

**Statement by Chino Obiagwu, of African Network on International Criminal Justice, on
plenary on ICC Review Process**

We welcome the review process of the ICC and the Rome Statute systems, and commend the President and the Bureau for their dedication and commitment to this process. We pledge the full support of civil society in Africa to this process, and totally available to assist the experts you will appoint to undertake the review.

Mr. President, we take note that it is not feasible to have experts with expertise on all areas that concern the court and the entire Rome Statute system, but we recommend that the experts but in formulating their methods of work, and undertaking the review itself, should take into consideration available expertise and resources especially from the civil society.

We take note that areas of defence rights, gender inclusiveness in the work and functioning of the court and entire Rome statute system, robust engagement with victims and affected communities, and civil society engagement with the court are issues that we urge the experts strongly treat as cross cutting that must be considered at every stage of the review process and in every cluster of issues identified. We strongly request closer attention to mandatory gender and geographic balance in not in all the three clusters, but strongly in the governance cluster.

We note that there are available resources to draw from on these essential cross cutting issues. We also note that there are a number of concerns already expressed on the functioning of the court by African State parties over the years, and it is important the review process take note and revisit those concerns with open and constructive manners. The cornerstone of the review should be transparency and inclusiveness

The review of the court is an essential moment to review the court's structure and practices relating to victims and affected communities, legal representation, equality of arms, defence rights and their families, and strengthening of relationship with the internal and external stakeholders.

Mr. President, we also draw attention to the important role of the Assembly of State Parties in the functioning, stability and political protection of the court. It is our view that the review process will not be complete without assessing and recommending ways of strengthening the role of the ASP, not only in the improved resourcing of the court, but also in improving the processes of selection and election of judges, principal officers, and provision of safe working environment for the staff and security of all users of the court.

Thank you