

**Statement on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia by Elvira
Cupika-Mavrina, Legal advisor of Latvia to the United Nations at the
Resumed Sixth Committee Session "Crimes against humanity"
Cluster 2**

Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States – Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia.

The Baltic States align with the statement made by the European Union and its Member States.

Firstly, turning to the draft **Article 2**:

We find the definition of crimes against humanity provided in draft Article 2 to be clear and comprehensive and we welcome its inclusive and diverse character regarding the circumstances in which these crimes may occur.

Further, we reiterate the need to avoid fragmentation of international law, hence we see merit in the fact that draft Article 2 is based on Article 7 of the Rome Statute. The definition of crimes against humanity enshrined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute has undisputedly enjoyed a wide international support, since it has also been included in the recently adopted Lubljana-the Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes and other international crimes. Therefore, in our view draft Article 2 will provide for an effective and widely accepted definition that will also complement international criminal law.

The definition aims to be victim-centered, which means that it has been designed to protect the rights and interests of the civilian population. This focus is important, as it ensures that the emphasis remains on preventing and punishing crimes that have a significant impact on civilians.

Secondly, on Article 3:

We consider that the inclusion of a general obligation to prevent crimes against humanity is a much needed and positive development of international criminal law. Prevention is key to combat these heinous crimes, and the obligation encourages States to take proactive measures to prevent them from occurring in first place. Further, we reiterate that general obligation to prevent and to punish crimes against humanity sends a strong message that such crimes will not be tolerated and that those who commit them will be held accountable.

Lastly, on Article 4:

The obligation to prevent just like the obligation to punish have long been implemented in each– Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvian - national legislations, thus we welcome the implementation of these obligations in both draft Articles 3 and 4. Further, the obligation to prevent as an obligation of conduct is common in international law, subsequently it can be found in most international treaties that address crimes and other harmful activities.

I thank you!