



**STATEMENT BY THE HON ANDRIES NEL, MP,
DEPUTY MINISTER
OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA**

ON BEHALF OF SOUTH AFRICA

**AT THE 24TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

THE HAGUE

1 DECEMBER 2025

Madam President,

South Africa thanks you for the opportunity to address this Assembly.

We extend our warm congratulations and assurances of support to the newly elected officials of the Court.

South Africa reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the international rule of law, to justice, to accountability, and to the end of impunity.

We also reaffirm, in the words of the Leaders Statement of the recent G20 Summit, hosted by South Africa, for the first time on the African Continent, under the theme: „Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”:

„[O]ur commitment to strengthening multilateralism, with the UN at its core, rooted in the principles of international law as they are reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.”

Similarly, we reaffirm our commitment:

„[T]o reform the Security Council through a transformative reform that aligns it with the realities and demands of the 21st century, makes it more representative, inclusive, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable, and more transparent to the whole of the UN membership...”

As States Parties, we must be unequivocal: the credibility and durability of the International Criminal Court depend on the consistent, impartial, and non-selective application of international law.

Regrettably, the Court continues to face unacceptable external pressures, including sanctions, cyber-attacks, and even arrest warrants issued against its judges and officials.

These actions not only attack the Court, but also the interests of victims and the collective investment of States Parties in international justice and the rule of law.

They must be resolutely rejected.

We commend the Registrar and the Government of the Netherlands, as host State, for their efforts to safeguard the Court’s operations, and South Africa pledges its full support to these endeavours.

However, political declarations of support are not enough. Concrete action is required.

We urge all States Parties to adopt the necessary domestic legislation and procedures to fully enable cooperation with the Court.

South Africa has initiated new legislation on extradition and on international co-operation in criminal matters which explicitly provide for co-operation with the Court and similar institutions.

We are concerned by recent incidents of non-cooperation and call on States Parties to make full use of the Rome Statute's consultation procedures to resolve any challenges that may arise.

South Africa strongly encourages States Parties who have indicated their intention to withdraw from the Rome Statute to re-engage with the ICC community and to reconsider their decisions.

These developments should galvanise our efforts toward universality of the Rome Statute system—a goal that remains indispensable to the fight against impunity.

Ultimately, the pursuit of international criminal justice is, and must remain, centred on victims.

We owe it to them to ensure meaningful participation in proceedings and to support the sustainable resourcing of the Trust Fund for Victims.

Madam President,

South Africa recognises that the Court's essential functions—investigations, prosecutions, witness protection, outreach, and more—require predictable and sustainable financing.

At the same time, we acknowledge the economic pressures facing many States Parties.

We therefore appreciate the Court's efforts to prioritise, make difficult adjustments, and present a budget that is both responsible and responsive to operational needs.

We urge States Parties to conclude the budget discussions swiftly, inclusively, and with flexibility.

We also commend the Court for the progress it has made in strengthening its internal workplace culture.

While more work remains, it is encouraging to see efforts aimed at ensuring that the Court's internal environment fully reflects the Rome Statute's values of fairness, accountability, and justice.

Madam President,

South Africa continues to value the indispensable role of civil society in promoting justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

Civil society has been integral to the Rome Statute system from the beginning, and we call on all States Parties to deepen engagement and forge stronger, cooperative partnerships with civil society organisations.

Madam President,

South Africa remains dedicated to strengthening the integrity, independence, and effectiveness of the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor so they may deliver justice impartially and without hindrance.

In the words of President Nelson Mandela:

“We have sought to ensure that the ICC is guaranteed independence and bestowed with adequate powers.

Our own continent has suffered enough horrors emanating from the inhumanity of human beings towards human beings.

Who knows, many of these might not have occurred, or at least been minimised, had there been an effectively functioning International Criminal Court.”

We thank you.