



MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian,**

**Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs**

**19<sup>th</sup> session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

**Video message**

*(to be broadcast on 14 December 2020)*

- *Check against delivery* -

President of the Assembly of States Parties,  
President of the Court,  
Prosecutor,  
Registrar,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

1/ In today's **context of brutalization of international affairs, the ICC is especially in need of our support, *as much as we need the Court:***

- 1) **to enable the international community to fight impunity for the most serious crimes, and;**
- 2) **to embody the principle of a rules-based international order, multilateralism and independence of the judiciary.**

**2/ That is why France is fully committed alongside it.**

- *In 2019, more than 90 requests* issued by the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registrar were processed by the French authorities.
- *This year again, as co-facilitators with Senegal of the Working Group on Cooperation, we worked on **strengthening discussions on financial investigations, proposed tools for inter-State cooperation** and identified **new avenues for action** for next year.*

- ***In 2021*, we will provide **funding to the cooperation capacity-building activities carried out by the Court.****
  
- **In France, we will launch **negotiations with the Court on the enforcement of sentences.****

**We also intend to join in the efforts of all States Parties to the Rome Statute to *strengthen it*, aided by the **review of the Court's system**, which began last year, with the support of the **group of independent experts**, the work of which must now guide us.**

- **Guide us to enable the ICC to **become even more efficient.****
- **To build on the **universalization of the Rome Statute.****
- **And to **better address, on its own, the threats** challenging it.**

3/ It is even more essential because **the sanction measures taken by the Trump Administration this year against ICC officials, starting with its Prosecutor, and more generally all those who cooperate with the ICC, are an unacceptable method of undermining its action.** That is why, once again, **we are calling in the strongest terms for the withdrawal of these measures.**

**The Court also needs the full extent of our political support to withstand external pressure.** It must be a priority for all of us today.

- The Court *must be able to act in full independence and impartiality* within the framework set out by the Rome Statute.
- The Office of the Prosecutor *must be able* to exercise its prerogatives **without hindrance or obstruction**, especially in the complex geopolitical context in which it operates.

**We must also ensure that the next Prosecutor of the Court is able to carry out his/her mandate without any interference or politicization.**

4/ We will rely on him or her to **conduct the necessary reforms in order to continue to further the quality and speed of the Office's investigations**, while adopting a **reasonable budgetary approach that respects the financial contributions made by the States Parties.**

We will also expect the new Prosecutor, and the judges and all Court supervisors, to work every day to **better take into account the variety of legal systems in order to better combine their various advantages**, while respecting the **multilingualism** that enables victims to play a full role in trials.

\*

Ladies and gentlemen, the International Criminal Court **is a relatively young institution**. That is why – and I stress – **our responsibility is**

**to *defend it* today and work to *strengthen it* for the long term.** It is a vital project, in which France will play an active role.

Thank you.