



Siracusa Declaration on Ensuring Consistent and Sustainable Support for the International Criminal Court

Assembled at the Siracusa Symposium on the Strategic Vision for the Next Decade – How to Ensure Consistent and Sustainable Support for the International Criminal Court, held at the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, 12 to 13 October 2023, as part of the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, we

1. *Affirm* the importance of strengthening the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system;
2. *Commend* the States that have become parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and *call upon* all States in all regions of the world that are not yet parties to the Rome Statute to consider ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to it, including the amendments, without delay;
3. *Call* for effective domestic implementation of the Rome Statute;
4. *Underscore* the need for signature, ratification, acceptance, approval or accession of essential instruments for the Court's operations such as the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities and other voluntary agreements, particularly those on witness protection and relocation efforts;
5. *Encourage* States to conclude framework agreements to cooperate voluntarily with the Court on witness relocation, receiving released persons, and enforcing sentences.
6. *Call upon* all States to assist the Court, providing it with sufficient resources for the fulfilment of its global mandate;
7. *Recall* the principle of complementarity whereby States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute atrocity crimes, and *welcome* the Draft Policy on Complementarity and Cooperation, encouraging feedback and comments from all stakeholders;
8. *Encourage* initiatives, such as the REACT Project undertaken by the Siracusa International Institute, aimed at raising awareness of the principle of complementarity and the importance of building internal capacity to undertake investigation and prosecution;

9. *Recognize* the robust contribution of the Rome Statute and the work of the Court to the fight against impunity, as a court of last resort and a crucial component of a global ecosystem of justice;
10. *Express* serious concerns concerning outstanding arrest warrants or surrender requests and *recall* States' obligations to cooperate fully with the Court;
11. Recall the important role of the Security Council in referring situations to the Court pursuant to article 13 and call upon Council members to more actively support existing referrals including with respect to obtaining custody over fugitives from justice
12. *Emphasize* the importance of international cooperation and judicial assistance in conducting effective investigations and prosecutions and in this context *welcome* the strengthening of the international criminal justice system, in particular by the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and other International Crimes, but also in this regard note the benefit of any convention based upon the International Law Commission draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity;
13. *Welcome* the continued structured dialogue between States Parties and the Court and other key stakeholders with a view to strengthening the institutional framework of the Court and the Rome Statute system by enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness while fully respecting and protecting the Court's judicial and prosecutorial independence;
14. *Recognize* the achievements, by the Court, the States Parties and civil society, that have strengthened the Rome Statute system through the review process and *reiterate* the importance of continuing these efforts in an appropriate form in the future;
15. *Call* for an effective and expeditious cooperation with regard to the Court's requests for the identification, tracing and freezing or seizure of proceeds, property and assets and instrumentalities of crime, which is crucial to the provision of reparations to victims;
16. *Reiterate* unwavering support for the Court as an independent, impartial court of law and *stand* firmly by its elected officials, personnel and all those cooperating with it, including victims and their communities, human rights defenders and members of civil society who are targeted for their work to advance justice before the Court;
17. *Welcome* the "Ethica Principles for International Criminal Judges" which provide guidance to all international judges on ethical issues, to better equip them amidst ever-increasing public scrutiny and expectations;
18. *Condemn* any act of intimidation, threat or attack intended to deter cooperation or to influence in any way the independence and impartiality of the Court as well as to threaten the security of its personnel or systems, and *call* upon States to equip the Court with the necessary resources in order to respond to this challenge to its work;

19. *Confirm* the constructive role of civil society in campaigning for a strong and effective International Criminal Court, one which is centered on victims and survivors of mass atrocities;
20. *Underscore* the need for the Court to adapt to new geopolitical and environmental realities, in particular climate change, including the necessary adjustments in terms of space, infrastructure, distribution of staff and the conduct of day-to-day work;
21. *Bear in mind* the importance of diversification of the Court's personnel and *prioritize* increasing steps so as to become more present in the communities whose trust is essential to the functioning of its mandate;
22. *Call* on academic institutions around the world to incorporate courses on international criminal law in their curricula and to conduct high-quality research in order to contribute to greater understanding of the International Criminal Court and other international accountability mechanisms and institutions;
23. *Encourage* the development and delivery of specialized training courses for participants in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes;
24. *Encourage* the dissemination of knowledge about international criminal justice and the Court's activities and working methods among researchers, judicial actors and the general public;
25. *Draw attention* to the need for the Court to expand, enhance, and rethink its communications and outreach infrastructure so as to adapt to changing times;
26. *Recognise* the importance of victims' involvement in the justice process and *encourage* fostering their effective participation in the proceedings;
27. *Acknowledge* the crucial role of counsel for the defence and the legal representatives of victims in the Court's work;
28. *Call* for increased voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Victims in order to ensure that the promise of reparative justice in the Rome Statute can be transformed into a tangible reality for the benefit of victims;
29. *Commit* to further dialogue to achieve a shared vision that aligns all actors of the Rome Statute system with a view toward maximizing the Court's impact in delivering meaningful justice for victims and survivors.
30. *Urge* the adoption of a strategic vision for the Court for the next decade.
