

**23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC Rome Statute – December 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 250 members from all around the world. This year we have clearly seen the dedication of human rights defenders who travel great distances to engage with you and support this movement for justice. These are challenging times for the ICC and the Rome Statute system, yet the commitment of civil society remains steadfast.

Human rights defenders who cooperate with the Court face immense challenges to themselves, their families and their colleagues in their fight to bring justice to victims and for their work in support of the Rome Statute system. We welcome the words of support for civil society and human rights defenders heard throughout the opening plenary and the general debate, and we further call on the Assembly and the Court to give full effect to these words by taking measures to ensure this engagement can be impactful.

In the face of continuing and serious threats and sanctions against the Court and its officials and those cooperating with it, your collective diplomatic and practical support for the Court is more important than ever. We call on States Parties to be united and strong, and to oppose and condemn any attempt to undermine the ICC's independence and work through sanctions and other measures. To this end, we call on your governments to both support the Court diplomatically and to adopt concrete measures in this regard.

Today we recall the vital role of victims in the Rome Statute system – it is for them that the ICC was created. States Parties have a crucial role to play in supporting the meaningful participation of victims in the Rome Statute System, and that means, among other things, ensuring sufficient and sustainable resources for the Court. The lack of sufficient resources and support for the entire Court risks having a profound impact on victims' participation, access to information, and redress.

Despite the many challenges we face today, the Rome Statute system remains a crucial avenue for meaningful justice. For example, on January 1, 2025 Ukraine will become the 125th state party to the Rome Statute. Congratulations and welcome to Ukraine, and to Armenia, the Court's newest State Party. Congratulations and welcome also to the newly elected representatives and elected officials of the Assembly's expert bodies.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

International justice continues to be a global priority. Today, victims and survivors around the world hold the ICC as a strong symbol of hope. 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 and commitments you will make in the next days. THANK YOU.