



CZECH REPUBLIC

Embassy of the Czech Republic in The Hague

23rd Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

General Debate

Statement by

Mr. Martin Smolek

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**

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Madam President,

Czechia supports the statement as delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and wishes to add few remarks in its national capacity.

Let me appreciate the very recent ratification of the Rome Statute by Ukraine who will become the 125th State Party as of the first day of the upcoming year. The ratification marks an important progress in achieving accountability for the crimes committed in connection with aggression of Russia against Ukraine. It is a piece of accountability mosaic, which we strive to complete by establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression committed against Ukraine. The ratification of the Rome Statute by Ukraine highlights the complementary nature of the ICC and the purported special tribunal.

In this regard, we should not settle for the argument that the ICC's jurisdiction worldwide for the crime of aggression has been limited. We, the States Parties, will have a unique opportunity to harmonize the ICC's jurisdiction for all the core crimes during the next year's review conference. It should be put clearly that the crime of aggression as the "mother of all crimes" is often the first international crime leading to commission of the other crimes, and as such deserves the same jurisdictional limitations.

Madam President,

We note the unprecedented workload of the ICC. The ICC is a court of last resort, based on the principle of complementarity. Its heavy workload serves as evidence of its irreplaceable position in the fight against impunity for crimes under international law. At the same time, its close cooperation with all stakeholders active in the system of the rule of law is vital in order to support accountability efforts. The Policy on Complementarity and Cooperation launched by the Office of the Prosecutor is therefore one meaningful example of deepening the engagement with national authorities and other stakeholders in situation countries. By creating synergies of cooperation both the national criminal systems and the Court will benefit.

I thank you.