



JAPAN

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. HORINOUCHI Hidehisa

Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

**At the Twentieth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to
the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

The Hague, December 2021

Madam President,

The ICC is an essential element of the rule-based international order, and plays a vital role in the fight against impunity. Since joining the Rome Statute, Japan has contributed to the Court as its staunch supporter, and has actively engaged in the endeavor of strengthening the Court.

Despite the massive constraints put upon us by the pandemic, the Court has tirelessly carried out its mandate. In this regard, I would like to express Japan's sincere appreciation to all the officials of the Court for their hard work to maintain the Court's activities.

Madam President,

To maintain and reinforce the vital role of the Court, we must achieve ongoing comprehensive reform. Last year, we decided to establish the Review Mechanism, and began considering recommendations presented by the Independent Experts. I would like to emphasize that the steady implementation following substantive consideration is a matter of paramount importance, and throughout the whole process, we should bear in mind what we want to fulfill. Here, let me highlight two goals.

First, we would like to see the Court producing tangible outcomes. Japan believes that this requires appropriate selection of issues based on detailed assessment, proper priorities for situations and cases, and expedited judicial proceedings. Delivering results brings justice to the victims, helping the Court win the enhanced confidence of the international community.

Second, we would like to see the Court with sound governance. The ICC is an international organization as well as an independent judicial body. It is therefore the States Parties' responsibility to remain engaged in strengthening its governance. To this end, Japan has called for the adoption of a rotation policy for the ICC staff as a measure to address the issue of staff mobility. Japan hopes that the Court carries out substantive consideration on the adoption of the policy with priority and starts discussion with States Parties.

To sustain sound governance, it is also important to step up our efforts to improve the geographical representation and gender balance within the Court. Japan counts on the Court's continuous commitment to better represent the diversity of the international community.

Madam President,

While efficient use of the resources needs to be enhanced, sustainable activities of the Court cannot be achieved without stable financial resources. As has been pointed out by many States Parties, the status of arrears and corresponding liquidity issues are extremely serious. Japan is concerned that the Court will fail to sustain its activities if this problem remains unsolved. We cannot afford further delay in discussing practical solutions.

Madam President,

The promotion of universality is key to the further development of the Court in the fight against impunity. The Court, States Parties, and civil society have been working hard to deliver on universal membership. But, it also holds true that some States hesitate to join the Rome Statute. In order to increase membership, it is indispensable to reach out to such States and gain their understanding and trust.

With non-States Parties, we should strive to forge a cooperative relationship based on dialogue and mutual respect. The Court must also ensure to carry on its activities pursuant to the principle of complementarity with the aim of gaining credibility for the Court.

In this respect, Japan commends Prosecutor Khan for adopting a more balanced approach in addressing issues where interests of non-States Parties are at stake. It is our hope that incorporating such an approach into the Court's activities will help the Court move closer to universal membership.

Madam President,

Last but not least, let me reaffirm Japan's continuous commitment to the work of the Trust Fund for Victims. Following previous years, I am pleased to announce on this occasion that Japan will make an additional contribution to the Trust Fund, earmarked for supporting the victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Over the next two years, Japan will serve as a member of the Bureau. As a Bureau member, Japan will spare no effort in taking an active part in the reform, in close cooperation with the Court, other States Parties and civil society.

Thank you.