



**STATEMENT**

by

**Dr Gustaf Lind**

**Deputy Director-General**

**Head of the Department for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law**

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

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One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza 885 Second Avenue, 46<sup>th</sup> floor – New York, N.Y. 10017-2201 – Tel  
+1 212 583 2500 – E-mail [sweden@un.int](mailto:sweden@un.int)

Mr. President, members of the Assembly, officials of the Court, representatives from civil society, ladies and gentlemen.

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Allow me first to express my Government's sincere appreciation to the Court and its officials, in all organs. Sweden has since its establishment been a strong proponent of the Court and its important mandate to deal with the most serious crimes of international concern.

Furthermore, Sweden wants to congratulate and welcome the six newly elected judges. They have important work ahead of them.

Sweden would also like to congratulate the Court for being this year's recipient of the Stockholm Human Rights award. An award established by the International Bar Association, The International Legal Assistance Consortium and the Swedish Bar Association. The President, Prosecutor and Registrar were honored with the prize in a solemn ceremony with 1 100 guests including their Majesties the King and Queen.

While congratulating the Court for its important achievements, I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Finland on its 100 years anniversary which is today.

Mr. President,

The Swedish Government is appalled by the continued blatant disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law that we see round the world today. Rape, sexual slavery and other sexual and gender-based violence have been taken to new horrific levels. Unspeakable crimes continue to be committed in violent conflicts against women and girls, men and boys. They deserve justice. To achieve lasting peace, those responsible for violations of international law must be held accountable. Impunity is unacceptable.

Therefore, the ICC needs more States Parties, not fewer. We regret that South Africa intends to continue its withdrawal from the Rome Statute. Let us instead celebrate next year's twentieth anniversary of the Court with new efforts for expanding the number of State Parties.

Mr. President,

Sweden continues to hold that the situation in Syria should be referred to the ICC. Regrettably, the Security Council has been unable to agree to do so. Meanwhile, we must strengthen our collective efforts to ensure that conditions are created for justice to

be done in the future. For this reason, Sweden is proud to support the work of the newly established International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria as well as the Commission of Inquiry regarding Syria.

National prosecution of serious international crimes committed in Syria also provides justice. So far, three cases of crimes against the law of nations in Syria have led to convictions in Sweden. As recently as in September, Södertörn District Court sentenced a thirty two year old man to eight months imprisonment, after he posed in photographs with dead and severely injured people in Syria 2014.

Mr. President,

This year Sweden is facilitating the budget consultations, an important but demanding task. Without the active contribution of States from all regions there would be no ICC. The Court can only be as efficient as we, the States Parties, allow it to be. Therefore, we urge continued support to the Court by providing it with the necessary financial resources to carry out its important mandate and also urge States Parties to pay their outstanding contributions and settle their arrears.

Mr. President,

The rights of victims are an important feature of the Court as well as a priority for Sweden. We commend the important work of the Trust Fund for Victims, which for example has extensive support to victims in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With increasing activities comes a corresponding need for more resources to the Trust Fund. During the period 2017-2019, Sweden is contributing substantially to the Fund, with a total amount of 30 million Swedish crowns or approximately 3 million euro. This makes us the largest contributor to the Trust Fund. We invite other States to actively contribute and engage with the Fund irrespective of your financial situation as the rights of victims are our collective responsibility.

On the important matter of the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, Sweden reiterates its position on the need for legal clarity. At the same time, we see the various concerns of State Parties, and in the interest of swift activation of the jurisdiction, Sweden remains open to discuss different avenues by which we can reach a consensus decision by the end of this meeting.

Mr. President,

Next year, it is the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. While recognizing the accomplishment to date we must renew joint efforts and we must stand together in the fight against impunity. The desire for accountability is universal. If justice at times appears selective, the solution is more justice, not less.

I thank you for your attention.