

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

*At the outset, I wish to align my statement with the one delivered by the European Union, and I would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.*

Mr./Madam Chair,

Let me begin by joining other colleagues in celebrating the life and the legacy of Ben Ferencz, and add that starting this discussion, today, with a view to one day being able to negotiate and adopt a Convention on Crimes Against Humanity is certainly the best possible way of honoring his memory.

On that note, I'd like to say that we're very happy to initiate what we hope will be a fruitful exchange of views with all delegations on the draft articles; and my delegation is looking at this exercise as one that will inform and support a future decision to act upon the ILC recommendation and move towards the negotiation of Convention, on the basis of the draft articles. And I must add we are extremely thankful to all those colleagues that worked tirelessly during the 6C session in the Fall to adopt the resolution that created this space, and my delegation wishes to make the most of this opportunity to have a substantive debate on what we feel is a crucial subject that fully deserves our attention - and I would be remiss if I didn't thank the members of the Bureau and the colleagues from the Secretariat for preparing this session.

I would also like to share that we approach this discussion with a very tangible goal in mind – we want to further our understanding of each other's' positions on the draft articles, we want to help clarifying and addressing any concerns that might exist, and we want to identify possible avenues to make progress in our discussion in accordance with the roadmap we set out in Resolution 77/249. In other words, we're here to share our views, we're here to share how we read the draft articles, but most importantly we're here to listen and we're here to discuss how we can work together on the basis of this draft and with a view to making progress.

On the importance of this topic and of a Convention, we don't have any substantive comments in addition to what the EU said and to what I mentioned earlier. We believe such a Convention is necessary and urgent to fill an important gap in international law and in the fight against the most serious crimes of international concern.

When it comes to preamble, I would just like to point out that we also read the preamble as laying out a conceptual framework for the draft articles, defining the general context in which they were developed and their main objectives. We also note that the preamble is in part inspired by the language used in the preambles of international treaties relating to the most serious crimes, including the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Rome Statute. And, obviously, we also note and highlight the reference to the *jus cogens* nature of Crimes Against Humanity.

On draft Article 1, we just note the dual scope of the draft articles, which apply both to the prevention and to the punishment of crimes against humanity, and like other colleagues we also believe they work hand in hand and are mutually supportive.