

Plenary Session on Cooperation – Segment 1 Voluntary Cooperation – 8 December 2021.

Thank you for the floor chair.

The Netherlands would like to thank the co-facilitators for their efforts on this important issue.

As the Host State, the subject of cooperation with the Court is very dear to our heart. After all, the Court relies on our cooperation in many areas ranging from the security and protection of the Court's premises, officials, witnesses and suspects to the transportation of defendants.

For the relocation of witnesses, the release of persons, and the enforcement of sentences the Court relies on voluntary cooperation with States Parties. This form of cooperation is of crucial importance to the effective functioning of the Court.

Voluntary cooperation agreements provide a general framework that allow considerable flexibility to a State Party to grant or refuse cooperation in a specific case. One would hope that this combination of importance for the Court and flexibility for the State Party would lead to the conclusion of many such agreements. Unfortunately, until now, far too few of such agreement have been concluded. These past few days however, many speakers have underlined the importance of voluntary cooperation so we are hopeful that the number of concluded agreements will continue to increase.

The lack of voluntary cooperation has a strong negative impact on the effectiveness of the Court. In addition to all the time, efforts and resource the Court has to put towards resolving issue that arise due to the lack of cooperation, it also compels the Court to rely more heavily on those States with which it has concluded such agreements.

The Netherlands commends France and North Macedonia for the signing of cooperation agreements and calls on other States Parties to follow in those footsteps. Let us live up to the principles enshrined in the Rome Statute and share the responsibility for voluntary cooperation amongst all States Parties.

Thank you.