



**Embassy of the Republic of Serbia
The Hague**

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STATEMENT

**by H.E. Mr. Petar Vico,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
the Republic of Serbia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands,
at the General Debate of the 14th Session of the Assembly of
States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International
Criminal Court**

The Hague, 19 November 2015

Mr. President,
Distinguished Representatives of the Court,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour and privilege to address the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. At the outset of my small contribution to the general debate, allow me to emphasize that Serbia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered yesterday by Luxemburg.

Mr. President,

Serbia continues giving the full and sincere support to the independent and efficient work of the International Criminal Court. This Court was established with an aim to end impunity of those the most responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law, and consequently, to contribute to the prevention of atrocities worldwide. Have we approached that aim?

There is no doubt that our time will be remembered by numerous armed conflicts, the horrific terrorist attacks and massive violations of human rights throughout the World. Millions suffer today. It would be difficult to say then that the International Criminal Court met the expectations of modern humanity, in spite of its significant results in several cases last year, faithfully listed in the EU statement. Nevertheless, this Court is still an important global factor of international relations, and it is our duty, as we are the Member States, to provide the Court with our utmost cooperation,

assistance and effective oversight through this Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

We see these days an interesting view coming from the civil society that international institutions are only as powerful as their members allow. It is only partially correct, Mr. President. The system of the Rome Statute depends on all relevant factors of international relations, and not only on its Member States and their fragile political willingness to cooperate with the Court. The universality of the Rome Statute is the most important precondition for the accomplishment of its global mission. This is, in our view, one of the biggest challenges for the ICC, together with the issue of non-cooperation, and the States Parties should reflect what can be done by all of us to make the Rome Statute truly universal. Justice cannot suffer selectivity: all victims, whatever their nationality is, deserve full respect and a proper legal reaction of international community, no matter where and by whom crimes were committed. No one should remain above the law.

In order to exercise its jurisdiction in efficient and effective way, the Court must be provided with sufficient resources, especially in regard with its increasing caseload. A responsible budgetary policy of the Assembly is also a guarantee for the Prosecutor's independence in the decision-making process during investigations.

Serbia welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Assembly and its working groups aimed at improving the efficiency of the Court, as well as the reforms to the ASP institutional structures. In our view, the Assembly remains an august forum where the States Parties can freely discuss all topics relevant

for their legislative activities. However, the Assembly should refrain from holding debates that follow recent decisions of the Court with which certain Governments have not been satisfied, or debates concerning the issues pending before the Court. The States Parties must ensure that actions relating to their management oversight role do not infringe on the judicial and prosecutorial competence and independence.

Thank you, Mr. President, distinguished delegates, for your kind attention.