



## **Coalition for the international Criminal Court**

### **22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC Rome Statute – UN, 7 December 2023 General Debate Statement**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with honor that I address you today as the Director of the Secretariat for the Coalition for the ICC.

The Coalition is the world's largest civil society partnership. We are represented at this ASP session by more than 200 individual human rights defenders from all around the world.

Some of our colleagues face threats and reprisals against themselves, their families, and their colleagues because of the work they do to speak out against injustice. Those who cooperate with the Court face immense challenges in their fight to bring justice to victims and for their work in support of the Rome Statute system. We call on States Parties and the ASP as a whole, to protect and defend civil society and HRDs who are at risk because of their engagement.

In the face of concrete threats and sanctions against the Court and its officials, your collective diplomatic and practical support for the Court is also critical. We call on your governments to defend, protect and cooperate with the Court and to uphold the integrity of the Rome Statute.

In these dire times, the principles and commitments of the Rome Statute are more crucial than ever. This ASP session should serve as a key forum for your governments to demonstrate to victims around the world your resolve to reinforce the role of the ICC in the wider international justice system and enforce the principle of complementarity.

We hear the ICC principals stating that they need more support to be able to fully and effectively implement their mandate. We hear our colleagues in situation countries and other regions telling us that the Court's presence is not felt, that the Court is not understood, that victims have not seen justice or heard from the Court in many years, that victims have not received reparations. The lack of sufficient resources for the entire Court risks having a profound impact on victims' access to justice and becoming a severe impediment to the optimal functioning of the Court.

Despite all the challenges, many around the world are still looking at the Rome Statute system with hope: notably, Armenia has just become the 124<sup>th</sup> state party to the Rome Statute, an important step to reduce the impunity gap and encouragement to other states to join this global effort. Congratulations and welcome to Armenia.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

This Assembly has just elected six new judges on the ICC's bench. Congratulations. These judges arrive at a crucial time in the history of the Court, facing an unprecedented level of activity. We call on States to adopt the draft Due Diligence Procedure for elected officials.

We would also like to congratulate the new ASP Presidency and Bureau and bid farewell and thank you to outgoing members at the end of the session. We value our unique consultative status with the Court and the ASP and we urge the Assembly to maintain and strengthen the access to ASP processes for civil society.

2023 has been a critical year for international justice. Today, the ICC often remains a last beacon of hope for victims who have no other avenue for justice. The success of the Court and the Rome Statute system cannot depend on the institution alone - it depends on you, its States Parties, and on the decisions you will take in the next days.

Thank you.