



Statement by the Republic of Cyprus

General Debate of the 16th Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court (4 - 14 December 2017)

Delivery: H.E. Kornelios Korneliou, Head of Delegation

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address the Assembly of States Parties at its 16th session. Cyprus fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

We wish to thank the outgoing president of the Assembly, Minister Kaba (Republic of Senegal) for his invaluable service, and congratulate incoming President Mr. O-Gon Kwon (Republic of Korea) for his election as President of the Assembly for the next triennium.

We are pleased to note that the Court has had another full year in terms of judicial proceedings, investigations, preliminary examinations and institutional developments. The successful discharge of the Court's mandate much depends on the expertise of the judges on its bench. In this respect we warmly congratulate the six new judges successfully elected at this session. We also welcome the significant progress in proceedings relating to reparations to victims, as well as the on-going preparation of the Office of the Prosecutor's Policy Paper on the Protection of Cultural Property within the Rome Statute framework.

The upcoming 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute offers an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Rome Statute system. It also offers an

opportunity for reflection on the achievements and the significant distance covered during this time, as well as on ways to address challenges and further reinforce the Court.

Although our three-year appointment as ad country co-focal point for the Universality and Full Implementation of the Rome Statute was completed at the end of last year, we remain strong supporters of the collective efforts to promote the universality of the Statute. In this vein, last July, Cyprus along with Denmark launched the social-media campaign “Join” that seeks to tackle some of the common concerns of states not yet parties to the Rome Statute.

We are especially pleased to note that the Government of The Gambia has rescinded their notification of withdrawal. We also welcome the 35th ratification of the Kampala Amendments by Panama.

We can only regret that the withdrawal of Burundi has come into effect and express concern over the announcement of South Africa to go ahead with its withdrawal. We are convinced that open and frank dialogue within the institution, is the way to go.

The Rome Statute system was not meant to be static. Being able to develop and adapt is key to the Court’s future success. We wish to focus our comments on two important matters before us during this session:

- We look forward to activating, before the end of this session, the Court’s jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, to effectively complete the Rome Statute as originally drafted and reinforce the United Nations Charter. We are convinced that the activation decision can remain respectful to the differing views which continue to exist only with regard to the Court’s exercise of jurisdiction over crimes of aggression, while at the same time not re-negotiating or reopening the

Kampala Amendments. In this respect, we continue to regard the option of the declaration (opt-out) as valuable technical tool, which may be used for legal or other reasons by States Parties which are not yet in a position to accept the jurisdiction of the Court. We also reiterate the call to States Parties to ratify the Amendments.

- Furthermore, we support the Belgian proposal of amendments to Article 8 of the Rome Statute, which aims to add four war crimes to the Statute, relating to employing Biological or toxin weapons, Anti-personnel mines, Weapons causing injuries by fragments which in the human body escape detection by x-rays and Weapons causing permanent blindness. Each of these weapons can cause immense suffering or killing in an indiscriminate way. Their incorporation into Article 8, would therefore allow us to bring the Statute even more closely in line with customary International Humanitarian Law.

I thank you for your attention.