

19th Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
14–16 December 2020
The Hague, The Netherlands

Written statement delivered by Anjali Manivannan, Director of Programs

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is an honor to address the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute at its 19th session on behalf of the World Federalist Movement/Institute for Global Policy. WFM/IGP remains committed to the realization of global peace and justice through the development of democratic institutions and the application of international law. As the host organization for the Secretariat of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, WFM/IGP tirelessly supports the fight against impunity for heinous crimes.
2. Global governance and international justice remain threatened by an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment and unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, the ICC has been the target of shameful attacks aimed at undermining the Court's investigations. In particular, the U.S. administration's abusive policy towards the ICC Prosecutor, its staff, their family members and other ICC defenders calls for all of us, especially Rome Statute States Parties, to stand united in protecting the Court and its personnel from being attacked for implementing their crucial mandate. During these very difficult times, WFM/IGP reaffirms its unwavering support to strengthening the ICC's effectiveness, independence and integrity, in its role as a critical institution for providing justice and redress for victims of crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

3. The ongoing ICC Review process represents an unparalleled opportunity to address the key threats and challenges facing the Court and the Rome Statute System. WFM/IGP recognizes the Independent Experts' report as a step in the right direction towards strengthening the ICC's effectiveness, independence and integrity through legal, policy and practice reforms. However, we believe that a successful review process is only possible with appropriate engagement opportunities open for all relevant stakeholders. As the ICC Review process continues, this Assembly must ensure that civil society organizations working against impunity around the world can meaningfully contribute to this initiative. WFM/IGP remains ready to continue facilitating civil society's engagement in the ICC Review.
4. Just last month, WFM/IGP published its new report entitled *Review of the International Criminal Court: Views and Recommendations from Civil Society*. The report documents the views and recommendations of 90 representatives of civil society organizations covering 43 countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and the Middle East and North Africa regarding the ongoing efforts to strengthen the ICC's performance. It also includes their initial reactions to the recent report by the ICC Independent Expert Review recommending significant reforms to the Court.

5. The report shows that while civil society remains supportive of the ICC Review process and the Independent Expert Review, many are concerned about the way the process is being conducted and implemented and expressed a need for greater involvement of civil society throughout the Review. Many civil society organizations are afraid that the “State Party-driven process” may lead to the ICC’s weakening.
6. Similarly, civil society representatives have expressed disappointment that the Independent Experts did not recommend an increase in the Court’s budget, despite documenting underfunding at several stages of their report. Some are also concerned about a number of recommendations included in the Independent Experts’ report which may limit and delay ICC investigations and reduce the scope of ICC’s cases, which would curtail the ICC’s contribution to the fight against impunity.
7. As negotiations continue concerning the next steps in the ICC Review process, WFM/IGP urges the ICC and all States Parties to fully consider civil society’s views and detailed recommendations, including its feedback on the Independent Experts’ recommendations, in assessing which reforms to take forward and how to implement them. We call on the Court and States Parties to broadly consult with civil society organizations, especially those working against impunity in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa, throughout the process to obtain their views on operationalizing reforms. It is critical for civil society to be kept fully informed of the progress with implementation efforts and the impacts of reforms.

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

8. Finally, the upcoming judicial and prosecutorial elections will play a key role in protecting the ICC’s effectiveness, independence and integrity. WFM/IGP urges Rome Statute States Parties to ensure a fair, transparent and merit-based election process for the elections of the next ICC Prosecutor and new judges. Their leadership, commitment and integrity will be essential for the Court’s future and for the effective implementation of reforms resulting from the ICC Review process. Electing only the most highly qualified candidates in the upcoming elections is vital in strengthening the Court’s ability to deliver fair, independent and impartial justice to victims of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.
9. WFM/IGP reiterates its commitment to support the ICC and the global fight against impunity. Our work will continue to ensure that those most affected by Rome Statute crimes are heard. We will sustain our efforts to uphold and strengthen the ICC’s effectiveness, independence and integrity.
10. On behalf of WFM/IGP, thank you for your kind attention.