

Rev 1

**Assembly of States Parties
of the
International Criminal Court**

**Sixteenth Session
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**Statement by Denmark during the
General Debate**

Delivered by H. E. Ambassador Jens-Otto Horslund

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Mr President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this Assembly today on behalf of Denmark. We align ourselves fully with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union. Let me highlight a few points of particular importance to us.

Mr. President,

Firstly I take pleasure in extending the gratitude of the Government of Denmark to President Sidiki Kaba for his invaluable contribution to realising the vision set out in the Rome Statute. Our gratitude goes as well to the Vice-presidents and the members of the Bureau for their tireless efforts.

We also believe that the President of the Court, Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi, has shown exemplary leadership. I wish to thank her and the two vice-presidents of the Court as well as all the outgoing judges for their equally invaluable contribution.

Mr President,

When we created the Rome Statute, we were driven by a strong conviction that impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is unacceptable. Without accountability for such crimes, there can be no lasting peace.

We knew that it was never going to be easy. Today, at the threshold of the 20th anniversary of the Statute, realising our common vision is still work in progress. Our political will and determination to overcome challenges and continue progress is required – more than ever.

Mr President,

We have just elected six new judges of exceptional quality, and we congratulate them with their election. We trust they will spare no effort in fulfilling their mandates and that of the Court in the most efficient fashion - individually and collectively.

Both outgoing Presidents have placed a particular emphasis on achieving universality of The Rome Statute. We also see this as a priority, which is why we have assumed the role of Assembly Focal Point for universality and full implementation for the past three years. It has not always been an easy task – our family has both grown and shrunk. And it is with deep regret that we have observed Burundi leave our joint fight against impunity. The 20th anniversary next year is an excellent platform for all of us to increase our efforts, also in our bilateral relations, to promote the goal of universal adherence.

Mr. President,

2017 has once again been a busy year for the Court. In our view, the Court must have the resources necessary to carry out its core functions. When requirements emerge, they must be provided for in a timely, reasonable and sound manner. Given our shared commitment – and the valuable expert advice by the Committee on Budget and Finance – I am confident we will reach a speedy conclusion on the budget, while avoiding the perils of micromanagement.

Mr President,

It is of vital importance to maximise the impact of our fight against impunity on affected communities. To this end, Denmark has recently partnered with the ICC in launching a new access-to-justice-project in Uganda aimed at assisting the Court in reaching these communities.

In a broader sense we should recall that complementarity is a cornerstone of the Statute. National jurisdictions have the primary role in fighting impunity and ensuring accountability. We still, however, have much to do in realising the full cooperative potential of our system. States helping States ending impunity must remain a priority.

The Court also depends on us, the State Parties, for cooperation in terms of its investigations, prosecutions and reparations. We look forward to the plenary segment on cooperation with a special emphasis on financial investigations. I also want to underline our shared responsibility for bringing down the number of outstanding arrest warrants.

Mr President,

Let me end by setting out Denmark's view on the issue of the activation of the crime aggression. We look forward to the coming discussions and will work actively during this session to ensure a consensual activation decision. But this decision needs to reflect our consistent and clear position on the interpretation of the Kampala agreement: That the Court cannot exercise jurisdiction over nationals - or acts on the territory - of States Parties, who have not ratified the crime of aggression. Activation of the crime of aggression is of very significant importance, and it is likely to present the Court with highly sensitive and complex questions of international law.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we have important work ahead of us. I am grateful for the trust placed in Denmark as a new Bureau member. We stand ready to do our part together with all of you. There will always be challenges and change – we must always follow vision with venture.

Thank you, Mr President