



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

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

General Debate

The Hague

6 December 2021

Delivered by H.E. Mr Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland

Madam President,

Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered today on behalf of the European Union.

The International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute System are undergoing a period of change, review and reflection. Allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Assembly, and through you the new President of the Court, the new Prosecutor as well as the judges elected during the last session of the Assembly. You can count on Finland's unwavering support to the ICC.

The new leadership brings along new energy and ideas. This is timely as we are in the midst of an extensive process of reviewing the functioning of the ICC and the Rome Statute system. Renewed dynamism is even more important as the workload of the Court is increasing.

Madam President,

States Parties must ensure that the Court has adequate resources to deliver justice. Delaying proceedings is not an option – the human and financial costs are unacceptable. All States Parties have a legal obligation to pay their contributions in full and on time. We must consider all measures to prevent the liquidity crisis faced by the ICC in two consecutive years.

States Parties can nonetheless expect the Court to fulfil its mandate efficiently and effectively. The ongoing review process is valuable in guiding the way. With the support and sufficient funding from States Parties, the ICC should harness new technologies to aid its work.

I welcome the emphasis that the Review Process has put on advancing gender equality at the ICC. The Court urgently needs more women in senior positions. All appointments should be merit-based and the Advisory Committee on Nominations plays an important role with regard to the judicial elections. I am proud to note the candidature of Judge Erkki Kourula thereto.

Madam President,

We, the States Parties, must sustain our support to the Court and its independence against any outside pressures. The ICC is, however, dependent on cooperation from all States to fulfill its

mandate. Ending impunity for atrocity crimes globally also necessitates determined action at national level, as the ICC is a court of last resort.

On par with our support to the ICC and national criminal proceedings, we must ensure the safety of civil society activists and human rights defenders, who are on the frontline gathering evidence on violations of international law. All too often, they are harassed and intimidated to prevent them from providing their findings to the attention of the ICC.

Madam President,

Faced with the existential threats posed by climate change and biodiversity loss, we must use all measures to prevent them. I follow with interest the discussions on the possible international criminalization of ecocide. Bearing in mind the often lengthy process of reshaping international law, I am encouraged of the possibilities to make better use of the Rome Statute as it stands to address environmental damage.

Madame President,

At the heart of the Rome Statute is our collective promise to the victims of mass atrocities that their voices are heard and that justice will be served. This should never be forgotten. Furthermore, to mitigate the immeasurable harm suffered by the victims, the Trust Fund for Victims was established. I am glad to announce that Finland will significantly increase its voluntary contribution to the Trust Fund, to support its assistance and reparations mandates. I encourage all other States to consider doing the same.

I thank you.