



**Assembly of State Parties
of the
International Criminal Court**

**Twentieth Session
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**Statement by Denmark in
the General Debate**

**Delivered by H.E. Ambassador of the
Kingdom of Denmark
to the Netherlands,
Jarl Frijs-Madsen**

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Madam President,

It is a distinct honour to address this twentieth Assembly of States Parties of behalf of Denmark.

Denmark aligns itself fully with the Statement delivered by the European Union. I will highlight a couple of points of particular importance to my delegation. But let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of this Assembly. My delegation stands ready to support your able stewardship in any way possible. I also wish to congratulate the new President of the Court, the new Prosecutor and the new judges on the important work they have already carried out.

Madam President,

The Court has been through a turbulent period over the last few years. The ebbs and flows of international affairs also has some implications for the Court – ever more so as the activities and caseload of the Court expands. Denmark has stood and will stand firmly by the court in defending it against external pressure and political opposition.

Together the Court and States Parties have until now been able to successfully navigate the stormy waters, and I have no doubt that we will continue to do so.

Madam President,

Allow me to use this opportunity to warmly welcome the renewed engagement of the United States with the Court. While we still do not see eye-to-eye on everything, we look forward to continuing our dialogue and stress that we should address our differences in a constructive and collaborative manner.

Madam President,

We welcome the increasing activities of the Court and recognize that 2022 will be a peak year in terms of judicial activity. This is a positive development in the fight against impunity. We also understand that this will require resources and Denmark is ready to provide for the needs of the Court. Chronic underfinancing of the budget, arrears and late payments, is a challenge in this respect, and one we must pay more attention to going forward.

Madam President,

It has been said that reform is a state of mind. I subscribe to this view. The State Party-driven Review Process is of the utmost importance to my delegation. This is how we ensure that the Court remains fit-for-purpose, efficient and effective. High-impact investigations and prosecutions, a lean judicial process and above all a well-managed and unified organisation will cement the relevance of the Court as our bulwark against impunity.

We have made progress already based on the Report of the Experts and we welcome the many positive updates from the leadership of the Court. We sense a strong will to improve, as set out in the response of the Court to the IER report. I congratulate and commend the leadership of the Court for its success and determination. I also wish to express our gratitude to the Review Mechanism for delivering results in this complex and demanding process.

But, Madam President, this is not the time to lean back and feel a sense of mission accomplished. We are only at the beginning of the process and there is an ever-present risk of losing momentum and getting tangled up in red tape. On all sides. The Assembly, as the Courts oversight body, has a responsibility to ensure progress and support the Court in implementing changes across the board. As well as doing its own part without undue delay. The Court must keep the States Parties informed and involved, with full respect for its independence.

The Courts leadership has announced a range of new strategies, policies and other measures as a consequence of the review. However, as it is said, “culture eats strategy for breakfast”. The Court must focus in particular on issues such as working culture and environment; sound and progressive human resource practices promoting staff wellbeing and productivity, and unity of purpose across the organisation and in its governance. Organisational change happens through a change of mind. This must be a joint effort between management and staff – and between States Parties and the

Court. Together we must put action behind words. Strategies and policies cannot stand alone.

Madam President,

We work hard to achieve universality of the Rome Statute. But we also recognize that some States are not yet ready to join. It is our hope that a dialogue-based approach and a well-managed, results-oriented Court will encourage States not yet Party to the Statute. Refining the balance between national jurisdictions and the Court to provide clarity and predictability can help in this regard.

Madam President,

Let me conclude by renewing our commitment and support to the Court and the Rome Statute System. The creation of the Court was a momentous historical breakthrough and we owe it to the victims, past, present and future, to preserve this breakthrough and maximise its impact. That is why we are here today.

I thank you Madam President.