



STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA

TO THE 21st SESSION OF

THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

BY

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Mr Vice President, honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, I would first like to pay tribute to Peter Lewis for his distinguished service over many years as Registrar, particularly at a time when the Court has had to manage a significant workload as well as the unique challenges presented by COVID-19.

Australia has been a steadfast supporter of the Court since its establishment twenty years ago – and of its vital role in holding perpetrators to account for the most serious international crimes.

We express our appreciation for the Court’s continued commitment to its mandate over the course of the year. We are encouraged to see that the Court held five trials this year – more than double the number held last year – and that it is expected to hold at least three trials in 2023.

Mr Vice President, at this pivotal time, it is important the Court has sufficient resources to continue its fight against impunity. Australia acknowledges the costs associated with the

Court's increased workload and supports an appropriate budget increase to enable the Court to deliver on its core mandate. We also encourage the Court to continue to find ways to work effectively and efficiently within the reality of finite resources. States Parties must also address the matter of arrears which impacts the liquidity issues facing the Court. We must not allow this to hinder the Court in delivering on its core mandate and urge all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

Mr Vice President, as co-focal point on complementarity since 2017, with Romania and now with Uganda, Australia would like to thank the Court and States Parties for their continued engagement on this critical issue. The principle of complementarity is fundamental to the Court's core mandate as a court of last resort in investigating and prosecuting serious international crimes. We look forward to facilitating ongoing dialogue on complementarity, as well as continuing our work as co-focal point to support the Court's survivor-centred approach to accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes.

Mr Vice President, Australia was pleased to join with 42 other States Parties in referring the situation in Ukraine to the Prosecutor. This referral demonstrates the confidence Australia has in the Court in ensuring accountability for serious international crimes. The atrocities committed by Russia in the context of its illegal, unlawful and immoral aggression against Ukraine demonstrate the importance of an independent and impartial international court in combating impunity and upholding the rules-based order.

Mr Vice President, as we reflect on the accomplishments and lessons of the past twenty years, we underscore the importance of continued implementation of the reforms recommended by the Independent Expert Review. Australia commends the Court and States Parties on their efforts in this regard we look forward to working with you to ensure the Court is best placed to fulfil its important role in pursuing accountability.