over the past 11 years.

However, there are some concerns to be addressed. Non-cooperation is a weighty obstacle. It hinders the Court's work and distorts justice. It also offends likeminded States Parties who align themselves with the principles of the Rome Statute. The other important issue is the protection of witnesses. The prosecutor cannot build successful cases without evidence from witnesses, but adequate witness protection measures must be in place so that witnesses can safely provide evidence.

Madame President,

We acknowledge today that the International Criminal Court is committed to becoming a universal system of criminal justice. The Court exists to complement national systems, to intervene only when a State cannot or will not investigate or, where relevant, prosecute in good faith. The Court is not intended to replace domestic systems or to dominate them – and it is not trying to.

We must ensure that more States are willing and able to prosecute atrocity crimes. This requires a number of things. Domestic investigators, lawyers and judges need to be trained on the law of atrocity crimes, and on techniques for investigating and adjudicating them. I am proud to highlight that Estonia co-sponsored two seminars on witness protection, in Dakar, Senegal and Arusha, Tanzania. In addition, in co-operation with other stakeholders, Estonia financed other events held in African States Parties. Estonia has also become a donor to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Madam President,

Finally, I am happy to announce that, this year, Estonia became the seventh state to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute. We call upon States Parties who have yet not done so to ratify the amendments. This would be one more step forward in the efforts to end aggression, to bring peace and justice to the world.

Thank you for your attention.