



S L O V A K I A

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STATEMENT

by

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of the International Criminal Court**

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At first, let me express the most sincere gratitude and congratulations to the President of the Assembly of States Parties for excellent work done during the first year of his presidency. Your enthusiasm, personal engagement and all your endeavours, Mr. President, have considerably contributed to the wide promotion of the ICC, its aims and values among the States Parties as well as those States who have not joined the Rome Statute, yet. I would like to assure you of the continuing support of my country to all activities necessary for fulfilment of your important mission.

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement presented earlier today by the distinguished representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

Slovakia is deeply committed to the fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes with the aim to ensure that their perpetrators are unconditionally and without exception brought to justice. Therefore, my country fully supports the International Criminal Court and its main objective to assist international community in difficult task of closing the impunity gap for the most heinous international crimes.

In this regard, we should never forget that the primary responsibility to exercise jurisdiction over alleged criminals lies within national legal systems and the ICC remains exclusively a “Court of last resort”. However, the system of complementarity can fully work only if States ratify or accede to the Rome Statute and implement it fully at domestic level.

Cooperation with the ICC is a clear sign of respect to the principles upon which it was established and we remind all States Parties that they are under legal obligation to cooperate fully with the Court. In order to gain the trust in the ICC of the general public we need to see the examples of real cooperation of the states with the Court and not of its total opposite which we have unfortunately witnessed several times during this year. We strongly appeal on all states to avoid any steps which could undermine the integrity and universality of the

system of international criminal justice built in Rome 17 years ago. On the other hand in building the system of international justice it is always important to listen carefully to the opinions and concerns raised by the other States Parties and to respect each other's views and legal traditions. Only in the atmosphere of genuine dialogue and respect we may successfully develop this system in line with the core principles of international justice on which it was established.

We should also remember that the ICC is a judicial body and we have to do everything to secure its independence and impartiality against any attempts of political interference. Thus, in case of issues reserved by the Rome Statute to the judicial deliberation, we should avoid very carefully any shadow of possible interference into the judicial process.

Mr. President,

The issue of protection of victims and witnesses has gained the position of utmost importance at the ICC and we are very keen to observe it. We strongly condemn any attempts to put unacceptable pressure on witnesses with the aim to influence their testimonies before the Court. We would like to see all the States Parties taking the most active role in preventing and punishing any such acts, in line with the principle of complementarity of the ICC mentioned before.

Mr. President,

With moving into its new premises, the ICC is opening yet another chapter of its historical mission. I am mentioning this because we should not forget the importance of material preconditions for successful operation of the Court. Although many of the States Parties are currently in difficult financial situation, which influence also the discussions on the 2016 ICC budget, we believe that the compromise in this question is going to be found without consequences to the proper fulfilment of the Court's tasks.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me once again express Slovakia's on-going commitment to the international criminal justice and to the work and role of the International Criminal Court and our full support of your efforts, as well.

I thank you.