

INTRO

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

As others before,
please let me start by thanking our hosts
for welcoming us today in The Hague:

- I wish you, Madam President (Kaukoranta),
every success for your work at the upcoming Assembly;
- And I thank the leadership and team of the Court
for the organisation and preparation of this Assembly.

Guided by the principle
“no peace without justice”

we are strong supporters

- of ensuring accountability and
- fight impunity for international crimes and human rights violations.

In my intervention,
please let me share with you
3 short thoughts:

- on the functioning of the Court
- on the resolution of conflicts while safeguarding
the international rules based order
- and on doubling our efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

I. My first remark is on
our joint commitment to support the functioning of the Court

Our meeting today clearly shows
our **determination and commitment**
to support the functioning of the ICC.

We are here to protect
the integrity and independence
of the Court now more than ever.

We are all aware
that the ICC
as well as its individual members
are **under pressure, in particular from the outside.**

Consequently, we are committed to
supporting the Court by increasing its resilience.

After consultations with the Court,
we are committed to ensure
that the Court has **sufficient financial resources.**

As Austria, we will therefore frontload our payments:

- We will transfer our annual contribution for 2026 already in the next weeks.
- And we will continue to support trust and special funds with additional voluntary contributions.

At the same time,
the Court must be **100% clear and transparent**
when it comes to **challenges from the inside** and
allegations of misconduct.

As goes for any institution,
it is foremost in the Courts own interest
to ensure full, swift and comprehensive investigations
and act upon the findings.

II. My second remark is on
the resolution of international conflicts and
compliance with the Rome Statute

We live in a world
of multiple armed conflicts
and crisis situations.

In times like these,
I would argue that we need

- more respect and enforcement
of the international rules based order
- and at the same time
more international fora
for negotiating pathways to sustainable peaceful solutions.

Some argue that we are facing a dilemma:

- Can you be a reliable state party of the Court that fully fulfils its obligations under the Rome Statute
- and at the same time host in your country Heads of State and Government under ICC arrest warrants for ceasefire consultations or peace negotiations?

In our understanding, you should be able to do both,
and in our understanding, you can:

the Rome Statute offers

the **necessary tools and pathways**

- the consultation mechanism under Article 97
- Article 98 regarding immunity and surrender
- and Article 16 referring to UN Security Council decisions in the interest of peace.

In this spirit,

We very much look forward to the discussions on Cooperation as well as Non-cooperation during our conference.

III. My third remark:

doubling our efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

Yes, the international rules based order is under pressure.

We hear this in many speeches and statements.

Coming from a small sized country,

We are aware that

full respect for and commitment to

the rule of law by all

is a **strong security guarantee**,

in particular for small and medium sized countries.

Unfortunately, **the current trend** is going into the other direction:

- some countries are criticising **double standards**;
- some State Parties are even **considering leaving the ICC**.
- And we read in the media
that in current peace and ceasefire consultations
a **general amnesty and impunity for war crimes**
is being discussed.

In these circumstances, we should double our efforts **and engage**:

- engage externally with those States
expressing concerns regarding the Court
- and engage internally among States Parties and with the Court.

And this is exactly why we are participating in the Conference today.

OUTRO

My final remark:

For the longest time in our history,
war crimes and crimes against humanity
were a brutal reality,
including **impunity** in so many cases.

Let us never forget:
What we have achieved together
by adopting and ratifying the Rome Statute
is a huge step forward.

Let us work hard
every day
to implement our principles into practice and
to ensure that
justice for all
is no longer a vision -
but a reality.

Thank you.