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INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

23rd SESSION OF THE
ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE

- GENERAL DEBATE -

STATEMENT BY

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Madam President,

Romania fully aligns itself to the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its Member States and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

26 years ago, the adoption of the Rome Statute represented a **groundbreaking achievement for the international community and for the international law**. It strengthened the system of international justice and it contributed to the promotion of the rule of law globally.

Reminding at all times the rationale for creating the International Criminal Court, fixed in the preamble of the Rome Statute (and I quote): “*Mindful that during this century millions of children, women and men have been victims of unimaginable atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity*”; “*Recognizing that such grave crimes threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world*”, we must remain determined to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes and, in this way, to contribute to the prevention of such crimes and to the building of a world free of such atrocities.

Today, in a world marred by increasingly complex armed conflicts displaying a flagrant disregard for international humanitarian law, **the International Criminal Court is a hope**. A hope to the victims – that they will not remain victims for ever – and for a principled international rule of law, which cannot tolerate impunity or *no action* for such egregious, inhuman crimes. A hope that humanity within humans is not lost.

It is therefore our duty to reaffirm, in these troubled times, **our support for the International Criminal Court and for its mission to the benefit of the entire international community**. Romania fully trusts in the independent and impartial ability of the ICC to bring justice in all situations under its consideration and contribute to the peace efforts in these regions.

Madam President,

During the last years, the Court and its officials faced **increasing attacks, ranging from political pressure and security concerns to intimidation and threats, including**

threats of coming under sanctions. My delegation is deeply concerned by any measure that may affect ICC's independence and impartiality and its capacity to fulfil its mandate in accordance with its founding treaty, the Rome Statute. Romania will continue to stand by the Court and defend it from any attempts to undermine it. We would also like to express not least our gratitude to the officials working under these dire circumstances.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Court depends on state **cooperation**. States must remain committed to the fight against impunity by ensuring full and prompt cooperation with the ICC. An enhanced cooperation regime helps the Court in carrying out its work effectively. Instances of non-cooperation not only hamper the Court's activity, but also challenge the credibility of the Rome Statute system.

Achieving **universality** of the Rome Statute remains, from our perspective, the most powerful preventive approach to mass atrocities.

Romania welcomes Ukraine's ratification of the Rome Statute, becoming a new State Party to the ICC as of 1 January 2025. The step taken by the Ukrainian authorities carries a particular symbolism, considering that Ukraine and the Ukrainian people are first and foremost victims of aggression and of the crime of aggression, which triggered the commission of all other crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court and for which the ICC has been already seized.

Ukraine's audacity - proved also in relation to the ICC - is a testimony to the fact that the *force of law* is and must remain the only approach to violations of international law and especially to the illegal use of force. We should use this momentum to reinforce our efforts in promoting the universality of the Rome Statute and in encouraging the widest possible participation in it. We should be innovative in demarches to that end and in making the Court better known to regular citizens in order to generate a bottom-up movement that would press for participation in the Rome Statute system.

Not least, as the Court's workload continues to increase, while finding itself facing severe challenges, we must provide the necessary **financial and logistical resources to the ICC** to preserve its functionality.

Madam President,

The Review Conference held in Kampala decided to review the amendments on the crime of aggression seven years after the beginning of the Court's exercise of jurisdiction, in other words in 2025. **Romania is open to engaging with other countries on ways to consolidate the jurisdiction of the Court over the crime of aggression** and align it with its jurisdiction over the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Before concluding, we would like to express our **gratitude to non-governmental organizations** and civil society in general, working in this field, for their tireless efforts in standing by the ICC and in supporting its activity.

I will conclude my statement by recalling some well-known words of late Nuremberg Tribunal Prosecutor, Ben Ferencz, one of the most fervent supporters of the ICC, who said that *"[t]here can be no peace without justice, no justice without law and no meaningful law without a Court to decide what is just and lawful under any given circumstance"*. This is the International Criminal Court.

Thank you.