



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

***Nineteenth Session of the Assembly of the States Parties
to the Rome Statute
of the International Criminal Court***

General Debate

The Hague

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Delivered by H.E. Mr Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

Finland aligns herself with the statement which is delivered here today on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Let me start by expressing our sincere appreciation to all the officials of the Court for their work. We commend the ICC for continuing its work without any suspensions and finding new working methods to ensure the functioning of the Court even during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our gratitude also goes to the Presidency of the Assembly and other Bureau members for their dedication to the work of the Assembly.

Ending impunity for the most serious international crimes is a high priority for Finland. The ICC constitutes an essential pillar of the rules-based multilateral order. We remain committed to safeguarding the independence of the Court and the integrity of the Rome Statute, and seek to demonstrate our support to the ICC in various ways.

We are deeply concerned about the recent attempts to prevent the ICC from delivering its crucial mandate. We fully condemn any attempts to undermine the work of the Court and continue to call for the withdrawal of all such measures taken against the Court, its officials and staff. We remain committed to defending the Court from attempts to interfere with its work.

Mr. President,

A year ago, the States Parties launched the Independent Expert Review in order to identify ways to strengthen the ICC and the Rome Statute system and thus promote their central role in the global fight against impunity.

We welcome the report of the Independent Expert Review published in September. While it contains a number of recommendations for improvements, the aim is to support the mission of the Court that, in the words of the experts, continues to be “as crucial as ever”.

The final report of the Group of Independent Experts is extensive and thorough, but it is only the starting point. The States Parties and the Court must remain committed to strengthening the ICC and the Rome Statute system. For the process to be successful, engagement by all States Parties, the Court and other relevant stakeholders is needed.

In order for the Court to be able to function efficiently, it needs to be properly funded and provided with sufficient resources. We call upon all States Parties to continue to provide the Court with the necessary financial resources and to pay their annual contributions in time.

Mr. President,

It is again time for judicial elections - and the mandate of the Prosecutor is also drawing to a close. These are vital positions for the justice to be done and I would like to extend our thanks for the valuable service of those who will be leaving the Court. It is of utmost importance to elect the most qualified candidates to carry on the mission for the victims of the crimes under the Rome Statute. For their part, the Advisory Committee on Nominations and the Committee on the Election of the Prosecutor have assisted the States Parties by providing their assessments of the candidates, as mandated by the Assembly. We have also greatly valued the public roundtables of the candidates, a most useful initiative that the civil society initially launched and that the Assembly now applied for the first time for the judicial candidates.

Mr. President,

The ICC was created to end impunity and bring justice to those, whose voices are often left unheard. Fighting impunity also means advancing the rule of law and safeguarding human rights. These objectives fit well with Finland's human rights-based foreign and security policy and with our long tradition of promoting human rights for all.

We commend the work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. Addressing the plight of victims of sexual and gender-based violence, often women and girls, has been a special priority for Finland. We are a long-standing supporter of the Trust Fund for Victims. Our second multi-year contribution to the Trust Fund, amounting again to 800 000 euros in four years, is coming to an end this year but we are planning to continue our financial support to the Fund. We encourage others to consider contributing as well.

The ICC remains, without question, the most important global actor in the fight against impunity. It is essential that we remain committed to protecting the integrity and judicial independence of the ICC, and continue to work with the Court and all the stakeholders in order to strengthen the Court and the Rome Statute system as a whole.

Thank you.