



IRELAND

Statement by

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at the

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of the International Criminal Court

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Mr President

Ireland associates itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. At the outset, I offer warmest congratulations to you, and to the new Vice Presidents and members of the Bureau and wish to assure you of our support. I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the outgoing President, Ambassador Tiina Intelmann, and to all the outgoing members of the Bureau for their excellent work during previous sessions and in preparing for this session and would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made by facilitators and members of The Hague and New York Working Groups. Last but not least, I congratulate the newly elected members of the Court and thank President Song and his colleagues who are also due to complete their terms of office for their sterling work on our behalf.

Mr. President

Ireland views the International Criminal Court as a vital element of our system of international criminal justice. It is our belief that when it is universally accepted and understood that there can be no impunity for crimes such as those dealt with by the Rome Statute, then the likelihood of such crimes occurring will eventually diminish. We surely have no choice but to continue to work towards this goal. For that reason, Ireland continues to support the universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

It is furthermore our view that in pursuit of this goal of full accountability, we must continue to recognise and accept that the Rome Statute applies to all – irrespective of the official capacity of any individual. This is a critical element of the integrity of the Rome Statute system which we must protect.

As the work of the Court has progressed, it is now very clear that, unquestionably, it faces many difficult challenges. However, these challenges are also for us as States Parties to the Rome Statute. The unique system set up by the Statute envisages the close collaboration of States with all the organs of the Court. In particular, there is the challenge of non-cooperation, including the non-execution of arrest warrants. We, the States Parties, and where situations have been referred by the Security Council, other States too, must seek ways to support the Court in this regard. We must also listen, and listen closely, to States that may experience difficulties, for whatever reason, in co-operating with the Court. It is critical, however, when doing this to do so in a way that supports the ultimate objective of the Court - to investigate and prosecute the crimes of most serious concern to the international community, with a view to

punishing perpetrators and thus affording justice to victims and affected communities.

Mr. President

Ireland also acknowledges that the work and operation of the Court is not without room for improvement. This is of course acknowledged by the Court itself, and we very much appreciate the efforts made by all the organs of the Court which continuously seek ways to improve and develop. We are always ready to discuss proposals and measures in this regard. In all such discussions, the respective roles of all the various stakeholders must be respected and, of course, the independent functioning of the Court as a judicial organ must be protected.

When establishing the International Criminal Court, a number of innovative and progressive steps were taken in the interests of delivering justice to victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In particular the Rome Statute addressed in a number of ways various forms of sexual and gender based crimes as being amongst the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. History has shown that sexual and gender based violence all too often becomes an appalling feature of conflict. Ireland welcomes the fact that the Office of the Prosecutor has identified this issue as one of its key goals in its Strategic Plan for 2012 – to 2015, and we welcome the Prosecutor's new Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes.

A further important element of the Rome Statute with regard to delivering justice to victims was recognised with the establishment of a Trust Fund for Victims. Ireland has been a consistent annual contributor to the Trust Fund. We have contributed €675,000 to date. We continue to encourage States Parties who have not yet contributed to the Fund to consider doing so in future.

Mr President

I will conclude by stating that we must do all that we can to ensure that the Court continues to be in a position to fulfil the mandate that we, the States Parties, have given it in order to achieve justice and accountability.