

Nordic statement on the Review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system at the 21th Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

Madam President,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Nordic States Parties: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country Norway.

The ongoing review process is of paramount importance for a strong, effective and independent Court. We consider the review crucial for the future of the Court, and we wholeheartedly stand behind the process.

We are grateful to all the stakeholders for tirelessly working towards improving the Court and the Rome Statute system throughout this process. We commend the Court's efforts and engagement in the review process, including through updates on the status of internal assessments and processes. And we thank civil society for playing an important role, pointing to challenges and solutions we as state parties might not see.

Now it is time to increase our focus on implementation. Genuine follow up with a focus on results is vital to ensure that the immense efforts that have already been dedicated to the review process, will bear fruit.

Madam President,

Going forward, we will continue to give priority to improving the governance of the Court. We welcome the ongoing dialogue between States Parties and the Court towards enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Court. A

prerequisite for achieving better governance, is a healthy workplace environment. The independent experts' findings on the workplace culture at the Court, were deeply concerning. And the recent report on workplace culture in the Judiciary of the Internal Oversight Mechanism backs up the experts' findings. We are troubled by the findings of a culture of fear and distrust, sexual harassment, and bullying behaviour amounting to harassment throughout the Court.

A healthy workplace culture is essential to maintain productivity and staff well-being, ensure efficient operations and enhance the reputation of an organisation. This is, of course, important in any workplace. But an international court, charged with upholding justice for victims, must be held to the very highest standard.

The latest report of the Review Mechanism documents substantial efforts that have been invested into improving the workplace culture. We are encouraged by the establishment of a set of core values for the Court as a whole and welcome the recruitment of an Ombudsperson. We regard positively steps towards gender equality, including the work of the focal point for gender equality towards countering sexism and unconscious bias, and warmly welcome the ICC Strategy on Gender Equality and Workplace Culture, which will be launched later this week. And we will follow with interest the new staff selection policy to improve geographical representation and gender balance at the Court.

At the Office of the Prosecutor, we are encouraged by Prosecutor Khan's commitment to zero-tolerance for all forms of misconduct. It is important that this policy is enforced wisely, bearing in mind the best interest of the Court and of its staff as a whole. All staff should have recourse to well-functioning resolution mechanisms in which they have confidence.

Overall, we urge the Court to meaningfully engage the Court's staff in the process to improve the workplace culture. We believe that active participation by the staff in the implementation of recommendations which affect them, including through the Staff Union Council, is key to sustainable results.

Madam President,

Now that we are moving into a new phase of the review process, we have an opportunity to ensure the harmonious, efficient and effective governance of the ICC. This must be done through our joint endeavors.

In closing, we reiterate our gratitude to the Review Mechanism and express our full support for its guidance going into the implementation phase of the review. We bear in mind the common objective of this process: to ensure that the ICC and the Rome Statute System are optimized to deliver on their core mandate: of fighting impunity and delivering justice to the victims of the worst crimes imaginable.

Thank you.