



Katherine Gallagher, FIDH Vice-President

Mr President,

It is an honour for me to address this 13 th Assembly of States Parties (ASP) in the name of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its 178 member organisations.

On behalf of FIDH, Mr President, I wish to congratulate you for your election and wish you all the success in your new leadership that should engage States to commit to defend the effective implementation of the spirit and letter of the ICC Statute.

Mr President,

In the framework of the general debate, we have heard the statement of various States, from all regions, reaffirming their commitment to defend the Statute's integrity, judges' independence, and victims' rights. We urge the States to bear these elements in mind when adopting decisions during this Assembly.

FIDH welcomes the adoption of the Office of the Prosecutor policy paper on sexual and gender based crimes that should enable the OTP to adequately and more systematically investigate these horrific crimes and prosecute their perpetrators.

FIDH also welcomes the report presented by the Office of the Prosecutor on its ongoing preliminary examinations as a important document that enables more transparency about these proceedings and encourages positive complementary.

FIDH is working towards achieving better universality of the ICC activities as the ultimate remedy for victims of justice of international crimes around the globe.

We were particularly disappointed by the disgraceful veto at the UN Security Council to refer the situation of Syria to the ICC Prosecutor earlier this year, despite efforts by some States parties to hold the most responsible accountable.

FIDH calls also upon States to encourage, rather than exert pressure against, accession of the State of Palestine to the Statute as an important mean to achieve justice in order to put an end to international crimes and to reach peace in the region. There must be an end to impunity to ensure that Palestinian civilians are not again subjected to the serious violations the world witnessed in Gaza last summer.

FIDH also calls on States to implement the unprecedented United Nations General Assembly Resolution to refer the situation in North Korea to the ICC.

In those countries, and others, the ICC is the only way to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed. Along these lines, FIDH also submitted communications to the OTP on the dramatic situations in Mexico and Cambodia this year.

The ICC OTP preliminary examinations, and its positive complementarity efforts, should be adequately supported as a first step towards achieving accountability and an end to impunity.

Mr President,

A key feature of the Rome Statute has been the recognition of the right to victims to participate and be legally represented in ICC proceedings, and to reparation.

Last year, this Assembly sent a strong message by expressing its overwhelming support to the implementation of victims rights.

It is of the greatest importance that myths about the so-called negative consequences of victim participation in ICC proceedings be adequately and effectively addressed, by your Assembly and by the Court, and in particular within the ongoing ReVision Project within the Registry.

FIDH welcomes all efforts that would strengthen the participation and legal representation regime. But to be *meaningful*, participation of victims must take into account the views and concerns of

victims; legal representation must remain independent and responsive to needs and views of victims. Victims legal representatives are the crucial link between victims and the ICC in order to realise justice. Victims are not far away from the ICC; it is the ICC which is far away from victims and must work to better include and respect their rights in accordance with the ICC Statute.

Mr President, let me conclude by reasserting the importance for States to reaffirm their defense of the integrity of the Statute. No one should escape justice before the ICC. All States Parties must cooperate with the ICC in order to achieve its ultimate goal, namely that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished.

I thank you.