



**Government Offices of Sweden**

**STATEMENT**

**by**

**Her Excellency Ann Linde**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

**At the General Debate**

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

**The Hague**

**14 December 2020**

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden**

Mr President,

I am honoured to address the Assembly of States Parties on behalf of Sweden.

Allow me first to express my Government's sincere appreciation to the Court, its officials and supporters around the world for their tireless efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern.

Sweden remains committed to a rules-based international order, and the ICC is an important part of that order.

Universal ratification of the Rome Statute lies at the heart of the promise of the ICC and – more broadly – international justice. Perceptions of selective justice must be countered with more States Parties, more support for the Court and more justice, not less.

Measures taken against the Court, its officials and staff, undermine our common endeavour to fight impunity and to ensure accountability for mass atrocities.

Sweden has consistently expressed its steadfast support for the integrity and independence of the Court.

Mr President,

While support from the outside is imperative to the Court's legitimacy and effectiveness, increased efficiency must also come from within the Court.

The ongoing review process of the Court and its organs is of paramount importance to Sweden. Sweden, together with the Nordic countries, has been active in that process.

We commend the hard and thorough work of the Group of Independent Experts and we welcome the report as an important opportunity for the Court, its organs and the States Parties to further strengthen the Rome Statute.

The focus should now shift to the implementation of the recommendations with a view to ensuring a strong, effective and independent Court.

Collective efforts by the Court, States Parties and civil society to strengthen the Rome Statute system and the Court should be inclusive and transparent. The integrity and independence of the Court, and the core principles of the Rome Statute, must be respected.

Mr President,

This year's Assembly of States Parties carries particular importance with the forthcoming elections of a new prosecutor and new judges. It is vital that the most qualified candidates with high moral character are elected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her time at the ICC and express appreciation for her tireless work to seek justice for atrocity crimes. We commend her relentless work in combating sexual and gender-based crimes.

Mr President,

In order to make justice meaningful for victims of atrocity crimes, the Rome Statute provides for reparative justice for victims. This is achieved not only by giving victims a voice during proceedings through their representatives, but also through the reparations and assistance provided by the Trust Fund for Victims.

The Fund relies on voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate. Sweden has been the largest contributor to the Trust Fund, with total contributions of approximately 3 million euros during the period 2019–2021. I encourage other States Parties to consider contributing to the fund.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by re-affirming Sweden's unwavering support for the ICC. I am convinced that the Court will emerge from the challenges it is facing; stronger, more efficient and more resilient.

Thank you.