



**21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome  
Statute of the International Criminal Court**

**Aotearoa New Zealand General Debate Statement**

**Delivered by Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Hon Nanaia Mahuta**

**December 2022**

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E ngā mana, e ngā reo,  
tēnā koutou katoa.

Madam President,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Friends,  
Greetings from Aotearoa New Zealand.

I welcome this opportunity to reaffirm our long-standing support for the International Criminal Court. As we celebrate 20 years since the Rome Statute came into force, global challenges have illustrated just how critical the Court's role is.

We believe the Court is a central pillar in the international rules-based order and that it ensures accountability for the most serious crimes. New Zealand's long-standing support for the ICC is a reflection of the values we uphold and how we seek to assert what we stand for.

That is why I am proud that we came forward as one of a group of countries that formally referred the Ukraine situation to the Court. We have been unequivocal in choosing to stand firm with those who share our commitment to the international rule of law, accountability and justice. With the ICC facing an unprecedented workload, New Zealand is focused on ensuring the Court is sufficiently resourced so it can continue undertaking its investigations and prosecutions independently and impartially.

As part of our support, we provided additional funding this year and deployed a specialised national expert to work with the Court. Alongside these actions, New Zealand supports a regular budget that is reasonable and justified, and allows the Court to fully implement its mandate. We thank the Committee of Budget and Finance for its guidance in the lead-up to this year's Assembly. Once the budget is agreed, we are committed to paying our

contributions in full and on time, and call on other State Parties to do the same.

New Zealand also acknowledges the important work of the Trust Fund for Victims to provide reparations and assistance to those who have been harmed. I would like to encourage other parties to consider supporting the Trust Fund for Victims through voluntary contributions. I would also like to thank the Registrar, Mr Peter Lewis, for his years of service and his ability to lead the Court in a cooperative, principled and steadfast manner.

As we celebrate the Court's many accomplishments over the past two decades, it is important that we look ahead to the next chapter. New Zealand will continue to support the ongoing review process to strengthen the Rome Statute system and enhance the effective performance of the Court's mandate. We look forward to the positive changes implementation will bring, including on gender equality and geographic representation which will need to be carried forward by all parts of the Court and by State Parties.

Madam President, New Zealand takes this opportunity to note our support for future discussions around the concept of ecocide in international crime to address environmental destruction at a global level. The Office of the Prosecutor plays a critical role in the effective functioning of the Rome Statute system and as such, we would like to acknowledge the Office for their dedicated work and service to the Court and its mandate this past year.

New Zealand encourages Parties that have not done so, to consider incorporating Rome Statute crimes and principles into their domestic law, and we reiterate our unwavering support for the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system.

Thank you Madam President.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou,  
tēnā koutou katoa.