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STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**79<sup>TH</sup> UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**SIXTH COMMITTEE  
AGENDA ITEM 80:  
“CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”**

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*Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,*

Let me start by congratulating the Chair and the Members of the Bureau on their appointment and assure you of our full support and cooperation towards a successful session of the Sixth Committee.

Poland associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the cross-regional statement delivered by Sierra Leone. Let me present some remarks in my national capacity.

*Mr. Chair,*

My delegation takes the floor on this agenda item for yet another year as our position on the need to elaborate an international convention on crimes against humanity, based on the Draft Articles prepared by the International Law Commission, remains unchanged.

Crimes against humanity constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. Since they jeopardize human rights, they are of concern to the entire international community.

The primary responsibility for preventing and punishing such crimes rests with states whenever they occur on their territories or are committed by their citizens. But there is also a collective responsibility to prevent and punish crimes against humanity and to ensure that their perpetrators are held accountable. An international instrument that would structure and systematize obligations of states in this regard is lacking and therefore, is urgently needed.

Elaboration and adoption of an international convention on crimes against humanity would not only facilitate prosecution of alleged perpetrators at the national level, but also ensure international legal cooperation in this regard. In addition, a convention would consolidate international law in this area and contribute to legal certainty.

It would also strengthen protection of victims of this category of international crimes.

*Mr. Chair,*

Since the beginning of the ILC's work on the Draft Articles, Poland has been a strong advocate of the victim-centred approach and paid particular attention to the plight of child victims in the global efforts to fight international crimes.

The experience of previous and recent years has confirmed that worldwide, children are the most vulnerable group regardless their country of origin, social group or ethnic identity. Children suffer as victims, witnesses and sometimes even as perpetrators forced to commit international crimes. We are convinced that children's best interests must always be our foremost consideration and that their rights must be adequately protected in the proceedings concerning international crimes.

Our aim is to achieve even greater protection for all categories of victims, witnesses and survivors affected by crimes against humanity. In case of children, their best interests must be a prime consideration in their physical and psychological healing and reintegration into society. This process should take place in an environment which fosters a child's health, self-respect and dignity. The Draft Articles – as elaborated by the ILC – provide a solid basis for constructing an ambitious, binding international instrument. By referring to mutually agreed language derived from widely ratified human rights instruments, it would directly secure the rights of all children, regardless their status.

*Mr. Chair,*

We express our readiness to work with everyone in an inclusive and transparent manner to ensure progress on this agenda item and to initiate the process leading towards a binding international convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, based on the ILC Draft Articles.

*I thank you.*