



**STATEMENT**

**By**

**Ambassador Per Sjögren**

**Deputy Director-General**

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

**At the General Debate**

**of the**

**12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

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**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**EMBASSY OF SWEDEN IN THE HAGUE**

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Madame President, Members of the Assembly, distinguished delegates, officials of the Court, ladies and gentlemen.

Sweden aligns itself with yesterday's statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Madame President, allow me first to express my Government's sincere appreciation to the Court and its officials – in all organs – for their significant contribution to the fight against impunity worldwide. A substantial number of victims have already been uplifted because they believe in your ability to deliver justice. And more victims will benefit in the future, not only thanks to the Court's reparative mandate, but mainly because of its firm effect to deter grave crimes against humanity.

Sweden recognizes the integral role of the International Criminal Court in a multilateral system that aims to end impunity and establish the Rule of Law. Accountability and the Rule of Law are valuable ends in their own rights, but encapsulate also more prosperity for our nations and peoples.

A main priority for Sweden is to work constructively with all stakeholders of the Rome Statute in order to maximize the Court's integrity, independence, effectiveness and efficiency.

This priority has been translated into two initiatives for governance and managerial reforms, both at the Court internally, but also the ASP - our joint supreme body and custodian of the Rome Statute. The first was a more strategic approach to an improved budgetary process of the Court. We are very pleased to see that this has borne fruit and the commitment shown by the new Registrar, Mr Herman von Hebel and his team in this respect.

The second initiative was launched by Sweden and Brazil at the last ASP in 2012 for a review of the ASP's Working Methods. We commend the Bureau, The Hague and New York Working Group and the Study Group of Governance for taking such an active part in the discussions that have resulted in a number of concrete suggestions for rationalization and increased efficiency of these important bodies of the ASP. The better we as States Parties can work together, the better the Court will function.

Victims' rights is an essential element in the Rome Statute. Expectations for rehabilitation and reparations to victims will grow by the number of cases before the Court. Therefore the resources of the Trust Fund for Victims must be increased. I am pleased to announce a new substantial Swedish contribution to the Fund for three years (2013-2015) on a total amount of 36 MSEK or approximately 4 MEUR.

Madame President, It is particularly important to address the plight of the most vulnerable groups in a conflict: women and children. Sweden strongly supports the Prosecutor's priority on gender issues. Sweden is proud to co-host a reception together with Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice to mark the International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with Prosecutor Ms Fatou Bensouda as a keynote speaker. I hope to see many of you at the event which takes place on Monday 25 November at 18.00 hrs.

Justice cannot be done without reliable and strong evidence and testimonies. Sweden is therefore concerned about alleged witness intimidation in ongoing cases. Witnesses must be protected and we urge more States Parties to enter into Witness Relocation Agreements with the Court. Not least regional relocation is important.

Sweden is devoted to strengthening the effect of the Complementarity Principle enshrined in the Rome Statute. At national level the Swedish Government is now in the final stages of preparing a Bill for a more comprehensive implementation of the Rome Statute into our Penal Code.

We are also strengthening our assistance in order to enhance national legal capacities and political will for investigating and prosecuting the crimes under the Statute. I would also like to encourage States to make use of Justice Rapid Response, a facility that manages the rapid deployment of criminal justice professionals from a stand-by roster.

Finally, let us recognize that all delegations here today share a joint mission of fighting impunity when- and wherever it occurs. To that end we need to show courage, constructiveness and ingenuity with the aim to find solutions within the framework of the Rome Statute that can overcome any differences.

I thank you for your attention.