



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

**NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

14-16 December 2020, The Hague

17-23 December 2020, New York

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. RUMEN ALEXANDROV, AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE KINGDOM
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Germany on behalf of the European Union and its Member states.

The ICC is an indispensable component of a rules-based international order and requires our firm commitment and support.

At the outset, allow me to stress the importance of this year's session of the Assembly of States Parties for the future work of the International Criminal Court. With the election of six new judges to the Court and a new Prosecutor, the States Parties have a significant opportunity to advance and strengthen the Rome Statute system.

Bulgaria is particularly pleased with the work of the Advisory Committee on nominations of judges, which would surely help for the election of the most qualified and experienced candidates and improve the Court's capacity. We urge States Parties to assess candidates strictly on their merits.

It is crucial that the States Parties remain united and open for consensus as regards the election of the Prosecutor. Notwithstanding, there should be no compromise regarding our firm standing against impunity and for the rule of law. Therefore, we call for the election of the most qualified and experienced candidate that has shown high moral character and has a vision for the future work of the ICC.

Bulgaria acknowledges the extensive work of the independent experts tasked by the Assembly at its last session to carry out a review of the Court. The States Parties must carefully study and examine the presented report and the findings and recommendations therein and implement the identified changes that need to be done. There are certain issues related to the judiciary, the governance of the Court that need to be addressed. States Parties should follow up on the recommendations, but the Review process should continue in a transparent and inclusive manner – with the participation of all stakeholders on the way forward and through open and regulated interaction between the Review mechanism and the bodies of the Court. The inclusiveness presupposes comprehensive interaction between Court, States Parties and civil society.

The Assembly should reflect on the report of the Committee on budget and finance and the identified recommendations for saving and efficiencies in the proposed budget for 2021. Nevertheless, an optimized budget does not have to impede the work of the Court. We urge the states in arrears to pay their outstanding contributions in time in order to ensure undisturbed progress in the dealings of the ICC and provide sufficient funding.

The ICC is facing troubling times during a global pandemic and challenges before the International Criminal Justice, that reflect on the most vulnerable groups. We encourage all stakeholders to focus on the needs of victims and develop a victims-based approach in their initiatives for strengthening International Criminal Law.

Mr. President,

Distinguished colleagues,

Bulgaria reaffirms its commitment to the mission and mandate of the ICC to end impunity for the most serious crimes and calls for universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute. Therefore, States Parties must uphold the judicial and prosecutorial independence of ICC and provide their political support, but also strengthen their national capacity, as the Rome Statute system is complementary to the national efforts against impunity.

I thank you!