



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by Finland at the
Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court

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Statement by

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(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I would like to start by expressing our appreciation for the leadership of the Presidency of the Assembly of States Parties. The ASP has a well vested role in our dedicated work in supporting the Rome Statute and the work of the ICC. Finland values broad participation in these meetings both from States and the civil society. It is in this respect that Finland has contributed also this year to the Trust Fund supporting the participation of least developed countries and other developing States. We find it crucial that all States Parties are in a position to engage in the discussions.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to the three Principals of the Court as well as to the ICC Trust Fund for Victims and the Secretariat of the Assembly. We commend your hard work and your endless efforts in the fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes.

I would also wish to congratulate the new President of the Assembly as well as the new judges. We wish you all the best in your new positions.

Finland is a staunch supporter of the International Criminal Court and we have sought to demonstrate this in different ways. For us safeguarding the integrity of the Rome Statute and the independence of the ICC is essential. The goal of ending impunity for the most serious international crimes is high on the agenda of the Finnish Foreign Policy.

The Court is without question the most important global actor in the fight against impunity. But it does not work alone nor does it work in a vacuum. It is the responsibility of all of us to lend our full support to the Court as well as to cooperate fully and effectively with the Court.

We also recognize important work against impunity carried out in other fora. Finland is one of the main supporters of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the crimes committed in Syria (IIIM). We have lent our support for these kinds of international mechanisms advancing accountability in a concrete way. This also includes Justice Rapid Response, which cooperates with the IIIM and the ICC.

Mr. President,

Let me focus my intervention today on three topical areas that are of utmost importance to Finland: resources of the ICC, the rights of victims and activating ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression.

We are today in a key position to voice our support both to the independence as well as the effective functioning of the court. In order for the Court to be effective and to deliver, it has to be properly resourced. The Court should not and cannot be resource-driven but demand-driven – within the limits of the Rome Statute. The budget has to reflect the evolving tasks of the Court. We would like to voice our concern about the resources of the Court and call for solutions that are not restraining but rather empowering the Court in its irreplaceable work.

Victims are at the core of the functioning of the Court. We very much welcome the longstanding work done by the NGOs in order to draw more attention to the role of victims at the ICC. Indeed this is an area that requires more consideration and attention especially now when reparations are becoming a reality.

Finland is a long-standing supporter of the Trust Fund for Victims, including with multi-year contributions. The Fund has made a difference and provided life-changing assistance to many.

I am therefore extremely pleased that Minister for Foreign Trade and Development of Finland just this week signed our decision for a new multi-year contribution to the Trust Fund. This adds up to 800 000 euros during the years 2017 – 2020. This support is ear-marked for victims of sexual and gender-based violence that are a special priority for Finland. The Trust Fund has been working for a long time in rehabilitating victim survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. This area, unfortunately, still requires our special attention and support.

We consider our support key in assisting victims of the most heinous crimes and their families in rebuilding their lives as well as strengthening the rights of women and girls. Both financial and political support is needed. We urge other States as well to consider contributing to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Mr. President,

We have lent our consistent and active support for including the crime of aggression into the Rome Statute since the negotiation thereof.

Finland has completed in 2015 the necessary national steps for the ratification of the so called Kampala amendments, including the provisions on the crime of aggression. As part of this, we have incorporated the crime of aggression into our national legislation. This national solution provides a firm legal basis for dealing with the crime of aggression also in national criminal proceedings.

As a natural continuation of our policy, Finland stands ready to activate the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. It is our sincere hope that this can be done during this ASP without opening the agreement reached in Kampala. We are ready to work on this together with all delegations. If needed, States Parties can rely on the opt out –mechanism as a legal and technical tool before completing necessary national steps for ratification.

Mr. President, Members of the Assembly,

The Rome Statute will soon celebrate its 20th Anniversary and we hope that this anniversary serves to highlight the value and the results of the ICC. We have to continue our active and visible support to the universality of the Rome Statute and the Court itself. Finland is ready to do its part and utilize the momentum. The Anniversary deserves our attention.

Let us together continue the work in advancing international justice and the rule of law.

Thank you.