



Your excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to address the 17th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Statute of the International Criminal Court in the name of the International Federation for Human Rights - FIDH - and its 184 member organisations around the world, including my organisation, Open Asia/ Armanshahr, working on Afghanistan.

This session of the Assembly of States Parties concludes a year of reflections on the work of the Court and the challenges it continues to face, twenty years after the adoption of its founding treaty. This session also takes place in the context of recent serious attacks against the ICC and international justice mechanisms, most notably by the US administration.

We urge you as an Assembly to fiercely and collectively commit to, and support the ICC against the flagrant threats it faces. We also urge you to commit to defending those working in support of accountability for international crimes, including human rights defenders and civil society organisations. States Parties should systematically cooperate with the Court, promote cooperation with the Court, and firmly address instances of non-cooperation.

Your excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Your support to a strong and independent ICC will enable the Court to become the universal Court it is meant to be, and to effectively prosecute those bearing the highest responsibility for the crimes under its jurisdiction, including sexual and gender-based crimes that are still too often under-reported and unaccounted for.

Your support also means allowing the Court the resources it needs, to properly equip it with the means necessary to scale up its investigations and prosecutions including in Burundi and Georgia, and to prepare it for additional investigations into grave crimes around the world including those committed in the situations of Afghanistan and Palestine.

We would like to emphasise that the activities of the Court are not limited to courtroom activities in The Hague, often thousands of kilometers from where the crimes took place. The Court's activities involve thorough and in-depth investigations in complex situations, they involve actively engaging with victims and making the Court known to affected communities. It is for that reason essential to dedicate resources to carry out outreach activities at an early stage, to enable an understanding of the Court's mandate and meaningful victim participation and legal representation. We also encourage States Parties to contribute to the Trust Fund for Victims which is in the process of implementing reparation orders in three cases and is implementing or designing assistance programs in

numerous situations. We applaud the generous contribution made by the Netherlands to the Trust Fund for Victims just two days ago.

Your excellencies,

If resources are not made available to the Court, we tie the Court's hands, risk damaging the world's biggest achievement in the field of international justice, and limit the effective access of thousands of victims to this universal Court of last resort.

Yours excellencies, distinguished delegates,

To prepare the Court for the years to come we kindly urge you to launch, as soon as possible, a merit-based search and vetting process for the next Prosecutor of the ICC.

Thank you for your attention.