



ICELAND
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by
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General Debate

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the International Criminal Court**

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Mr. President, your excellencies.

First of all allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and assumption of Office as President of the Assembly for the next three years. We wish you all the best and assure you of Iceland's full support in your work. I would also like to extend our warmest gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Sidiki Kaba, for his leadership and achievements during his time in this demanding position. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate the six newly elected judges to the ICC, the new Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and other newly elected officials of the court and also wish them all the best in their challenging positions.

Iceland expresses its continued support for, and commitment to, the International Criminal Court. We also express our sincere appreciation to the Court for its significant contribution to the fight against impunity worldwide.

The report on the activities of the court for 2016/17 reflects the Court's increasing and comprehensive activity and confirms that it is truly a global criminal court. We commend the Prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, and her team for their relentless efforts to prosecute perpetrators from all over the world. We also welcome the Court's ambitions to enhance the efficiency of its activities.

The ICC is an essential institution and promotes respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law. It also promotes the advancement of post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with the view of achieving sustainable development and peace as envisioned in Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President.

Iceland supports the increased focus of the Court and Member States on sexual and gender based violence. The core aim of the court is to bring justice to victims of atrocities. This particularly applies to the most vulnerable groups in conflict situations - women and children - who deserve increased attention and support from the international community.

The full realization of the rights of victims is an important aspect of the continuing success and relevance of the Court. In this regard we commend the important work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims.

We recognize, as the ICC Prosecutor mentioned in a statement last month on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, that an important aspect of challenging the culture of discrimination that allows reprehensible crimes, including sexual and gender-based crimes, to prevail is the effective investigation and prosecution of those primarily responsible for such heinous crimes.

Cooperation with other stakeholders is of utmost importance for the work of the Court. Many States and international organizations are important contributors here, but it is a continued cause for concern that the number of outstanding arrest warrants remains high. Iceland urges all States to cooperate fully and effectively with the Court.

Enhanced cooperation between the Court and the Security Council is still called for. This is particularly true in cases of non-cooperation with the ICC and strengthened follow-up of situations referred to it from the Security Council. We note with great concern that the Security Council has been unable to refer the Syrian situation to the ICC.

Mr. President.

The ICC needs more States Parties, not fewer. Iceland urges all States who have not yet done so to become parties to the Rome Statute. We were deeply disappointed with the decision of three States Parties to withdraw from the ICC, but equally pleased to note that some of them have announced a reversal of their decision. We stand ready for a constructive discussion about concerns that some States Parties may have. Withdrawals from the Rome Statute are not the solution here and we encourage States Parties, critical of the Court, to seek other solutions within the framework of the Rome Statute.

As regards the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, Iceland has already ratified the amendment and strongly supports its activation in this Assembly of States Parties. However, we have noted the different view among States Parties in this regard and strongly urge for a consensus based solution on details of the activation of the jurisdiction.

Mr. President.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the worldwide activities of the International Criminal Court. It is our common responsibility to cooperate with the Court and enable it to carry out its important mandate. Iceland welcomes the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute in 2018 and remains a dedicated supporter of the Court and committed to its ideals.

Thank you for your attention.