

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by Slovakia on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, let me congratulate you Mr. President on your active leadership of the Bureau and assure you about the full support of the Czech Republic in this challenging mission.

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic believes that the role of the ICC in the struggle against impunity is irreplaceable and we stand ready to support it wherever possible, including by upholding its independence and by preserving the integrity of the Rome Statute. The Czech Republic welcomes El Salvador as the 124th State Party and call upon other States to follow in the near future.

We note with deep regret recent decisions of South Africa, Burundi and Gambia to withdraw from the Rome Statute and, while recognizing that ratification or withdrawal from any treaty is a sovereign decision, we invite them to reconsider their positions.

The 124 State Parties have created a unique system to combat impunity at the national and international level. The ICC does not replace national or regional criminal justice systems, but rather complements them. We believe that the Court is an integral part of the international criminal justice system, which secures and protects the rights of victims and prevents crimes under international law. Hence, any withdrawal is an irreplaceable loss.

In June 2010, State Parties made a historical achievement at the Kampala Review Conference, when they reached a consensus on the definition of the crime of aggression as well as on other amendments of the Rome Statute. As Czechoslovakia was a victim of two aggressions in 20th century, the inclusion of the crime of aggression in the Rome Statute represents one of the checks for non-repetition of this crime in the future. The definition of the crime of aggression has also been incorporated in Czech Criminal Code and last year, the Czech Republic has ratified and deposited its instruments of accession to both of the Kampala amendments.

In June 2016, 30th ratification of the amendment of the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression has been reached, thus fulfilling one of the conditions on the way to activate the Court's jurisdiction. Currently, 32 State Parties have done so; still, an early activation by 2/3 of the State Parties remains crucial. Therefore, we strongly encourage all State Parties to ratify the Kampala Amendments and to continue in our common effort to activate the Court's jurisdiction on the crime of aggression in 2017.

Mr. President,

We must work together to strengthen the rule of law and international justice. As State Parties, our primary task is to motivate other States to follow the policy of zero tolerance for

impunity and to call for accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, which are happening now in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

The referrals of the situation in Sudan and Libya to the ICC by the Security Council were a milestone. We believe that other situations, in particular the one in Syria would deserve the same decisive action by the Security Council and we call for a coherent approach to referrals. At the same time, when deciding upon referral, the Security Council should be ready to effectively follow-up development in each situation.

Opening a situation or a referral of a situation by the Security Council to the ICC is therefore only the starting point. The obligation of States to cooperate, stemming from respective provisions of the Rome Statute or the Security Council resolutions 1593 (2005) and 1970 (2011) in country-specific situations, is crucial to be fulfilled. Hence, we are concerned by the lack of cooperation, which remains one of the main challenges for efficient and effective International Criminal Court.

In this regard, a national implementation of the provisions of the Rome Statute is necessary for an effective cooperation with the Court. States can also assist the ICC in fulfilling its mandate by ratifying or acceding to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC. A strong support for the Court was expressed from Central and Eastern European States at the High-level Seminar on Cooperation with the ICC where concrete recommendations were adopted. My delegation also welcomes the special session on cooperation during this ASP.

Despite the increasing and unprecedented Court workload, the Court must reiterate the effectiveness of its proceedings. This year, already fourth judgment has been issued by the Court. For the first time in its history, the ICC charged destruction of historic and religious monuments as war crimes or issued a judgment for crimes against administration of justice. Following the convictions in four cases, the reparations proceeding are underway.

The Czech Republic is closely following the informal consultations on the draft budget and is aware of different attitudes and various proposals expressed and submitted during these consultations. However, in order to maintain the economy of judicial proceedings, it is also necessary to keep Court's budget on a sustainable level.

Thank you, Mr. President.