



SLOVENIA

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STATEMENT

BY

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Mr President,

Slovenia welcomes today's debate on the activities and latest developments in the International Criminal Court. Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. In view of the importance of the subject matter before us, we would like to make some additional comments.

Slovenia joins others in thanking President Fernández de Gurmendi for joining us here today and for her helpful presentation of the latest report of the Court. As a long-standing supporter of the ICC, Slovenia takes this opportunity to reaffirm its strong support for the Court.

We note with appreciation that the Court has continued to handle a heavy workload as it pursues its work on situations that spread across many regions of the world. It opened a new preliminary examination of the situation in Gabon, following its referral, and sustained important efforts with respect to the international cooperation and outreach activities.

With victims being at the centre of the Rome Statute system, we are particularly pleased to note the positive developments concerning reparations to victims. Assistance to victims and reparations for their suffering and loss are essential for justice to be truly meaningful. The Trust Fund for Victims plays an important role in this respect. Recognising the increased activities and needs of the Trust Fund for Victims, I am pleased that Slovenia recently made a financial contribution to the Fund.

We would also like to welcome the ratifications and accessions to the Kampala amendments. As the second state to have both ratified and implemented the Kampala amendments, Slovenia continues to promote the universality of the Rome Statute and the amendments thereto. We express our strong support for the swift activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, which is expected this year. This is the final step needed for the historic achievement in Kampala to be brought to life. My country is convinced that the states parties to the Rome Statute will be able to meet this goal.

The ICC is the only permanent international criminal court that serves the fundamental purpose of offering justice to victims when states are unable or unwilling to do so. Slovenia is particularly reassured that following the last year's announcements of the decisions to withdraw from the Rome Statute, two Member States have revoked their decisions and thus continue to play a role within the Assembly of States parties.

In this context, Slovenia wishes to highlight the importance of making continuous efforts against the culture of impunity and stresses the significance of the primary responsibility of states to combat impunity in good faith.

Mr President,

A great portion of this year's report focuses on international cooperation, and rightfully so. The ICC is certainly the key international institution for administering criminal justice. However, with a lack of enforcement powers and outreach capacities, it depends greatly on the cooperation and support of states and civil society, as well as regional and international organisations.

Slovenia greatly values the many forms of mutual cooperation between the United Nations and the ICC, both with the Headquarters as well as the peacekeeping missions and other UN presence in the field. The UN support is crucial, ranging from information exchange, the provision of services and facilities and field support, as well as cooperation from the senior leadership of the UN. Slovenia is pleased to note that cooperation between the UN and the ICC is generally exemplary. At the same time, we do recognise room for improvement.

Slovenia welcomes the Secretary General's call in his latest report on the rule of law to address the outstanding challenges regarding the efficiency and sustainability of international accountability mechanisms. In this context, Slovenia considers that the increased cooperation between the Security Council and the ICC would contribute significantly to preventing atrocity crimes, as well as to the effectiveness and credibility of the Court. The role of the Council and the Court are inherently inter-related. For example, the Council has the capacity to play an important part in addressing non-cooperation with the Court. It can contribute to the Court's effectiveness through its work on sanctions-related matters such as travel bans and freezing of assets. Moreover, an active follow-up by the Council to its referrals to the ICC would decisively contribute to the Court's effectiveness.

Despite the fact that some of outstanding issues are, admittedly, more challenging, such as the matter of funding with respect to situations referred to the ICC by the Council, this should not preclude us from addressing them. With a view to exploring avenues for improved cooperation between the UN and the ICC, Slovenia would welcome open exchanges and structured dialogues between the Council and the Court. The fast approaching 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute is an appropriate opportunity to call for increased efforts to this end.

Mr President,

Cooperation with the ICC by States Parties to the Rome Statute as well as states that are not parties in the case of Security Council referrals is not a policy choice. It is an international legal obligation. Slovenia is concerned that 15 arrest warrants issued by the Court remain outstanding, some of them for several years. This is a serious obstacle to the Court's mandate and its credibility. It is clear that more should be done by states to ensure the execution of outstanding warrants. Slovenia thus calls for full and prompt cooperation with the Court.

Also critical for its credibility are the Court's efficiency and integrity. In this regard, Slovenia welcomes the continuous efforts within the Court to introduce further improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of its proceedings. We recognise the importance of addressing the challenges facing the Court. The Court is not exempt from criticism, and it has already lived through some challenging moments. In this context, Slovenia underlines the important role of internal processes and the Independent Oversight Mechanism of the Court. We place our trust in the mechanism and are confident that, through its work, the Court will continue to reinforce its integrity.

Our common goal should be an impartial, independent, universal and effective ICC that delivers high-quality judgments and places victims at the centre of its tasks. This will require joint efforts by all stakeholders. Slovenia remains firmly committed to the rule of law and international criminal justice and stands ready to contribute to further strengthening international criminal justice.

Thank you.