

**AMBAXXATA  
TAR-REPUBBLIKA TA' MALTA**



**EMBASSY OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA**

**THE HAGUE**

**Statement of the Republic of Malta  
Delivered by Ambassador H.E. Marlene Bonnici  
18th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the ICC**

**The Hague, 02-07 December 2019**

Mr President,

Malta associates itself with the EU statement delivered by the Finnish Presidency on behalf of the European Union.

Malta wishes to extend its gratitude to the President, the Organs of the Court and their staff, the Bureau members, the Secretariat and the various facilitators for their work in preparing for this Assembly.

The rules-based international order can only maintain its relevance through a consolidated framework based on justice, accountability and respect for international law. Throughout these days we will hear of the many challenges that the Court faces. Mr. President, I want to reiterate that the International Criminal Court (ICC) can count on my country's full support and commitment in striving towards fulfilling its mandate as set out by the Rome Statute. This can only be achieved by ensuring that the Court continues to be dynamic and responsive to the ever-changing context in which we live. This is evident in the activation of the crime of aggression and resolve to keep the focus on all other crimes identified by the Statute, not least those of a sexual and gender-based nature. We can and must do more in this regard.

The fight against impunity for the most heinous crimes is at the core of the ICC mandate. This is certainly not an obstacle-free task and my country will continue to take a principled defence of the Court, and what it represents. In this regard, we consider the Independent Expert Review as an opportunity to provide significant added value in empowering the Court as well as the State Parties in further enshrining the Court's role on the international stage with a look towards the future. Equally, the review represents an invaluable opportunity to take stock of lessons learnt as well as chart the way forward through a comprehensive, well-informed and inclusive engagement. We must seize this opportunity – which my delegation perceives as an enabler towards further maximising the Court's potential in delivering on its principal mission in the best way.

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Mr President,

As to the initiative taken in relation to the election of the next Prosecutor, Malta appreciates the efforts being made in this area, as well as the progress made to date by the Committee on the Election of the Prosecutor. This election, as well as the election of six new judges in 2020 is an important moment for the future. We will continue to follow closely developments in this area, bearing in mind the provisions of the Rome Statute.

Mr President,

The decision to establish the Court made by the State Parties two decades ago represented the will to address crimes through collective action whilst also being an undisputed success of effective multilateralism. The world needed change, and the ICC, as the guarantor of universal justice and the hope of silent victims brought that change and remains an effective instrument to achieve peace and stability. . This approach remains essential to putting into practice the mandate with which we have entrusted the Court. To this end, a sustained effort is required towards forwarding the message of the Statute's universality through dialogue and engagement. This is also true of the continued need to fully promote the elements of complementarity and cooperation as means to better support the Court's activities on the ground.

Mr President,

In closing, Malta fully acknowledges the ICC efforts to integrate a focus on diversity, through gender and geographical perspectives on people's opportunities and interactions in the Court's functioning. We continue to underscore the need for increased geographical balance and addressing under-representation of the individual State Parties. This remains a priority of Maltese policy and we will continue to engage with the Court in this regard.

I look forward to continue working with you Mr. President and with other State Parties in our unwavering determination as supporters of the Court and its officials.