



Check Against Delivery

**Statement of the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of
Georgia**

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**General Debate of the 18th Assembly of States Parties to the Rome
Statute of the International Criminal Court**

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Introduction

- Mr President, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,
- It's a great feeling to address such a distinguished audience in Den Haag - the city of peace and justice.
- Justice and peace are two mutually complementary and reinforceable pillars of the modern world order.
- Justice and peace are two fundamental values upon which the International Criminal Court rests as an international institution.
- Therefore, at this genuinely "World Forum" today, not an overstatement as ASP is attended by representatives of 123 member states, numerous NGOs and many other interested parties, we are called to raise up to our responsibility both as individual states and the Assembly to maintain and promote peace through fighting impunity and achieving international justice.
- This process is complex, multifaceted and multi-actor that certainly requires resolve and leadership.
- The new type of leadership of 21st century that transcends traditional understanding and is transformed into the role to "unite, represent and encourage society" to say in the words of King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands.
- Hence, while acknowledging the key responsibility rests with the States Parties, I would focus on what Georgia as an ICC founding member and through ASP as a body under the Rome Statute can and should do in cooperation with the society and other actors to strengthen the system of the Court.

Georgia and ICC

- Having this in mind, Georgia managed to consolidate the support from the society back in 90's and we were in the forefront of establishing permanent international criminal court as a member of "Like Minded" group of states sharing the objective of establishing a strong Court.
- Two decades ago the rationale for Georgia for negotiating and then joining the Rome Statute was the same as it is today – belief in rules-based international order where

international justice is achieved even if one is confronted and challenged by far more superior power.

- This belief grew stronger 11 years after 2008 Russian-Georgian War that targeted Georgian population in a repeated wave of ethnic cleansing and made civilians and military personnel victims of various war crimes.
- In this respect, there is strong consensus in the Georgian society and expectations are high that tangible progress will be achieved in the ICC investigation of these crimes.
- As a responsible member of the Rome Statute we believe in the strong and efficient Court system that has capacity to address the most heinous international crimes both in the context of Georgia investigation and well-beyond across the globe.
- In doing so we deliberately put emphasis on the notion of the Court system and victims.
- Notably, with a view of contributing to building a synergy between the Court and the ICC Trust Fund for Victims we got Georgia's representative elected as a TFV Board Member.
- This development encapsulates well our philosophy of the ICC that is to contribute to the Court system in all aspects.

Strengthening the Court

Legal Framework

- Georgia has established an extensive implementing legal framework on cooperation with the Court, including Rome Statute-based comprehensive national legislation;
- We have ratified Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities and signed two major cooperation agreements to facilitate the expeditious fulfilment of the ICC's mandate in the territory of Georgia.
- This year we signed another agreement with the Court on Enforcement of Sentences.

Cooperation and complementarity

- The legal framework with the ICC and the unaverred commitment of the Georgian government shape and define the cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office in the context of ongoing investigation into the situation of Georgia as well as other investigations or preliminary examinations.
- And notwithstanding continued Russian occupation, we should like to have every confidence that the impartial investigation by the ICC Prosecutor's Office will yield tangible result in enforcing international justice.

- In many respects, the ICC investigation into the situation in Georgia may serve as a litmus test for the Court's efforts in coping with the challenges irrespective how powerful the other party is.

Financial Support

- For the Court remain functional and impartial, it should be provided with adequate budgetary and financial resources.
- In 2017 for the first time Georgia has made a financial contribution to the Trust Fund to support its reparation and assistance mandates.
- Last year we doubled the contribution and intend to increase it further in 2020 up to €25,000.
- We hereby encourage all member States and donors to furnish the Court system with the necessary financial and material resources.

Election of judges

- I would be justified to say that the next year's election of 6 ICC judges and Prosecutor will be a defining moment for the Court for years to come.
- As a founding member of the Court and the situation country Georgia has a 20 years-long track record of cooperation, vision and sensibility towards international justice.
- First and foremost, we have a pool of competent lawyers that have gained an experience relevant to the judicial function of the Court equally importantly being at ease with all legal cultures represented in the ICC.
- Having these assets Georgia has decided to make another yet the most important investment where the Court needs it the most - to nominate its candidate for the election of judges of the International Criminal Court.
- He or she will be selected through a national procedure in accordance with article 36 of the Statute and requirements of ASP Resolution on the Nomination and Election of Judges.
- I seize this opportunity to kindly ask all the delegations to support our candidate.
- I am finishing where I have started – Georgia deserves to be represented in the judicial formation first time for what it did and what it can do with the ICC and in the ICC.
- Thank you.