

# SWEDEN



## STATEMENT

by

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Mr. President, members of the Assembly, distinguished delegates, officials of the Court, ladies and gentlemen.

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Mr. President,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as President of this Assembly. Sweden is committed to supporting you in this important role. Allow me also to thank your predecessor Ambassador Tiina Intelmann who has served with great commitment and distinction. The Court cannot function without its officials. Their tireless work – in all organs of the Court – should be recognized as vital to the continuing fight for justice for victims of mass atrocity crimes.

Sweden is firmly convinced that the Court and its activities are part of a wider process of increasing expectations and demands for accountability for heinous crimes in all societies around the world. Independent, effective and efficient criminal courts are the custodians of this culture of the Rule of Law, at the international as well as national level. Only a system based on the Rule of Law is capable of delivering true justice to victims of serious international crimes.

Mr. President,

The Rome Statute system is based on the principle that it is the primary responsibility of States to investigate and prosecute the most serious crimes of international concern. Implementation of Rome Statute crimes into national penal codes is a precondition for realizing this responsibility. Sweden has this year further implemented the Rome Statute through the adoption of a new law on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, whereby also crimes against humanity have become a separate crime in domestic law.

Having the requisite penal legislation in place, however, is only the first step. Capacity to actually carry out investigation and prosecution of Rome Statute crimes is another thing. It should be recognized that this is not an easy task. It is therefore essential that States assist each other in building the necessary capacity. This can be done in multiple ways, including through development co-operation.

States could also draw on the expertise of different organs of the Court and other international actors. One such actor – which I would like to encourage States to make use of – is the Justice Rapid Response, a facility that manages the rapid deployment of criminal justice professionals from a stand-by roster. As ASP focal point for complementarity together with Botswana we look forward to continue discussions on ways to assist States to enhance their capacity.

Mr. President,

It is truly encouraging that increased attention is given to atrocity crimes committed against women and girls. For too long sexual and gender based violence in conflict was almost

completely neglected. It is a major achievement that international criminal law now recognizes the gravity of such violence as serious international crimes and as a means of war as such. This is part of a general progress – which includes the crucial adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 – underlining the impact of conflict on women as well as their important role in all phases of conflict resolution and the rebuilding of war torn societies.

While investigation and prosecution of serious international crimes at *all* times are challenging, specific challenges are involved in investigating and prosecuting sexual and gender based crimes. A major reason is of course that gender based discrimination prevails in societies all over the world and that the potential stigma for speaking out often deter victims. We warmly welcome the cutting edge new Policy on Gender Based-Crimes of the Office of the Prosecutor which address these issues. We encourage States to explore how to increase capacity to investigate and prosecute such crimes in domestic systems, drawing from the policy.

Mr. President,

We are convinced that the success of the Court is dependent upon efforts to reach out to affected communities. This is also an aspect of cooperation because with knowledge of the Court within a situation country, investigations within affected communities are more likely to succeed. Therefore, the Court's outreach and communication efforts are vital to achieve justice for victims in affected communities.

Mr. President,

Sweden remains a staunch supporter of the International Criminal Court and we are strongly committed to its integrity, independence, effectiveness and efficiency. The victims of mass atrocity crimes deserves no less.

Thank you for your attention.