



**Republic of Serbia**

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**STATEMENT**

**by**

**H.E. Ms. Ksenija Milenković,**

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of  
the Republic of Serbia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

General debate

19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties  
to the Rome Statute

14 December 2020

Mister President,  
Distinguished Representatives of the Court,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's my pleasure to address the Assembly of States Parties on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. While Serbia aligned with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Germany, on behalf of the European Union, allow me to emphasize a few points in our national capacity.

Mister President,

The adoption of the Rome Statute twenty-two years ago and its entry into force in 2002 was welcomed by the Government of Serbia as the most important event in international law since the establishment of the United Nations. As then, Serbia still firmly believes in principles on which the International Criminal Court was founded. It supports the values that aimed to guide the Court, as a **permanent and independent** judicial authority based on free will of its States Parties. Ending impunity of those who are responsible for the most serious violations of international humanitarian law, should be the goal of all of us. Today more than ever.

In reaching these goals, the goals we ourselves have set out, we need to understand that the Court relies on us and our continuous **cooperation**. It is well known that Serbia has come a long way in this regard. Our own experience teaches us of the importance of justice for all victims. We believe that a system in which principle of cooperation is coupled with the principle of **complementarity** makes a step forward in achieving that justice. At all levels and at all times.

Mister President,

We know now that a system we created is not perfect. First steps are always the hardest to make, with a number of challenges and obstacles. But we do believe in opportunities to make things better. We have been, Mr. President, given that chance to improve the Court through the **process of the review**. Serbia highly values the work, report and recommendations of the Independent Experts. It is now primarily duty of States Parties and the Court, to make further efforts in finding the best solutions to make the Court stronger and more effective. Establishment of a **Review Mechanism**, as inclusive yet efficient subsidiary body of the Assembly with a clear mandate, is a crucial element of that process.

Mr. President,

While review is a process that will take considerable time in future, we should not forget that every step on that way counts. We thus pay special attention to the forthcoming **elections** for the judges and the prosecutor while sincerely thanking the outgoing judges, the President of the Court, judge **Chile Eboe-Osuji** and the **Prosecutor Fatou Bensuda for their tireless efforts in seeking justice**. The strength of the Court and achieving justice depend on wise and merit-based choices.

Mr. President,

A year behind us has been challenging in many ways, not only for the Court, but all of us. Terrible consequences of **COVID-19**, have reminded us yet again of how valuable life is. It is a notion that **victims** of most serious crimes live through from day to day in their demands for justice. Serbia believes the voices of victims are important and would like to thank all **those who help these voices being heard**.

Mr. President,

The events of the past year have indeed been onerous. With a lot of will and courage we have managed to come a long way. Allow me to use this opportunity, Mr. **President**, to thank you and two **Vice-Presidents** Ambassador Horslund of Denmark and Ambassador Mlynar of Slovakia for your tireless efforts in keeping us strong and united in the past three years.

Furthermore, Serbia highly values the work of **facilitators** both in The Hague and New York who continued to strive for consensus in their respective facilitations. We would also like to thank the **organs of the Court**, and especially the Registrar **Mr. Peter Lewis** for making additional steps in savings and efficiencies, including through suggestions for the next year's budget. Serbia will continue to pay its **contributions** in full and in timely manner.

Finally, allow me, Mr. President to assure you that **Serbia** will continue to render its support to the Court directly and through various mechanisms. As an active member of the **Bureau** in the past three years, Serbia has shown readiness to take part in processes of special importance for the ICC. We hope to continue with that course in the next mandate, should we gain further trust of States Parties.

Thank you.