



**Seventeenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute
of the International Criminal Court**

**Statement by
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Director
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Mr President,

It is a great privilege to address this Assembly on behalf of the Government of Norway.

I would like to start by thanking the President of the Assembly for his able leadership. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all the officials and staff of the organs of the Court for their tireless efforts in the fight against impunity.

Let me also congratulate the newly elected Vice-President, the new Bureau member, and the newly elected and re-elected members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims and the Advisory Committee on nominations of judges.

Mr President,

This year's milestone twentieth anniversary of the Rome Statute reminded us what a major achievement the establishment of the ICC was. Norway has, from the outset, been a staunch supporter of the ICC as an independent institution. The ICC is a fundamental part of the international peace and security architecture. The continued backing of States Parties is vital.

Let us also recall last year's historic consensus on activating the jurisdiction of the Court over the crime of aggression. This was a significant step forward in the history of the Court.

Mr President,

Today, multilateralism is under increasing pressure. Norway considers it important to protect and strengthen the institutions that the international community has established for the sake of our common good. The ICC is a fundamental part of the rules-based international order that

we have all benefitted from. However, there is still some way to go before the ICC lives up to its full potential. Nevertheless, the Court remains a central part of multilateral diplomacy, and we as States Parties must safeguard and protect it.

Norway's efforts in this respect include working for universality of the Rome Statute. It should have more States Parties, not fewer. We regret steps taken to withdraw from the Rome Statute. Norway firmly believes that active membership is the best way to make an impact.

Mr President,

Over the last decade, international criminal justice has played a key part in the international community's response to mass atrocities. Justice for victims is increasingly being seen as a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

Norway has supported the Trust Fund for Victims consistently. We encourage other States Parties and stakeholders to support the Fund by making voluntary donations.

The Office of the Prosecutor's continued commitment to applying the full force of the law to address sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children, is noted with appreciation.

Mr President,

Highly qualified and professional leadership is crucial for ensuring the efficiency and independence of the Court. In this respect, it is vital that the process leading up to the election of the next Prosecutor in 2020 is transparent, non-political and merit-based. A search committee of independent experts should be established to find the best-qualified candidates.

Let me conclude by reiterating Norway's strong commitment to the mission and mandate of the ICC. At 20, the Rome Statute system is still evolving, and the ICC is a young institution that has all the same gained a central role in building a more just world. Norway will continue to be a consistent partner in the fight against impunity.

Thank you.