

AMBAXXATA
TAR-REPUBBLIKA TA' MALTA



EMBASSY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

THE HAGUE

Statement of the Republic of Malta
Delivered by Ambassador H.E. Dr Mark A. Pace
19th Session of the Assembly of State Parties to the ICC
The Hague, 14-16 December 2020

Mr President,

Malta fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by the Finnish Presidency on behalf of the European Union.

This delegation would like to thank you, Mr President, the Bureau, the Secretariat and other facilitators in preparing and making the necessary arrangements for this Assembly of State Parties to take place in spite of the extraordinary circumstances which the World finds itself in.

This year we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the UN: an anniversary which grants us the opportunity to renew our efforts towards reinforcing multilateralism. This can only be done if we remind ourselves of the common foundational elements: our commitment to a rules-based international order, our commitment to the fight against impunity, and our commitment to delivering justice to victims. In this regard, Malta reiterates the International Criminal Court (ICC) is an integral component of the rules-based international order and remains the keystone of the collective pursuit of international criminal justice.

Although our attention may have been deviated by the pandemic, we must not lose sight of the victims of international crimes who are especially vulnerable, not least those subjected or at risk of gender-based violence, who are counting on us to deliver justice. It is in this sense that we must re-affirm our unwavering commitment to the Court, its values and its principles.

There has never been a more pressing time for State Parties to renew their commitment to the Court, to reaffirm our beliefs and our adherence to the values and principles of the Court.

Mr President,

Malta remains committed to raising awareness on the most heinous crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, to promoting national investigations and

prosecutions, to appropriately recognising and assisting in common efforts in enforcing international criminal law, to addressing the position and participation of victims in criminal proceedings, and in reinvigorating the global commitment for the continuous fight against impunity.

This delegation also recognises that we must all continue playing our part in promoting the Court in order to achieve universality. We equally understand that this is not an easy task, and that universality can only be achieved through a concerted effort, continuous dialogue with key partners, and effective outreach activities.

Mr President,

Two years ago, the State Parties marked the two decades of the ICC's establishment. It was then time to take stock of the advances made by the Court and to address areas of improvement. In this regard, Malta welcomes the report of the Independent Group of Experts and notes positively the recommendations of the Independent Expert Review. It is now time to work together to take forward the process. Malta stands ready to embark upon this process of reform, to give its assistance and to contribute, where necessary, in undertaking holistic reform.

Let us bear in mind that striving towards a more efficient and effective Court is vital for the fight against impunity. While we are aware of the intricacies of such a wide-ranging modernisation process, the focus should be kept on implementation. Our collective goal is to strengthen the Court in taking forward its core mission.

Mr President,

Malta notes with regret recent developments that have exerted undue pressure on the pursuit of international justice. We continue to hold that the independence and the Court's ability to implement its mandate unhindered remains essential in addressing impunity.

Mr President,

In closing, allow me also to thank the Prosecutor Madame Fatou Bensouda at the end of her mandate for her contribution to the Court. We augur her all the best for the next step her career.

As we go forward, I would like to assure this delegation is committed to pursue consensus in view of the key decisions which will have a bearing on the direction the Court will be embarking on. Let us look at the year 2021, a year full of challenges and complexities, as a year which is presenting us with an invaluable opportunity to play our role in further strengthening the Court and reinforcing its role as a credible, efficient and effective institution.