

Nordic Statement
Review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system
Twentieth Session of the Assembly of States Parties
Plenary meeting 8 December 2021

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the Nordic Countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. We warmly welcome the opportunity to reiterate our support for the ongoing review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system, which we consider crucial for the future of the Court. We wish to share some of our views on the progress of the review and on the way forward.

First, we would like to thank the Review Mechanism, the State Party representatives and the *ad country* focal points, for the immense amount of work and guidance undertaken this year. Similarly, we would like to extend our appreciation for the Assembly mandate holders. The Nordic Countries welcome and commend the Court's efforts and engagement in the review process, including through updates on the status of internal assessments and processes.

We look forward to continue on the inclusive and transparent path established by the Review Mechanism, in full cognizance of the review being a joint endeavor between the Court, the Assembly and other relevant stakeholders, including the civil society. We all share the goals of strengthening the performance of the Court and the effective delivery of justice. We underline that the review process must be carried out in full respect of existing mandates of the Court and the Assembly, including continuously observing and safeguarding the Court's judicial and prosecutorial independence, as well as the Assembly's management oversight responsibility regarding the administration of the Court.

Madam President,

In the past months, we actively engaged in the first stage of the assessment of the IER recommendations with the Review Mechanism's "Categorization of Recommendations" and the "Comprehensive Action Plan" (CAP) as our road map and guide.

Discussions in the Review Mechanism and the facilitations included several topics of key importance to the Nordics, such as recommendations related to the Court's working culture, zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, gender equality, internal grievance procedures, human resources, the Trust Fund for Victims, and the preliminary discussion on unified governance. We are pleased to see that many assessments were concluded, and we underline the importance of timely implementation of those recommendations positively assessed. Many of the more complex issues need more time. We look forward to continuing the discussions and hope that all stakeholders will remain committed to keeping up the pace. We welcome the Matrix as a useful tool for tracking progress and commend the intention to update it regularly.

Madam President,

As the work on the IER recommendations resumes in 2022, the Nordics will continue to place particular importance on the governance and management of the Court. Recommendations concerning unified governance are essential as they inform and underpin a high number of other recommendations and aim to ensure a harmonious and efficient governance of the ICC. Other areas of great importance include gender equality, including gender mainstreaming and targeted actions, internal grievance procedures and ethics, budget management oversight issues, addressing the issue of liquidity, outstanding contributions and arrears, human resource issues, including the establishment of a tenure system and the provision of assistance and reparations to victims.

We also continue to place importance on recommendations on situations and cases, preliminary examinations and investigations, and internal quality control mechanisms, as well as recommendations on the efficiency of the judicial process, coherent and accessible jurisprudence and decision-making.

We believe that active participation by the Court's staff in the assessment and implementation of recommendations, which affect them, including through the Staff Union Council, is key to sustainable results.

The review process is comprehensive and complex in both scope and nature. The ambitious timeline set by the CAP poses a challenge for all involved, including the States Parties to be able to participate and form a comprehensive and holistic view of the recommendations and their interlinkages. We therefore encourage the Review Mechanism to exercise as much leadership as possible in paving the way forward. While we as small delegations feel the weight of this exercise, we are convinced of the need to move ahead with ambition and determination.

We would also recommend starting discussions early in 2022 to allow sufficient time for the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders.

The Nordic Countries concur with the goal of the Review Mechanism that the assessment of most recommendations should be completed in 2022. We would also like to see the implementation of the positively assessed recommendations to pick up speed.

We should all bear in mind the common objective of this process: to ensure that the ICC and the Rome Statute System are optimized to deliver on their core mandate: of fighting impunity and delivering justice to the victims of the worst crimes imaginable.

In conclusion, the Nordic States Parties reiterate our gratitude to the Review Mechanism and express our full support for its stewardship and guidance. We continue to emphasize inclusivity and transparency as key elements for the legitimacy of the review process.

Thank you.