

**Permanent Mission of Austria**  
**to the United Nations in New York**

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**68<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

**Agenda Item 86**

**The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction**

**Statement by**

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Mr. Chair,

The principle of Universal Jurisdiction has given rise to many discussions among lawyers, diplomats and in civil society. It has raised various concerns and was sometimes also cause for international tensions. While we support the basic idea of universal jurisdiction, in the interest of the common fight against impunity, we see a considerable amount of confusion and misapprehension that exists with regard to the concept of universal jurisdiction.

We are therefore of the view that a thorough discussion of the substance of the topic can be very useful, and that such a thorough discussion should be carried out in an efficient as well as a professional manner.

We commend the chair of the working group on Universal Jurisdiction, Ambassador Ulibarri, for his able guidance of our work in the 6th Committee on the topic, in particular for guiding the work on the informal working paper.

Nevertheless, we would like to reiterate that we do not see that the 6th committee is the right forum for discussing such a highly complex legal topic. In particular, the topic needs a scientific analysis in order to avoid certain misunderstandings that still sometimes govern the discussions.

We therefore support the idea put forward by other delegations to request the International Law Commission, the competent suborgan of the United Nations General Assembly, to embark on this topic.

We are confident that this very important legal topic would be in very good hands with the International Law Commission.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.