

IRELAND NATIONAL STATEMENT AT THE 21ST
SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

Madam President,

Ireland associates itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to you, Madam President, and to the members of the Bureau for your dedicated work throughout the year. I also wish to thank the President of the Court, the Prosecutor and the Deputy Prosecutors for their tireless efforts in pursuing justice over the last 12 months.

Special thanks must also be offered to Mr Peter Lewis, who joins us for his final ASP in his capacity as Registrar. Throughout his five years at the helm of the Registry, he has been a welcome force of stability and professionalism through challenging times. We are grateful for his exemplary service.

Madam President,

This was a significant year for the Court in many ways. It marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, which commenced the ICC's operations. Such a milestone inevitably prompts a period of reflection and renewal. Furthermore, as the year unfolded, it has also proven to be a time of great action and activity.

The Court is now facing its busiest period ever in terms of its investigative and judicial workload. While this increased activity highlights the importance of the Court's mission and its growing prominence, it also presents challenges.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has shone a spotlight on the operations of the ICC, and renewed efforts for international criminal justice more broadly. It is important that we capitalise on this momentum to demonstrate and ensure the Court's capacity to deliver real justice for all victims of atrocities crimes in all country situations that the Court is seized of.

Madam President,

We must not forget that it was the cries of victims across the globe that spurred us to establish the ICC. Victims are at the heart of the Rome Statute and the reparative justice system established by it. Ireland considers the Trust Fund for Victims essential to making the Court's justice a reality for victims, their families and affected communities.

I personally witnessed the real difference that the Trust Fund's activities make and the transformative impact of this work this September when, in close cooperation with the Government of Uganda and the Trust Fund, Ireland organised a visit with a delegation of 13 states and the EU to monitor the work of the Trust Fund in Northern Uganda. We encourage all States who have not done so to consider contributing to the Trust Fund for Victims.

In that vein, I am pleased to announce that Ireland has agreed a three-year grant to the Trust Fund for Victims of €1.5 million. This grant is part of the €3 million voluntary contribution to the ICC that Ireland announced in April this year. €1 million of this funding was immediately transferred to the Office of the

Prosecutor, and I am pleased to say that the remaining €500,000 will be disbursed among the Special Fund for Relocations, the Trust Fund for the Development of Interns and Visiting Professionals and the Trust Fund for Family Visits before the end of the year.

Madam President,

While Ireland made a necessary contribution to meet an urgent need, voluntary contributions are not a sustainable means of funding the Court. Reliance on additional funding from a select group of States can fuel accusations of bias in international law. Ireland strongly encourages States Parties to agree a budget that enables the Court to rise to the challenges before it and deliver on the goals that we, as States Parties, have collectively bestowed upon it.

As well as setting a sufficient and sustainable budget, it is also essential that States Parties pay their assessed contributions in a timely manner. Ireland is deeply concerned at the level of arrears and outstanding contributions. For the third time in a row, this issue has threatened the ability of the Court to meet

its financial obligations. This is a major challenge to the Courts operations. We urge all States parties to pay their assessed contributions on time and we are open to working and engaging constructively towards a solution on this.

Madam President,

States Parties are united by their mission to end impunity for the world's most serious international crimes. We therefore have an obligation to support the independence of the ICC when it is challenged by those who are threatened by this. This includes defending, not only the Court and its officials, but also those who cooperate with the Court. In this regard, we are concerned by reports of threats and intimidation directed at some civil society organisations cooperating with the ICC. We welcome the Bureau's adoption of a strategy for responding to attacks on the Court and look forward to updates on its implementation.

Ireland has sought to defend and support the Court at every opportunity, including throughout our term on the UN Security Council. As we approach the end of our two year Council term,

this experience has lead us to reflect on the relationship between these two vital institutions for international peace and security. We hosted an Arria formula meeting on this topic in June of this year and published a Chair's summary of the event that contains many useful suggestions on how to optimise this relationship.

Madam President,

States Parties continue revitalising and reaffirming their commitment to the Rome Statute system through assessing and implementing the recommendations of the Independent Expert Review. Ireland fully supports this process and commends the steps taken so far.

The values of the Court, the values of justice and accountability, are universal. Preventing, and actively fighting, impunity for perpetrators of unimaginable atrocities that shock the conscience of humanity requires all States to come together to build a truly international system of criminal justice. We therefore call upon all States that have not done so, to ratify the Rome Statute. Victims deserve no less.

For these reasons, Ireland renews its steadfast support for the Court.

Thank you, Madam President.