Mr. President,

Hungary welcomes the submission of the report of the International Criminal Court (ICC) which – together with this debate – provides for regular interaction between the Court and the UN membership. Just a couple of days ago in the Security Council 58 Member States participated in an excellent open debate dealing with the working methods of the Council, focusing, inter alia, on the interaction between the ICC and the Council, especially in the case of referrals.

Outside of New York, we have witnessed the first visit of the Council to the Seat of the ICC. This public acknowledgement of mutual interest cannot be overestimated.

Mr. President,

There is a crucial link between peace and security on the one hand and criminal accountability on the other hand. The most important objective of the Rome Statute has always been to make Countries resilient against atrocity crimes that do not only kill people but threaten the very fabric of society and statehood. Prevention is also best served by the perspective of unavoidability of punishment, by making sure that perpetrators are bought to justice.

Based on these premises we must again acknowledge the partnership between the ICC, the Security Council and the broader United Nations. This is a partnership of values, peace, security, rule of law, justice, and for the universal respect for human rights. ICC is now part of the permanent international architecture to uphold these values, while the UN Membership can do so much more to help the ICC mature and grow.

We commend the latest reform developments taking place within the various ICC organs. We are delighted to note that the efforts to strengthen the Office of the Prosecutor were highly successful. The Registry’s “re-vision” project is taking hold. And last but not least, there are also signs of improvement in Court proceedings. Of course, there is still plenty of room for further reforms.
Having said that, States Parties to the Rome Statute have to remind themselves that the Rome Statute is a treaty that is not solely about the establishment of the ICC. The Rome Statute is about the joint will of States Parties to make sure, through national legislation and national action, that atrocity crimes do not happen, and if they do, perpetrators are prosecuted expeditiously at the national level. This way the Rome Statute can strengthen sovereignty of State Parties, while the ICC remains the last resort to turn to when there is no other recourse to justice.

The principle of complementarity also requires cooperation among states. States Parties must provide assistance to national capacity building, so all States can fight impunity effectively. The UN organs also have their own role in supporting the Court. Therefore, we welcome that the annual report also deals with the issue of cooperation in detail.

Finally, when the ICC must act, it must rely on the support and cooperation of the States Parties. We encourage further efforts aimed at strengthening the relationship of the Court with regional organizations, such as the African Union, and with civil society organizations. In the case of referrals the Security Council should also do more to ensure that Member States cooperate with the Court.

Mr. President,

Looking forward to the next ASP, we cannot forget the fact that the Court, in general, and its activities in particular are not immune from political disagreements. States Parties bear the ultimate responsibility to respect and protect the judicial independence of the Court. However, States Parties also have the responsibility to sort out differences and find solutions that reinforce the authority of the Court.

Hungary welcomes the consensus of the African States Parties to present Sidiki Kaba of Senegal as the next President of the Assembly of States Parties. We fully support the new President’s complex vision that aims at focusing on improving on the contentious issues, strengthening cooperation with the Court, implementing the complementarity principle and promoting the universality of the Statute.

As a sign of our continued and committed engagement, we will remain a member of the Bureau for the next three years. Hungary has also decided to nominate Professor Péter Kovács for the election of judges to the International Criminal Court for the period 2015-2024. If elected, the first ever Hungarian judge will offer his experience as a former Constitutional Court Justice, trained for independent legal decision making and with utmost respect for the law. He is a candidate who is used to operate in the highest judicial functions where decisions are made in major legal issues, with the full understanding that such decisions may have far reaching political ramifications as well.

Thank you, Mr. President.