



Statement by the Republic of Cyprus

**By H.E. Mrs Maria Michail,
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the UN**

at the Sixth Committee

**on the agenda item 81:
" Crimes against humanity"**

United Nations

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Thank you Mr. Chair.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and wishes to offer some additional observations in its national capacity.

We welcome the significant step marked by the adoption of resolution 79/122, through which the General Assembly has resolved to convene a United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity. This development underscores the commitment of the international community to address a long standing gap within the international legal framework and to enhance our collective ability to prevent and prosecute such grave crimes and promote inter-State cooperation in this regard.

A legally binding international instrument in this field constitutes a necessary tool for the consolidation of international criminal law, the promotion of human rights, and the advancement of the rule of law, peace and security.

A considerable legal lacuna exists within the current body of international treaties that merits attention. While war crimes and the crime of genocide are codified under widely ratified conventions mandating States to prevent, punish, and cooperate concerning these offenses, crimes against humanity, as core international crimes, still lack a dedicated treaty. Nevertheless, their occurrence and impact are no less severe than those of genocide or war crimes.

A future Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity would bring multiple benefits. It would contribute to the harmonization of national laws relating to the definition, prevention and punishment of these crimes; it would establish legal mechanisms to deter such conduct *ab initio*, while ensuring accountability *ex post* through the incorporation of crimes against humanity into national legal systems; and it would strengthen inter-State cooperation in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of these crimes — an essential prerequisite for effectively combating impunity.

We wish to pay tribute to the International Law Commission for its invaluable contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law. We further express our appreciation to the ILC for the preparation of the draft articles on this topic. We reiterate our view that these draft articles constitute a sound and balanced basis for the forthcoming negotiations of the Convention.

Cyprus looks forward to the commencement of the work of the Preparatory Committee, and to a comprehensive, transparent and inclusive process with the participation of all delegations and relevant stakeholders, including relevant NGOs with consultative status in ECOSOC. My delegation stands ready to engage constructively and to contribute to all organizational, procedural and substantive aspects of the Committee's work, with a view to ensuring that the Conference can efficiently conclude and adopt a legally binding international convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

Thank you.