

Distinguished prosecutors general, chief representatives and participants,

It is my great pleasure to meet you all in this beautiful and historic city of St. Petersburg.

I am Cheol-Kyu Hwang, President of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP), the only worldwide international organization for prosecutors. Our Association connects and brings learning and support to prosecutors in 177 jurisdictions and territories across the globe.

The IAP is co-organizing this Conference with the Council of Europe and the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation and it is my great honor to represent the IAP at this opening ceremony.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our host, Igor Krasnov, Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation and his prosecutors for braving challenging circumstances to organize this prestigious event.

Also, I am so grateful to the COE and IAP Officers - the IAP Secretary General and General Counsel are here with me - for their hard work for this important event.

As we move through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that we continue to collaborate, share experiences and learning, and work collectively together to strengthen our international co-operation to combat serious transnational crime and to promote the rule of law, fairness, impartiality and respect for human rights.

The importance and value of close collaboration is reinforced by the number of heads of prosecution services who have attended this

Conference in person or joined online.

Under the main theme of the Conference, we expect to discuss in-depth the role of prosecutors in protecting human rights and the public interest in the context of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Among others, protection of human rights and serving the public interest throughout the whole criminal justice process constitutes the most essential obligations placed on prosecutors.

The IAP Standards of Professional Responsibility and Statement of the Essential Duties and Rights of Prosecutors adopted in 1999 clearly state that prosecutors must fulfil these critical missions. The IAP has consistently and proactively encouraged and monitored the Standards adoption across the globe and will continue to do so.

In some jurisdictions, prosecutors have expanded their working spectrum by engaging in policies and legislations related to major social issues. In addition, we are now facing serious threats from environmental crime, healthcare crime and cybercrime. The Conference provides an opportunity to discuss and explore these matters further.

Looking forward, I hope that the valuable outcomes of the Conference will spread far beyond Europe, and with the assistance of the IAP, to prosecutors in all the regions of the world. They will certainly help all prosecutors realize their common values and goals of the rule of law and human rights protection.

I wish you all health, happiness and great success. Thank you.