



Statement

Closing of the 20th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute - The Hague
11 December 2021

On behalf of the Coalition for the ICC, we wish to offer the following observations as this session nears its close.

Civil society has sought to participate actively in this session despite the challenges and limitations. We welcome expressions of support from many states parties regarding the critical role of civil society and human rights defenders in the Rome Statute system. We urge all states parties to ensure that civil society participation in the work of the ASP is safeguarded and guaranteed, and call on the Assembly to draw lessons from the past two sessions in order to expand opportunities for full participation in the future.

Recalling the statement made by the CICC Review Team this week, early consultation with civil society, in particular from ICC situation countries, should also be an essential part of the review process moving forward.

We reiterate our call to states parties to ensure the court has the resources necessary to meet its mandate for justice. In spite of limited increases, the adoption of a budget clearly inconsistent with the Court's workload harms victims' access to justice, and challenges the court's delivery of fair and accessible justice. We regret that some States Parties continue to seek to impose arbitrary financial limits, and caution that these could have long-lasting negative effects. Rather, States parties should support the court in developing a long-term strategic vision as a basis for closing the gap between the work the court must do and the resources it has available.

We strongly reiterate that victims and affected communities should be at the centre of the Court's work. There cannot be protection for victims' rights, nor meaningful justice without participation from those most affected by its work and decisions, and without the effective representation of victims during proceedings before this Court.

Outreach to victims and affected communities from the earliest stages of proceedings, including during preliminary examinations, is also crucial to the Court's work.

We also call on this Assembly to remain vigilant and continue defend and protect human rights defenders who are targeted because of their work to advance justice.

Finally, we call on States Parties to continue improving upon ICC and ASP elections. In this regard, we welcome that the Assembly is tasking the Bureau to develop a vetting mechanism for ICC elected officials, a crucial process that should apply in all ICC elections.

We also urge States Parties to adopt and implement fair, transparent, and merit-based national nomination processes in accordance with international standards.

Looking ahead at next year's 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, the Coalition for the ICC will continue to help safeguard the Court's mandate and promise of justice for victims, and we remain ready to engage with you in our shared goal of a fair, effective, and independent ICC.