



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

***Twenty-first Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute
of the International Criminal Court***

**General Debate
The Hague, 5 December 2022**

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

Madame President,

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered today on behalf of the European Union.

I thank you, the President and the judges, the Prosecutor and his Deputies, for your efforts to advance international criminal justice and strengthen the Rome Statute system. My special thanks to Registrar, Mr. Lewis, for his dedication and outstanding performance, as his term of office approaches its end.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the ICC. As the Court has reached maturity, we see the full scale of its operations, from preliminary examinations to the implementation of reparation orders.

For two decades, the ICC has been a beacon of accountability, leading our efforts to curb impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

The ICC remains as important as ever, given the atrocities that unfold in many parts of the world today. The opening of a full investigation in the situation of Ukraine, and the crimes that continue to take place there is one stark reminder of this reality.

Madame President,

The ICC is a Court with a global mandate, but also a Court of last resort. The ICC does not replace national judicial systems, but strengthens and complements them. The ICC only steps in when necessary.

The universality of the Rome Statute remains a central priority, as it fosters the worldwide ecosystem of accountability.

To deliver on its promise and mandate the Court needs resources that match its workload. Exceptional voluntary resources can support, but not replace, sustainable resourcing through the regular budget. All States Parties have a legal obligation to pay their contributions in full and on time. Delaying justice is not an option.

We created the ICC to serve many purposes, from combatting impunity to contributing to sustainable peace. At the heart of the Rome Statute system was always the promise to focus on the victims. To ensure we hear their voices through meaningful participation, and provide assistance and reparation for the unfathomable suffering they have endured.

In most cases, the ICC fully relies on the Trust Fund for Victims. Finland is a long-standing contributor to the Trust Fund, and I call on others to join us.

Madame President,

The ICC still faces opposition and attempts to undermine its work and legitimacy. I reiterate Finland's unwavering commitment to the independence and the impartiality of the ICC. The Court deserves our political and financial support, as well as cooperation essential for its functioning.

As we support and protect the ICC itself, we must also do the same for those who collaborate with the Court. Human rights defenders and civil society actors around the world are often on the frontline gathering evidence on violations of international law, and too often harassed and intimidated to prevent them from providing their findings to the attention of the ICC.

Madame President,

Amidst the challenges of pandemic recovery, combined with the economic instability and food crisis caused by Russia's unlawful invasion in Ukraine, we cannot forget the existential threats posed by climate change and biodiversity loss.

I welcome every effort to use international criminal justice to respond to these threats. In this regard, I would like to highlight the International Law Commission's Draft Principles on Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts, commended this year by the UN General Assembly. This Assembly also allows us to continue discussions on the ecocide initiative.

I thank you, Madame President.