



ICELAND

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by:

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Madame President, your excellencies,

The year 2022 has been a significant year for the International Criminal Court. As we celebrate the Court's 20th anniversary, we must not lose sight of the reasons why the ICC was created: To establish accountability and

provide justice for victims, by ending impunity for the gravest international crimes. The Court has made pivotal progress and achievements during these last 20 years. For its contribution to this cause, we express our deep gratitude as we reiterate our strong and continued support for, and commitment to, the ICC. Iceland would also like to praise Prosecutor Khan for his dedication and hard work towards increasing the Court's outreach and visibility across the continents.

Madame President.

The strength of the ICC depends on the reach of its jurisdiction; thus, we urge all States to ratify the Rome statute and become States Parties. Iceland wishes to underline the ICC's complimentary nature and to encourage all States not party to the Rome Statute to reassess their position, as we all share a common goal of ending the impunity of perpetrators of the most heinous crimes and bringing justice to victims throughout all jurisdictions.

Iceland stresses the need for consensus on the budget for 2023 so that the Court can continue its important work and urges all States Parties to fulfil their obligation to pay the annual contributions on time, as the Court's workload has risen to unforeseen heights. In August, Iceland responded to the Court's plea for further funding as we provided an additional, unearmarked, contribution. We encourage States to respond to the Court's

request for further funding, as this is an essential part of maintaining the Court's function and its judicial integrity.

Iceland acknowledges the importance of the relationship between the ICC and the Security Council. We encourage both bodies to find even more practical solutions to strengthen both their functioning and cooperation, especially in matters in which the Security Council refers cases to the ICC. Speaking of which, Iceland regrets the fact that the Security Council has failed to make full use of the potential to refer situations to the Court for investigation, such as in the case of Syria.

Madame President.

The effectiveness of the ICC is contingent on the cooperation of its States Parties; thus, we urge all parties to cooperate fully and effectively in every manner possible, from issuing arrest warrants to enabling the work of Human Rights Defenders. The ICC must be able to fulfil its core purpose of delivering justice to victims. All efforts of the Court should build on a victim-oriented approach. A crucial element of the Court's deliverance of justice is implemented by the Trust Fund for Victims. Iceland is proud and honoured to be making the second contribution to the fund, and we call on all States and legal entities around the world to cooperate and contribute to the fund.

Iceland is a dedicated supporter of the Court's efforts to advance accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes. We praise the recent work on the Policy on the Crime of Gender Persecution. The development of the policy paper is a fundamental part of the Court's progress to evolve its institutional capacity to investigate and prosecute gender persecution.

Madame President.

In the past year the Court has encountered unprecedented and challenging matters that need to be met head on by the international community as a whole. Despite the Court's numerous advancements in several areas, we must not forget that there are always opportunities to further improve its functions.

The independent expert review was established to improve the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Court. Iceland praises the Court on its response to the review. However, recent issues brought to light by the Independent Oversight Mechanism, are deeply worrying and we encourage the leadership of the Court to respond without any delay. The Court, simply put, needs to be a good place to work for all its staff. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the importance of implementing

changes that reflect the global nature of the Court in matters such as gender balance, geographical distribution and linguistic diversity.

Iceland is supportive of the idea of a permanent vetting mechanism for ICC elections, which we believe can only further strengthen the Court. A step-by-step approach, involving the next judicial elections on an ad hoc basis, could be ideal.

To conclude, Iceland thanks the staff of the International Criminal Court for their continued hard work and dedication. The Court has proven to play a vital part in the maintenance of the rule of law, international peace, and security. It is the firm belief of Iceland that the Court and the States Parties can build on that success and reach further.

I thank you.