



**18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

**New Zealand Intervention – Review of the Court**

**Delivered by Victoria Hallum, Chief International Legal Adviser**

**4 December 2019**

---

New Zealand welcomes this opportunity to have an open, honest and respectful dialogue about the ways we can ensure that the Court and Rome Statute system operate as best as possible and enjoy broad support.

Some have said that the Court is falling short of our own expectations. Others have acknowledged the difficult environment in which the Court operates in, and the inherently challenging task the Court faces to deliver accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

In the past two days, States have expressed strong support for an independent expert review of the Court. We have also heard, and emphasise, the importance and responsibility of States Parties themselves to take ownership and work with the Court, experts and civil society in the reform process.

New Zealand supports the independent expert review, which should provide concrete, achievable and actionable ways to strengthen the governance, judiciary and investigations and prosecutions of the Court. As we said yesterday, mandating this independent review mechanism is a crucial first step. We welcome the provision of an interim report or briefing in June or July 2020, in order to provide an update on the status of the review.

Responsibility will lie with both the Assembly and the Court to carefully consider the review's recommendations and take decisive action to implement those changes that can and should be made to enhance the efficiency, credibility and effectiveness of the Court. It will be important for States Parties, the Court, relevant experts and civil society to work together in achieving positive outcomes and carrying this forward.

An independent expert review is part of the broader ICC reform agenda and is not an end in itself. We encourage States Parties and the Court to continue dialogue on potential improvements, including through existing ASP working groups and facilitations to complement this important review process. We welcome the Bureau's efforts to consider

ways the Assembly can strengthen cooperation, address non-cooperation, consider complementarity and the relationship between national jurisdictions and the Court, and the equitable geographical and representation and gender balance of the Court. New Zealand would also support examining ways to streamline Assembly procedures and enhance its functioning.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Court to enhance the transparency, efficiency and accountability of its work and encourage it to continue its efforts on strategic planning, prioritisation of resources, collaboration and financial discipline.

As we look ahead to the next chapter in the Court's history, we are at a critical juncture where decisive and collective action is needed to support and safeguard the Court.

As a friend of the Court, New Zealand looks forward to working constructively with others in enhancing the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Court and the Rome Statute system and ensure that the Court continues to be an effective and credible international judicial institution.

Thank you.