



ICELAND
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Written Statement

**20th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court**

The Hague, 6-11 December 2021

Madame President, your Excellencies,

Iceland regrets not being able to attend the ASP this year due to the Covid-19 situation in both Iceland and the Netherlands and would like to extend its thanks and commend the organisation of this event despite these difficult circumstances. It is with gratitude that Iceland submits this written statement and with great respect to the Court and its staff.

Firstly, our congratulations to the newly elected President of the Assembly, the new President of the Court, the new Prosecutor as well as the judges elected during the last session of the assembly. We wish you all the best and assure you of Iceland's full support for your work.

Iceland highly appreciates the Court's contribution towards establishing accountability for the most serious crimes under international law, and providing justice for victims, while upholding the principle of complementarity. Iceland reiterates its strong and continued support for, and commitment to, the International Criminal Court and we express our sincere appreciation to the Court for its significant contribution to the fight against impunity worldwide.

Madame President.

A core aim of the Court is to bring justice to victims of atrocities. This particularly applies to the most vulnerable groups in conflict situations. It is well known that women and children are affected by crimes during armed conflict and often targeted directly. Iceland strongly supports the efforts made by the Court to focus on sexual and gender-based crimes and encourages the Court to continue to develop its institutional capacity to investigate and prosecute them.

In this context we would like to highlight the important work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. Iceland is pleased to announce that it will make a voluntary contribution to the Fund this year for the first time with an aim to do so for three consecutive years. We welcome the work that the Fund has been carrying out to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. It is an honour to assist in fulfilling the Rome Statute's provisions providing rights of victims of crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC to receive reparations and assistance. Iceland calls on all State Parties to contribute to the Fund.

Madame President.

Iceland welcomes the ongoing independent expert review of the Court's functioning and believes that successful implementation of its recommendations will result in strengthening the Rome Statute system and increasing furthermore the efficiency of the Court. Some of the topics of key importance are related to a healthy work culture and diversity issues such as equitable geographical distribution, linguistic diversity and last but not least gender balance, which Iceland believes is of the utmost importance; overall and in senior positions of the Court.

While we work to further strengthen the Court, encouraging more States Parties to ratify the Rome Statute and join the Court remains a priority. Iceland urges all States who have not yet done so to become parties to the Rome Statute. We also urge all States Parties to fulfil their obligation to pay the annual contributions.

Lastly, we warmly thank the staff of the International Criminal Court for their continued hard work under challenging circumstances during the pandemic.

Thank you.