

**21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute  
of the International Criminal Court**  
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**Plenary Session on Cooperation, Protection of Witnesses**

Intervention by Ms. Petra Benešová, International Law Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

The Government of the Czech Republic is very proud that it successfully finished negotiation on the cooperation agreement on the protection of witnesses. The agreement was signed last Friday and after its entry into force it will allow us to contribute to the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes under international law by a very practical means: providing protection of witnesses who are a necessary component of each criminal proceeding.

Since this panel is supposed to be focusing on technical aspects, let me to share with you two remarks related to the process of negotiation itself.

First: We value very highly the extraordinary cooperation with the Registry, in particular the Victims and Witnesses Section. Their insight and ability to shed light on issues of practical cooperation with the Court is essential.

Second: The negotiation process would not have been successful without intensive consultation with relevant government bodies that share the responsibility of future implementation of the agreement. We considered necessary to have all the implementation bodies on board since the very beginning of the process.

I thank you.