



Government Offices of Sweden

STATEMENT

by

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At the General Debate

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Madam President, members of the Assembly, distinguished delegates, officials of the Court, ladies and gentlemen:

I am honoured to address the Assembly of States Parties. Sweden aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

I want to reiterate Sweden's support for the International Criminal Court.

The ICC is unique as the only permanent international criminal court for serious crimes of international concern. It is also a victims-Court because of the unique standing of victims provided for in the Rome Statute. The Trust Fund for Victims is the cornerstone of the reparative justice for these victims. I am proud to say that Sweden historically has been and continues to be one of the largest contributors to the Fund. However, this is not enough. The Fund depends on voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate. We call on others to join in contributing to its important work.

The Court is facing unprecedented threats and attacks.

Arrest warrants have been issued against several of the Court's high officials, simply for carrying out the mandate that we — as States Parties — entrusted to them. This is unacceptable. We are deeply concerned that the Court faces threats of sanctions. We will continue, together with the whole of the EU, to defend the Court from any attempts to hinder its efforts to fulfill its core mandate. We thank the Court's officials and staff for their continuous hard work under these circumstances. And thank you, Madam President, for your personal engagement in defending the interests of the Court.

Madam President,

Given the Court's substantial workload and the external pressures it faces, enhancing its governance is of utmost importance. Five years ago, we embarked on a journey to review the functioning of the Court and the Rome Statute system. Much has since been done by the Court to review and implement the recommendations from the Independent Experts,

which we commend. The Independent Experts Review identified that the workplace culture at the Court had room for improvement. The improving of the working environment for the Court's staff has been a priority for Sweden during the review process. An important outcome of the review was the introduction of a tenure policy for management positions that could improve staff motivation and internal mobility. It is for the senior management of the Court, as a top priority, to improve the workplace culture at the Court. A good working environment would also enhance the efficiency of the Court.

Sweden notes with appreciation the Court's continued efforts to integrate a gender perspective into its activities as well as the improvement in increasing the gender balance at the Court. However, women are still under-represented at senior levels of the Court's staff. Sweden calls on the Court to make further efforts to narrow the gender gap by additional concrete initiatives to address this structural issue.

Madam President,

The ICC cannot provide justice to all victims of Rome Statute crimes on its own. Ending impunity and ensuring access to justice for victims are shared goals of the Court and all States Parties to the Rome Statute. Serious crimes of international concern are often complex, and their investigation and prosecution may need international cooperation to succeed. Joint efforts between states and the Court are vital to the viability of the Rome Statute system. Swedish courts have convicted perpetrators of serious international crimes committed in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Syria, Iran and Iraq. Additional investigations are ongoing. The key to successful prosecution of such crimes has been the establishment of specialized war crimes units. The secondment program is an important tool in strengthening the cooperation and complementarity between the ICC and national investigations.

Madam President,

States' full cooperation with the Court is essential for its ability to carry out its mandate. There are at present a record number of outstanding arrest warrants for fugitives from international justice that must be promptly executed.

The Court's success depends on the timely payment of assessed contributions. We urge all States Parties to pay their contributions in time and in full each year.

Madam President,

Sweden remains a committed supporter of a viable, independent, effective, and efficient International Criminal Court and continues to strive for the universality of the Rome Statute. Victims of atrocious crimes deserve no less.

We were pleased to formally welcome Armenia as the 124th Party to the Rome Statute in February and we recently welcomed Ukraine's ratification in October. We urge all states that have not yet done so to join the Rome Statute.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to our civil society colleagues. We highly value their constructive engagement with us and the Court in our common endeavor to maintain and strengthen the operation of the ICC. Any threats and intimidation directed at representatives of civil society are unacceptable.

I thank you.