

AS DELIVERED



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT

by

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Madam President,

While aligning my delegation with the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished representative of the European Union, I would like to make some further observations in national capacity.

First of all, I wish to thank President Eboe-Osuji for his comprehensive presentation. I also thank the International Criminal Court for the report on its activities in 2017/18.

The General Assembly debate on this report is one of the important institutional links between the United Nations and the ICC and provides the platform for all 193 Member States of the United Nations to discuss the work of this unique judicial forum.

In my intervention, I wish to address the universality of the Rome Statute and the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

The ICC, created 20 years ago, is the only permanent international judicial organ having general jurisdiction over the most heinous crimes under international law. The Court can fulfill its mission of ending impunity for the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression, only if it achieves universality. We should focus all our political efforts and consistently engage in an open and patient dialogue, based on the shared values lying at the core of the ICC, which will enable all States Parties to the Rome Statute to continue strengthening the rules-based international order and prevent impunity.

On the other hand, non-participating States shall be encouraged to join the Rome Statute system, in order to eliminate the territorial or personal jurisdictional gaps allowing perpetrators to escape justice. Having activated the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression and having adopted three new war crimes amendments in December 2017, the Rome Statute provides broader protection than ever to the victims of the most heinous international crimes.

Coming to my second point, Madam President,

The institutional links between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations have broadened the spectrum of measures the Security Council can take when dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security. Without justice, sustainable peace cannot be achieved. Slovakia encourages the Security Council to use this unique tool and make referrals, when international crimes are being committed and the national authorities bearing the primary responsibility for the prosecution of those crimes are not in a position to do so. It is equally important that the Security Council follows up on the referrals. The ICC and the international community as a whole should not experience the frustrations from lacking co-operation by Member States.

I wish to use this opportunity to point to a concerning development, whereby the ICC-related language in some recent UN Security Council resolutions, for example in the resolution on *Children and Armed Conflicts* (CAAC) has been weakened in comparison with the previous one. Trust and a symbiotic relationship is built, first and foremost, by actions, but words matter, too. I express my hope that we all will collectively avoid any erosion of support, either verbal or practical, to the International Criminal Court.

Madam President,

Let me conclude by reiterating Slovakia's strong support for the International Criminal Court, as well as for the broader cause of closing the impunity gap for international crimes. This is clearly reflected also in Slovakia's committed service as Vice-President and Coordinator of the New York Working Group of the Assembly of States parties to the Rome Statute.

I thank you.