

New Zealand General Debate Statement

Madame President

As the first and only permanent international criminal court, New Zealand considers the Court plays a critical role in investigating allegations of serious international crimes and ending impunity for such crimes.

The **relevance and importance** of the Court is unquestioned. New Zealand warmly welcomes and celebrates Armenia and Ukraine becoming the 124th and 125th State Party of the Statute.

We commend the substantial investigatory work the Court has accomplished this year concerning conflicts and alleged crimes across four continents. We especially acknowledge the role that the Office of the Prosecutor, the Judiciary and the Registry play in this work, working in partnership with States Parties.

We offer our thanks and express our confidence in **the Prosecutor, the Deputy Prosecutors and their teams for their dedicated work and service to the Court** and its mandate. Investigations continue in 12 situations, including in Darfur, Mali, Ukraine and State of Palestine. We continue to follow closely the investigations into situations in our own Indo-Pacific region: the Philippines and Bangladesh/Myanmar.

The **cooperation**, assistance and support of all States remains essential to the Court's operations and fulfilment of its independent and impartial mandate. States Parties are required to cooperate with the Court, including by facilitating the arrest and surrender to the Court of perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern. We are concerned by one State Party's recent non-compliance with its obligations under the Rome Statute.

New Zealand also reiterates our calls on all states, whether or not they are Party to the Rome Statute, to support the Court's important work towards international justice and accountability. We also call on all countries who have not yet done so to **ratify or accede to the Rome Statute**.

Madame President, New Zealand is concerned about the number of **threats facing the Court**. It is unacceptable that some have threatened elected officials and personnel of the Court and threatened Court systems. In June New Zealand endorsed a Joint Statement reaffirming our shared commitment to preserve the Court's integrity from political interference and pressure. New Zealand stands by those statements.

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It is also unacceptable that the Court has experienced cyber-attacks and other attempts at infiltration and intimidation. As part of our support for the Court as an independent and impartial judicial institution, New Zealand provided support for the Court's Security Trust Fund. Ensuring the Court is safe, secure and resilient is critical to ensuring that the work to end impunity continues at pace. We thank the Netherlands for its consistent support as Host State in this regard. We trust the Court will not be deterred from pursuing its vital mandate.

Madame President, New Zealand supports a well-run court. We thank **the Registrar and his team** for their work to ensure all pillars of the Court have the support they need to do their work.

New Zealand remains focussed on ensuring the Court is sufficiently resourced to enable it to continue undertaking its investigations and prosecutions independently and impartially. We support a **regular budget that is reasonable, justified and fiscally responsible**. At the same time, we recognise the fiscal constraints facing many States Parties, and the need for this reality to be reflected in the Court's planning and operations. We thank the Committee of Budget and Finance for its guidance in the lead up to this years' Assembly of State Parties, and we look forward to agreeing a budget by consensus.

New Zealand has supported the work of the Review Mechanism. This mechanism has ensured the recommendations of the Independent Experts Review are addressed. While the work will now be mainstreamed, we must keep working on the challenges identified, including on ensuring a positive workplace culture. The States Parties must work alongside the Court in this.

New Zealand strongly supports the important work of the Trust Fund for Victims. We commend the Fund for its efforts this year, delivering a **real and meaningful sense of justice to thousands of victims, their families and communities**. We encourage other States to consider supporting the Trust Fund through a reasonable regular budget and through voluntary contributions. Separately, New Zealand also takes this opportunity to note our support to continued discussions about serious environmental damage and destruction at a global level.

Finally, let me finish by quoting my Prime Minister, Christopher Luxon, "It is critical for New Zealand that the rules based system is upheld. New Zealand supports international law, and the International Criminal Court as a critical part of that infrastructure."

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We put this support into concrete action, including through our role as a pragmatic and constructive Bureau member. We look forward to serving all States Parties in this capacity for the remainder of our term.

Thank you Madame President.

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