Mr./Madam Chair,
Let me start by aligning myself, on behalf of the Czech Republic, with the statement
delivered by the representative of the European Union on behalf of the Union and its
Member States.
The Czech Republic considers universal jurisdiction to be an important and useful tool for
bringing perpetrators of the most heinous crimes to justice. Last Wednesday the
delegation of the Czech Republic delivered statement under agenda item “Crimes Against
Humanity”. We stressed the importance of preventing commission of such crimes and of
punishing them whenever and wherever they have been committed. This, of course, does
not apply to crimes against humanity only. There are other categories of crimes under
international law that violate universal values and must be prosecuted and punished in
the interest of all States. Such prosecution and punishment not only ensures that
perpetrators are held accountable, but also provides justice for victims and helps prevent
commission of these crimes in the future.
Universal jurisdiction enables States to exercise their national jurisdiction over a crime
irrespective of the nationality of its perpetrator or of the place where the crime has been
committed. Exercising universal jurisdiction is without prejudice to traditional
jurisdiction based on territoriality and personality, which are predominant. Universal
jurisdiction serves as a guarantee against impunity of alleged perpetrators of the most
serious crimes under international law. As such, universal jurisdiction is a generally
recognized principle of international law and the Czech Republic, as many other States,
has incorporated it in its national legislation.
We believe that defining the scope and concrete application of the principle of universal
jurisdiction on the international level is purely legal question and should not be burdened
by political considerations. Such considerations are, unfortunately, unavoidable within
the Sixth Committee. In addition, the limited time that is devoted to universal jurisdiction
in the Working Group does not allow substantive consideration and progress concerning
this topic.
Universal jurisdiction is a practical area of international law. Legal certainty regarding the
scope and application of universal jurisdiction among international community is very
desirable. Therefore, in our previous interventions, we proposed to refer the topic of
universal jurisdiction to the International Law Commission to prepare a study on this
issue. The Commission as an independent expert body can provide states with thorough
legal analysis of disputed aspects of universal jurisdiction and enable States to make
progress in their future discussions on these aspects. Such decision of the Sixth Committee
would also demonstrate its commitment to strengthen interaction between the Sixth
Committee and the Commission. In addition, the outcome of the Commission’s work
would necessarily come back to the Sixth Committee for any action this Committee would
consider appropriate.

Mr./Madam Chair,
We remain convinced that referring the topic of universal jurisdiction to the International
Law Commission is the most appropriate way forward. Such approach would provide
States with clear legal basis for further consideration of this important issue and would
advance proper application of universal jurisdiction in the future.
Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair
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