

Eleventh session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The Hague, 15 November 2012

STATEMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND
Director General Päivi Kaukoranta

Mr. President,

Finland associates itself with the statement made earlier today by the distinguished representative of Cyprus on behalf of the EU and its member states.

Let me start by expressing our sincere thanks for the leadership and dedication that Ambassador Tiina Intelmann has shown during her first year as the President of the Assembly of States Parties. I would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to the distinguished representatives of the Court for their tireless efforts during this year, to the Registrar of the Court as well as the ICC Trust Fund for Victims and the Secretariat of the Assembly. We would like to thank the host state the Netherlands for its generous hospitality in observing the 10-year anniversary of the Court during this Assembly. I wish to congratulate President Song for his re-election as the President of the Court and Madam Fatou Bensouda, the Prosecutor of the Court, for her excellent efforts during her first year in office, including her emphasis on gender issues, as well as the newly elected Members of the Board of the Trust Fund for Victims and the Members of the Advisory Committee on Nominations. Finland attaches great importance to the key position of the Deputy Prosecutor of the Court and we are looking forward to the elections to be continued this Friday.

Mr President,

The celebration of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute is a celebration of success. The International Criminal Court has come a long way since its establishment. It has become the centerpiece of our international criminal justice efforts and the key actor in fighting impunity for the most serious international crimes.

This year has been marked by significant milestones in the functioning of the Court, with the Court delivering its first ever judgment and deciding on general principles to be applied on the implementation of reparations. We welcome these decisions and their contribution to fighting impunity for the most serious international crimes. They serve as an effective deterrent, and give hope to the victims of the most horrendous crimes that justice can be reached.

Mr. President,

Finland has for long been a strong supporter of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. The Trust Fund has already provided assistance to 84,000 victims in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo through projects with its local and international partners, and is soon launching operations in the Central African Republic. As President Song underlined yesterday at the solemn commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Court, the significance of these projects cannot be overstated.

The Trust Fund will also in the future, and not least when implementing the decision on reparations in the Lubanga case, be largely dependent on voluntary donations. Voluntary contributions by States and other entities are now more urgently needed than ever. We are pleased to announce that Finland has decided to continue to support the Trust Fund with a total of 900 000 euros between 2012 and 2015. We acknowledge the central role the Trust Fund for Victims has in efforts to bring justice to the victims and commend the work it has done in this regard.

Mr. President,

As the operations of the Court expand, it continues to face a growing number of challenges that need to be addressed.

Promoting universal ratification and effective implementation of the Rome Statute continues to be a priority for us. The widest possible participation to the Rome Statute is a cornerstone of a truly effective international criminal court. We warmly welcome the States that have recently joined the Rome Statute and call upon all other States to do so.

We also welcome the first ratifications of the amendments to the Rome Statute adopted in Kampala in 2010. Finland for its part remains committed to an early ratification of the said amendments. National ratification process is expected to be finalized by the end of 2014.

Mr. President,

It is essential that all States fully cooperate with the Court. We welcome the inclusion of a special session in this Assembly on this very important topic. The number of outstanding arrest warrants continues to be a cause for grave concern. We encourage avoiding non-essential contacts with individuals subject to an arrest warrant issued by the ICC. All States should also fully comply with their obligations under the UN Charter and with resolution 1593 and 1970 of the Security Council urging States and organizations to fully cooperate with the ICC in the Darfur and Libya situations. We call particularly on the Sudanese and Libyan authorities to comply with their legal obligations under the above mentioned Security Council resolutions.

We welcomed the open debate on peace and justice which took place at the United Nations Security Council in October this year, upon the initiative of the new State Party, Guatemala. This was a very valuable opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities arising in the context of the relationship between the ICC and the Security Council. We warmly support the continuation of these discussions.

The Security Council's follow-up on situations which it has referred to the ICC is needed for the effective functioning of the Court. The mandate of the Court is limited and the active follow-up by the Council is therefore of utmost importance,

Mr. President,

We wish to underline that even in this difficult global economic situation we need to ensure that the Court has the necessary resources to enable it to fulfill its important mandate and to handle its steadily increasing workload in a responsible and timely manner. In addition to investigating and prosecuting crimes under its jurisdiction, it is of utmost importance to ensure sufficient resources for the outreach activities of the Court to the affected communities. Relevant and focused outreach is an essential component of the Court's activities. It is important that the Court's processes are understood by the affected communities, in order to make them meaningful to the victims. Informing affected communities about the ICC has a positive impact on investigations and prosecutions in general, and for its part increases the effectiveness of the Court.

In addition to sufficient resources, the efficient functioning of the Court is of utmost importance. We welcome the ongoing work within the Hague working group as well as the judges' own initiative to review the courts structures and procedures.

Mr. President,

There are a number of ways in which the international community can assist the Court and States in investigating and prosecuting the most serious international crimes. I would like to highlight two examples here. The Justice Rapid Response offers trained experts in the field of international criminal justice for the tribunals or international organizations and states to assist in the investigation of these crimes. The JRR Roster is a valuable instrument strengthening the rule of law and Finland has been a strong supporter of its work. A second example is the legal tools project of the ICC which has created a free public platform the legal tools database, providing equal access to legal sources which lies at the heart of the complementary challenge.

Let me conclude by reiterating the strong support of Finland to the ICC and our firm commitment to fight against impunity in cooperation with other states, international institutions and the civil society.

Thank you Mr. President.