

**Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic Countries
(Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden)**

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Plenary

Agenda item 73:

Report by the International Criminal Court

by

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and my own country, Sweden.

Let me start by thanking the International Criminal Court for its annual report to the United Nations. I would also like to thank Judge Chile Eboe-Osuji, President of the ICC, for a thorough presentation of the main issues in the report.

Heinous crimes are being committed with impunity in many conflicts and situations worldwide. The ICC and its vital mandate to hold perpetrators of the most serious crimes to account and provide justice for victims, while upholding the principle of complementarity, continue to be imperative in the pursuit of international justice. The ICC also plays an important role in promoting a rules-based order and can contribute to the advancement of post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Yet, the Court today faces a number of challenges. The Assembly of States Parties and the Court must address these challenges swiftly and in an effective and efficient manner that continually enhances results and impact, including through careful and prioritized use of resources. The Nordic countries welcome the work currently being undertaken by the States Parties, the Court and civil society in this respect. The Court must be able to work independently and impartially and the Nordic countries support the Court in this regard. Strengthening the Rome Statute System and the Court to meet these challenges is necessary to fulfill the vision of the drafters in Rome.

Mr. President,

Universality lies at the heart of the promise of the ICC and international justice more broadly. By increasing the number of States Parties, the Court will be better able to address the most serious international crimes with greater consistency and impact. The Nordic countries continue to support universal adherence to the Rome Statute. We stand ready for a constructive dialogue on the challenges experienced by some States Parties in their relations with the ICC. We encourage constructive discussions based on our statutory obligations of the areas in which performance of the Court can continue to be enhanced. Continued dialogue is of key importance.

Mr. President,

The Court's effectiveness in carrying out its mandate depends heavily on cooperation with states, other stakeholders, and international organizations. Let me in this forum make particular note of the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the ICC as described in the Report. We share the Court's strong appreciation of the crucial support and cooperation from senior leadership of the UN. We also welcome the operational support the Court receives from other United Nations entities, departments, offices, and special advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General.

Mainstreaming the ICC in the United Nations system through the acknowledgments and support for its activities expressed in various United Nations reports, resolutions, declarations, and other documents adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other United Nations organs remains important.

Enhanced cooperation between the Court and the Security Council is still called for. This is particularly true in cases of non-cooperation with the ICC as well as for strengthened follow-up of situations referred to it from the Security Council. Following the referrals of the situations in Darfur and Libya, we note that the Court reports that it has communicated to the Council 15 findings of non-cooperation by states but that the Council has not responded to these communications in any substantive form. We strongly urge all states to cooperate fully and effectively with the Court, in line with the Rome Statute and all applicable United Nations Security Council resolutions

Mr. President,

We also note with great concern that the Security Council has been unable to refer the Syrian situation to the ICC, and we strongly urge the Council Members to continue efforts in this regard. Specifically with regard to the situation in Syria, the Nordic countries will continue to support the work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, the IIIM. We encourage others to do the same.

The situation in Myanmar, and in particular the reported gross violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that have taken place in Rakhine remains a serious concern. We are deeply concerned by the findings in the latest report by the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. We urge Myanmar authorities to conduct credible investigations in line with international standards. The establishment by the Human Rights Council of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011, was an additional important step towards accountability. A referral by the Security Council to the ICC remains, however the most robust means for achieving accountability in Myanmar.

Mr. President,

The full realization of the rights of victims is an important aspect of the continuing success and relevance of the Court. We commend the important work of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. We note with appreciation its work in providing support and rehabilitation to victims of sexual and gender-based crimes. The Nordic countries have consistently supported the Trust Fund and we encourage states and other entities to contribute to the Trust Fund.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the Prosecutor and her tireless work to seek justice for atrocity crimes. We commend her work in combating sexual and gender-based crimes and atrocity crimes against or otherwise affecting children.

Mr. President,

In order for the Court to be able to carry out its mission in the most efficient way, it also needs to be properly funded. The Court's budget will be dealt with in the Assembly of the State Parties later this year, but we wish to underline the worldwide activities of the Court and its high work load as reflected in the Court's report. It is our common responsibility to ensure that the Court has sufficient resources to carry out its important mandate in a time of increasing demand. Likewise, it is the obligation of the Court to ensure its effective and efficient functioning.

Mr. President let me conclude by renewing our pledge that the Nordic countries will remain staunch supporters of the ICC. We are committed to continue working for the Court's effectiveness, independence and integrity.

I thank you.