

**STATEMENT OF ESTONIA AT THE 17<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE  
5 DECEMBER 2018**

Mr President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia has the honour to address the Assembly of State Parties. We would like to express our gratitude and congratulate His Excellency Kwon on his first year as President of the Assembly.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Mr President,

This year we have been celebrating the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the adoption of the Rome Statute, which has given the international community a good occasion to engage in a more concerted collective effort to highlight the work and the role of the ICC.

From the very beginning, the ICC has played a crucial role in the maintenance of **a rules-and-values-based world order** and contributing to peaceful societies. It is unfortunate that today we see that the rules based international system – the foundation of the international community – is increasingly challenged and questioned.

**The application of international law**, including the Rome Statute, is vital to combat impunity and to prevent the most serious crimes and the deterrence of conflicts. International law provides transparency and predictability of State behaviour and reduces the risk of intolerable practices.

It is never superfluous to emphasise that international criminal justice and ICC need our support. Estonia would once again like to express our strong support to the ICC and call for **universal ratification of Rome Statute**.

Mr President,

Estonia would like to recall that this is the primary duty of States to prevent and respond to international crimes and stress that ICC complements, not replaces, national courts. **Complementary** role of the ICC in cooperation with national justice systems and assistance to their strengthening is of particular importance to combat impunity.

We need to strengthen our common efforts to end conflicts and make perpetrators accountable. Effectiveness and the efficiency of the ICC to fulfil its mandate inevitably depends on **States' full cooperation** with the ICC, irrespective whether they are State Parties or not. Prompt and unconditional execution of arrest warrants of ICC remain a challenge today. When States Parties do not comply, the ICC must be able to rely on the **Security Council** to intervene with full support.

Mr President,

The ICC is currently dealing with more cases and situations than ever, covering most of the regions of the world. We note the significant judicial developments at all stages of proceedings of the ICC. However, facing the increasing workload also creates challenges for the **ICC to remain efficient and effective**.

We encourage the ICC to continue exploring the possibilities of using new technologies and developing and implementing meaningful performance indicators in order to **improve efficiency**. We welcome attention paid to the improvement of the ICT systems of the ICC and work carried out by the CBF and the ICC in this regard. Effective use of modern ICT systems not only help to raise the efficiency of the functioning of the Court but also has a positive impact on the better use of limited financial resources. Estonia has effectively integrated use of ICT in our court proceedings and we stand ready to share our experience in electronic court proceedings and communication.

Mr President,

Estonia welcomes particular efforts of the **Office of the Prosecutor** of ICC to integrate a gender perspective and analysis into its work and launching of the Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes in 2014 and its current implementation.

We also need to do more to offer important **protection for victims and witnesses** that have suffered or witnessed crimes. Here we would like to stress the ICC's important role for delivering justice to victims of atrocious crimes in providing assistance and awarding reparations. We would also like to reiterate the role that **civil society** plays in fighting for global justice for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We would like to express our appreciation and strong support to the work of the **ICC Trust Fund for Victims** to which Estonia also regularly contributes. We encourage States, irrespective whether they are State Parties or not, and other donors to consider making voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Mr President,

Estonia would also like to welcome the activation of the ICC's jurisdiction over the **crime of aggression** as of 17 July 2018. We are confident that this step strengthens the ICC and contributes to the fight against impunity; in particular, as we can see that the crime of aggression has unfortunately not disappeared from the State practice.

Estonia is committed to continue working together with all partners to further the work of the ICC and strengthen the system of international criminal justice. We would once again want to reiterate our appreciation to the work of ICC as an independent and impartial judicial institution.

Thank you for your attention!

