

**Twenty-third Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

General Debate

The Hague, 2 December 2024

National Statement of Finland

**Delivered by Director-General Ms. Kaija Suvanto,
Legal Adviser at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

Madame President, Excellencies,

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Hungary on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Allow me to **congratulate** the Presidency of the Assembly and judges elected during the last session of the Assembly as well as the new Presidency of the Court. You can count on Finland's unwavering support to the ICC.

Accountability for serious violations of international law, including individual criminal responsibility of those most responsible, is a key component of lasting international peace. For two decades, the ICC has been leading our efforts to curb impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. Today the ICC remains as important as ever, given the atrocities unfolding in many parts of the world.

Madame President,

Regrettably, the Court is facing **threats, attacks and intimidation** while carrying out its mandate. Finland condemns any **threats, attacks or interference** against the Court, its personnel or those cooperating with it, including any attempt to impose and implement sanctions.

The **independence of judicial institutions** is a fundamental component to the rule of law, and must be safeguarded at all times. We call on all States to respect the independence and impartiality of the Court. Finland stands by the ICC, which must be allowed to carry out its mandate without fear or favor.

Under the Rome Statute, States Parties are obliged to **cooperate** fully with the Court and comply with requests for arrest and surrender. ICC's ability to fulfil its mandate is dependent on States meeting their cooperation obligations, including in the execution of arrest warrants. We deplore any instances of non-compliance with the obligation to cooperate. We also urge all States Parties to avoid **non-essential contacts** with suspects under ICC arrest warrants.

All States, whether parties to the Rome Statute or not, can cooperate with the ICC, and we encourage all to do so. Cooperation has many forms, from information sharing to the relocation of witnesses and enforcement of sentences.

Madame President,

Nearly two-thirds of all UN Member States are also States Parties to the Rome Statute. Finland warmly welcomes **Ukraine** to this family, and hopes other States will follow its example. The **universality** of the Rome Statute remains a central priority, as it fosters the worldwide ecosystem of accountability.

We emphasize the importance of a **healthy and inclusive working culture**, as well as the Court's zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and other misconduct. We stress the importance of addressing and investigating any allegations in a fair and impartial manner, with full respect for the presumption of innocence, as well as the duty of care towards ICC personnel.

To deliver on its promise and mandate the Court needs **resources** that match its increasing workload. The **cyber-attack** on the Court last year highlights the need to protect the ICC and invest more in its security through regular budget funding. Given the pressing security challenges the Court is facing, Finland has nevertheless decided to make a **voluntary contribution** to the Special Fund for Security to support the Court's efforts.

Madame President,

Finland looks forward to the **review of the amendments on the crime of aggression** next year. We believe that aligning the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression more closely with the other three core crimes would raise the threshold of warfare, and thus greatly benefit all States Parties and contribute to international peace and security.

As we support and protect the ICC itself, we must also do the same for those who collaborate with the Court. **Human rights defenders** and **civil society actors** are often the first to alert States and the ICC of serious violations of international law, wherever they take place. This cooperation is not without risk.

At the heart of the Rome Statute system was always the promise to focus on the **victims**. The ICC remains an important avenue to access justice, assistance and reparation for thousands of **victims and survivors** around our world. Finland is a long-standing supporter of the **Trust Fund for Victims**, and I call on others to join us. We wish the new Board of Directors of the Trust Fund every success upon starting their term.

I thank you, Madame President.