

**Statement by
H.E.Mr. Sotos Zackheos
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Of the Republic of Cyprus**

**To the Sixth Committee
Of the 57th Session of the General Assembly**

**Agenda item 158:
“Establishment of the International Criminal Court”**

New York, 14 October 2002

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to extend to you my sincere appreciation for the effective manner in which you steer the work of this committee. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Kirsch, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee as well as to the President of the Assembly of the States Parties, the Ambassador of Jordan, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini, for their wise leadership and guidance.

Cyprus has aligned itself with the statement of the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union and I will therefore restrict myself to a few remarks.

This discussion takes place only a month after the First Assembly of the States Parties To the Rome Statute and the entry into force of this landmark instrument of international law. These events are of historic significance for humankind as they signal the culmination of the efforts towards the eventual realisation of the lofty aspirations of the international community to put an end to impunity for those responsible – of whatever rank in society - for acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. By doing so they also strengthen the armory of the United Nations in our quest to promote international peace and justice.

Cyprus welcomes the growing acceptance of the Statute as yet another manifestation of a broad determination to face these heinous crimes as attacks against all countries, religions and cultures which must be outlawed and accounted for at the international level. It is important that in the effort to gain the widest possible ratification or accession to the Rome Statute, its full integrity should be preserved as well as the respect of its letter and spirit.

Being one of the earliest advocates of permanent international criminal jurisdiction to secure deterrence and punishment of serious international crime, Cyprus has contributed actively in the deliberations, which led to the establishment of the ICC.

Impunity has encouraged the perpetration of heinous crimes including against women and children throughout human history. We anticipate that the establishment of the Court and its effective functioning will ultimately reverse such a regressive course whose recent manifestations in Africa, the Balkans, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world, stirred the conscience of humanity. Let me pause for a minute to express our deep gratitude for the principled role played by the civil society and in particular by the Coalition for the ICC, whose vision and perseverance have been a great encouragement on the road to the establishment and for the eventual universality of the Court.

Cyprus, a victim of foreign occupation attaches great importance to the provisions of the Rome Statute. We underline in particular the fact that the jurisdiction of the court extends over war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as the forcible transfer of population, the transfer by the occupying power of its own civilian population into the occupied territory, the enforced disappearances of persons and the subsequent refusal to give information on the fate or whereabouts of those persons.

Cyprus, a member of the Bureau and of the Subcommittee for the Crime of Aggression, is fully committed and ready to contribute vigorously to the efforts of meeting the challenges ahead, including the election of judges meeting the requirement of Article 36. It is within this context that my Government has decided to present the candidature of

Mr. Georgios M. Pikis, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Cyprus, for the post of a judge of the Court.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

We owe it to millions of victims throughout history and to the future generations to proceed unwaveringly towards our goal for an effective independent court, as a necessary instrument of a new ethos in international relations.