



STATEMENT

H.E. Mr. Josip Grubeša
Minister of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina

General Debate of the Fifteenth session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court
The Hague, 16 November 2016

Dear President,
Distinguished representatives of the Court,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina. First of all I would like to emphasize that we fully support the work of the International Criminal Court, but let me highlight some of the viewpoints of Bosnia and Herzegovina in that regard.

It is needless to talk about the importance of establishing the International Criminal Court, a permanent and independent judicial body based on the free will of State Parties to the Rome Statute. You will agree that, in the international law, it was and still is one of the most important events since the establishment of the United Nations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has learnt from its own experience the values and importance of the international justice and continued fight against impunity. Our experiences are based on the cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as well as with its successor the International Residual Mechanism, and, definitely, the role of the domestic judiciary in the fight against impunity for the crimes against humanity and values protected by the international law. The very existence of the will to bring to justice those who committed war crimes is an indicator of maturity and readiness of a society to face its own past, which is the starting point for reconciliation and building of the stable future. Judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a decade of experience in the fight against impunity, but the job has not been finished yet! We believe that in the following period, our judiciary will continue to contribute to the development of a modern international criminal law and more successful transitional justice process in the Balkans.

As you know, Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Rome Statute in 2002 and, having in mind that the International Criminal Court is based on the principle of complementarity, it also adopted, in 2009, the Law on Implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and Cooperation with the International Criminal Court. At the beginning of

2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court. Furthermore, I am pleased to inform you that Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently carrying out activities in order to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute.

We are aware of the fact that the issue of victims has an increasingly important position in the modern system of the international criminal law. That was also recognized in the judicial system of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first court in the region which has established the Witness Support Section, modelled after the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. A lot of knowledge, work, time, and resources were invested in this Section, and it is now one of the most important sections within the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Head of the Section is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the International Criminal Court, and we believe that she will contribute with her knowledge and experience to the work of the mentioned Section.

Finally, Mr President, Your Excellences, we would like to express our concern about the decisions on withdrawal of certain State Parties to the Rome Statute from the International Criminal Court, and we would like to emphasize the strong support of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the further strengthening of the institutional capacities and activities of the International Criminal Court, as well as to highlight the necessity of full and unconditional cooperation of all State Parties and international organizations.

We believe that the only way to combat impunity is the universal application of the Rome Statute and active advocacy of its principles and objectives.

Thank you for your attention.