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**Statement by
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Madame President,

On 17 July 1998, the world witnessed a defining moment in the history of international law. The adoption of the Rome Statute was not just a legal achievement — it was a powerful statement of our shared determination to end impunity for the most serious crimes. It was based on a common understanding: that impunity for grave crimes threatens peace, security, and the wellbeing of humanity.

This year, we gather at a time of heightened global tensions. The world is more divided, more dangerous and more unpredictable than it has been for decades.

Respect for international law is eroding. Institutions built to uphold legal order are under pressure. Civilians in many parts of the world are subjected to grave violations of international law — living in devastation, without protection, and denied justice.

At this critical juncture the need for the ICC is greater than ever before. As an independent institution with a global mandate, the ICC plays a vital role in holding perpetrators accountable. Its work is guided by the principles enshrined in the Statute — ensuring fairness, due process and respect for international law.

Madame President,

This year has been particularly challenging for the ICC. The Court has faced renewed cyberattacks, and several of its elected officials — as well as individuals and organisations cooperating with the Court — have been targeted by sanctions.

Such measures are deeply troubling and set a dangerous precedent. Targeting individuals for performing their legally mandated duties undermines the integrity of the international justice system, which has long served the global community with purpose and principle.

These actions undermine trust in the international legal order and send a chilling message to those who seek to enforce accountability for the gravest crimes. The ICC was established to serve as a court of last resort — free from political interference and guided solely by legal principles.

In the face of these challenges, it is imperative that we stand firmly in defence of the Court's independence. The credibility of the international justice system depends on our collective resolve to protect it from undue pressure and retaliation.

Norway remains unequivocal in its support for the ICC and urges all States to refrain from measures that could compromise the Court's ability to fulfil its mandate, and to reaffirm their shared commitment to the principles of international law.

Despite the pressures it has faced, the Court has shown resilience and a steadfast commitment to its judicial duties.

The Court has made notable progress — advancing investigations, issuing arrest warrants in multiple situations, and reaching key milestones in trials and convictions. These achievements underscore the Court's growing relevance.

Reliable funding is essential to safeguard the Court's independence and ensure it can withstand political pressure. Norway calls on all States Parties to ensure the Court has the resources it needs to carry out its mandate, and to agree on measures that strengthen the Court's financial resilience — ensuring operational continuity in situations of external pressure.

Like all institutions, the ICC must continuously strive for improvement. Progress has been made to enhance Court operations, guided by the recommendations of the Independent Expert Review. Although the mandate of the review mechanism has concluded, the implementation of recommendations must continue. Norway will remain engaged and will closely follow efforts to strengthen the Court's workplace culture, recognising that a healthy environment is essential to the effective fulfilment of the review mandate.

Madame President,

Norway deeply regrets the withdrawal of Hungary from the Court. We are also concerned by the recent announcements of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger regarding their intention to withdraw from the Statute. We urge these States to reconsider. Concerns should be addressed through constructive dialogue, in a manner that respects the integrity of the Court.

At the same time, we are encouraged by new accessions to the Statute. The growing membership of the Court strengthens the global architecture of legal protection against the most serious international crimes. In this regard, we welcome Ukraine as the 125th State Party

from 1 January this year — a powerful testament to our shared commitment to the ICC's foundational principles.

However, universality is not enough. The Court's ability to deliver justice depends on the full and effective cooperation of its States Parties. We urge all States to meet their obligations under the Statute — by enabling access, sharing evidence, and executing arrest warrants without delay. Selective cooperation and double standards must be firmly rejected. This is a shared responsibility, and Norway remains fully committed to doing its part.

Madame President,

Let us not lose sight of the aspirations that guided us in 1998, when the ICC was established. For survivors of atrocity crimes, international justice is not merely a concept — it is a lifeline, a thread of hope and the first step on a long journey towards healing and peace. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard and strengthen the Rome Statute system — a landmark achievement born of global cooperation and shared vision.

Thank you.