

**Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court**

**Seventeenth Session
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Statement

By

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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Finland aligns with the statement [which will be] presented here today on behalf of the European Union.

For Finland, the rules-based international order is of fundamental importance. Over the years, the International Criminal Court has established itself as the most eminent actor in the global fight to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern. Today, I want to reaffirm Finland's continued support for the Court. We are committed to safeguarding the integrity of the Rome Statute, and we respect the independence of the Court.

A successful rules-based international order cannot be achieved without dedicated actors. We are grateful to the Office of the Prosecutor, the Chambers and the Registry for their committed work in strengthening the rule of law. I would also like to express our appreciation to the President of the ASP and the Bureau for having coordinated and advanced intersessional efforts in preparation of this Assembly.

Since the last Assembly, we have seen significant developments at all stages of proceedings at the International Criminal Court. In order to fulfill the mandate entrusted to it, the Court must have the resources necessary to do its work. We welcome the continued efforts of the Court to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, we also call for solutions that will empower the Court to continue its irreplaceable work.

Finland values broad participation of States and of civil society in the meetings of the ASP. The ASP has an integral role in supporting the Rome Statute and the work of the Court. This is the forum for addressing any concerns that the States Parties may have about the functioning of the Rome Statute system, while respecting the judicial independence of the Court. It is crucial that all State Parties are in a position to engage in the discussions. Having this in mind, Finland has contributed again this year to the Trust Fund for the participation of least-developed countries and other developing States.

Mr. President,

Victims are at the core of the Rome Statute system. They deserve to receive acknowledgment, justice and reparations for the enormous harm they have suffered as a result of the most heinous crimes.

To celebrate this year the Rome Statute's 20th anniversary in a practice-oriented manner, the Finnish Embassy in The Hague has hosted together with Redress and the Victims' Rights Working Group the first session in a series of lunch talks on victims' rights. These talks provide opportunities to discuss some key issues, such as reparations, participation and outreach. We must ensure that the effective participation of the victims in the Court proceedings will be promoted. In this work, the role of civil society is crucial.

When cases of the ICC reach the reparation stage, the work of the Trust Fund for Victims becomes increasingly relevant. The reparative function of the Court is both significant and challenging. Expectations concerning the Trust Fund's ability to assist victims remain high, especially if those who are convicted are indigent. Voluntary contributions are therefore needed in order to implement the Fund's assistance mandate. The Fund has already provided life-changing assistance to many victims of atrocity crimes and their families, and will continue to do so in the future.

Finland is a long-standing supporter of the Trust Fund for Victims. We emphasize the importance of the work of the Fund in strengthening the rights of women and girls. We call on other States to support the work of the Fund, especially through monetary contributions.

Mr. President,

'Women, peace and security' [Resolution 1325] is one of Finland's foreign policy priorities. We believe that gender equality lowers the risk of armed conflicts and, as a result, contributes to the abolishment of sexual and gender-based violence. The Rome Statute system has a key role in conflict prevention and sustainable peace building. It is imperative to fight impunity for the most serious international crimes, including sexual and gender-based violence, and promote the dignity of victims and survivors. We commend the Prosecutor's continued work to integrate a gender perspective and analysis into all of the OTP's work, and encourage her efforts to focus on sexual and gender-based crimes.

Women's participation and leadership in all matters of peace and security is the prime focus of the 'Women, peace and security' –agenda. Women need to be actively encouraged to look for leadership positions on all levels of multilateral decision-making. Hence, we welcome the recent decision of the President, the Prosecutor and the Registrar of the Court to join the International Gender Champions network, and we support their aim to break down gender barriers and advance gender parity in the ICC.

Mr. President, Members of the Assembly,

Finland is committed to the fight against impunity. All State Parties' cooperation with the Court is vital for its orderly functioning. We encourage States to continue to promote awareness of the Rome Statute and of the Court, particularly among youth. If young people learn about justice today, they have a better chance to create a more just world of tomorrow.

Thank you.

