



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court
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GENERAL DEBATE

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to address this Assembly by adding a few additional remarks to the statement already made by Finland on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, to which my delegation fully aligns itself.

At the outset, however, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for all the efforts and initiatives undertaken during the previous months aiming not only to rebuild and reinforce the commitment to the Court but also to coordinate the preparations for the Court's review process and the election of the next Prosecutor.

Mr. President,

It is my country's firm belief that the International Criminal Court, our Court, is an indispensable component of a rule-based international order and a key institution in the global fight against impunity for the most hideous international crimes. I would like, therefore, to reconfirm our staunch support for the work of the Court and express our readiness to protect the integrity of the Rome Statute system and defend the independence of the Court against any external threats or political interference.

In order, however, for the Court to fulfill this important mandate, it has to become truly universal, so that no part of our world remain outside its jurisdictional reach. On our side, we will continue to join efforts to promote the broader possible ratification of the Rome Statute as well as of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC. In this regard, we cannot but regret the withdrawal by a State of its instrument of accession to the Rome Statute and we invite it to reconsider its position.

Mr. President,

In the current session of the Assembly, we have important decisions to make.

Last year, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, we had the opportunity not only to take stock of the achievements of the Court over the last two decades, but also to discuss and reflect on the challenges it faces in exercising its unique mandate as the first and only permanent, treaty-based international criminal tribunal. Some of these challenges are due to the external, international environment which is radically different from the one 20 years ago, while others are linked to the internal functioning and the overall operation of the Court.

Since the success of the Court is a collective responsibility, we believe that it is high time for this Assembly to address these challenges by setting the parameters for a thorough, transparent and comprehensive review process, including by highly qualified and independent experts, to which all relevant stakeholders, the Court, States

Parties and civil society will be invited to participate. This process, however, should be conducted without calling into question the Court's statutory framework and the core principles of the Rome Statute and in full respect of the judicial and prosecutorial independence. Furthermore, it should take into account initiatives already undertaken by the organs of the Court to improve its performance and enhance its efficiency and effectiveness, thus seeking to create synergies and avoid overlaps and duplication of work. In this regard, we seize this opportunity to welcome the recent adoption by the judges of guidelines on the judgment drafting process and on the timeframes for the issuance of key judicial decisions.

Mr. President,

In 2020 this Assembly will elect a new Prosecutor and six new judges. My country attaches great importance to a transparent, inclusive and merits-based process for the election of the next Prosecutor. We welcome, therefore, the Interim Report of the Committee on the election of the Prosecutor and we look forward to receiving further updates on its work.

Regarding the election of judges, it is our view, Mr. President, that the primary responsibility for nominating and electing the most highly qualified individuals lies on us, the States Parties. We welcome the strengthening of the nomination and election processes which, in our view, should be conducted in full respect of the requirements set out in Article 36 of the Rome Statute, and in particular those on the expertise required in order for the Court to be able to operate in an increasingly complex international environment.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me to conclude by stressing the need to provide the Court with the necessary financial resources to carry out its mandate. At the same time, the Court should use these resources in the most productive, efficient and effective way. The level of outstanding contributions is a matter of concern to us and we would like to call on the States Parties concerned to do their utmost to fulfill their financial obligations towards the Court, including by considering the possibility to enter into payment plans.

Thank you Mr. President