

Madam President, esteemed colleagues

I am Honoured to address this august assembly on behalf of the Republic of Mauritius

Let me first acknowledge the contribution of this assembly and the ICC to fighting impunity for the world's most atrocious crimes.

The fight is no easy fight. We all know of the tragic consequences of international crimes for local, regional and the international community.

The work of the Court is more than ever essential if we want to see a reduction in war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We do not live in an ideal world- it will never be possible to satisfy everyone but we should all nevertheless recognise the endless efforts put up by the ICC to fulfil its mandate without fear or favour. We stand firmly by the ICC to defend its independence when same is under attack.

But we must also be realists when it comes to fighting international crimes by the ICC. Without any doubt, the ICC is the key player in this but there are many ways we can assist the Court in its mission even though our contribution could only be a small part and I would wish to focus on this briefly today. We cannot simply rely solely on the Court to do all the work. Its limited resources mean that it cannot investigate all the atrocity happening in the world. Complementarity is still important and we, State Parties, have to help the Court by playing our part too. Only referring cases to the Court is not always the only option. As countries, we should do our level best to also investigate and prosecute international crimes whenever we can. When it comes to international or atrocity crimes, we cannot just watch. We have a duty to protect, defend and preserve the integrity of humanity and most importantly the dignity of fellow human beings. National prosecutions are now considered as a primary vehicle for the enforcement of

international crimes for many reasons- political, sociological and practical reasons but above all it should be for justice and victims of international crimes.

Madam President, we should do this NOT only if these crimes take place in our jurisdiction but also, when these crimes happen elsewhere. We can do this whenever the alleged perpetrators step in our respective countries or if we make use of the concept of universal jurisdiction.

But, esteemed colleagues, you might say that such crimes are not easily provable or that often we lack the evidence or skills and adequate resources to carry on these prosecutions ourselves. To some extent, it is true. But we must sometimes think differently. If, for one reason or another, we cannot investigate and prosecute international crimes directly, there are still satellite or parallel crimes that can be addressed seriously. There is now greater potential to intervene and disrupt. We should therefore strengthen our capacity to address international crimes domestically. To do this, we must favour a comprehensive local legislative framework which would help in achieving this.

We all know that international crimes generate transnational criminality. Perpetrators pillaging villages or towns might move the proceeds of international crimes to other jurisdictions including ours. Money used to purchase weapons, vehicles or hire soldier or militia might even transit through our respective jurisdictions. Whenever this is the case, we should act! We in Mauritius take this seriously being an offshore jurisdiction. We have enacted a panoply of legislations to address all this.

We should act by investigating, freezing assets and prosecuting not only those directly perpetrating international crimes but also those who aid and abet and otherwise offer assistance to the commission of these crimes. This would include people laundering the proceeds of

these crimes but also those financing armed groups in the different conflict zones around the world. It is one way of breaking the cycle of impunity for international crimes and delivering justice to victims of international crimes.

Every effort helps. If we all play our parts, then together we may significantly disrupt the criminal activity. No country here today should make it easy for the commission of these crimes be it directly or indirectly.

To end impunity, we should renew our vigilance and do everything we can to contribute in our own way to fight criminal activity whenever and wherever we can and in so doing helping each other and as well as the ICC in discharging its responsibilities.

Thank you