

**Indlæg ved direktør for udenrigspolitik under højniveausegmentet ved 20års
Jubilæet for Romstatuttens tilblivelse, den 17. juli 2018 i Haag**

Honourable Speakers of Senate and Parliament, Ministers, representatives of the Court, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address this symposium on the occasion of the Rome Statute's 20th anniversary on behalf of Denmark. It is a particular pleasure to speak in these impressive premises designed by the Danish architects Schmidt/Hammer/Lassen. Through its functionality and grace they reflect the ICC values of justice and the rule of law.

The ICC is a unique organisation. It has an extraordinarily important mandate of bringing justice to the victims of the most serious international crimes. It is the first global, treaty based international criminal court. It took decades of discussion and debate to bring it into existence. Denmark wholeheartedly supported this process to its conclusion back in 1998. We ratified early in 2001 helping to bring the number of State Parties over the threshold of 60 required for the Statute to enter into force.

Since then, Denmark has consistently supported the Court – politically, financially and through our cooperation with the Court organs. Through the years, Denmark has taken up various responsibilities in the Assembly of State Parties such as facilitating the issues of cooperation, complementarity and universality. We continue to engage in these and other central themes.

At this 20th anniversary, Denmark finds itself with particular responsibilities as a member of the ICC Bureau and with our ambassador to The Hague as Coordinator of the Hague Working Group. We consider it an excellent opportunity to support the development of the Court into an even stronger, more efficient and more effective institution.

The ICC itself is a young institution - still a teenager. It will over the coming years face many challenges. The Court and the State Parties must assume responsibility and tackle these challenges – individually and together.

There are still significant potential for optimizing the governance and administration of the Court. Like any other organisation it must modernise and continue to deliver results on its core mandate. Stronger coordination and cooperation between the organs of the Court is needed. States Parties must provide a strong framework and – speaking candidly – sometimes push the Court to give maximum effect and impact to the resources at its disposal.

There will also be many external challenges and political obstacles facing the Court in today's world. They will not make the development and strengthening of this young institution any easier. States Parties must come together in support of the Court against outside pressure. It is essential for the Court to be able to carry out its work in an independent, impartial and fair manner. In the same way, state cooperation in terms of investigations and prosecutions must be forthcoming. These internal and external elements are closely related. They impact one another and both sets of challenges must be addressed. The image of the Court is of

utmost importance. Justice, reason and modesty must always be seen to form the core. We say this as a longstanding friend of the Court. We want the Court to succeed.

The mandate of justice for victims is the main driving force for all the work we do for and with the ICC. It is therefore a great pleasure for me to announce a new Danish contribution to the ICC Victims Trust Fund of 200,000 euros. The moral force of the Court comes from always remembering that victims have the right to justice – and we all have the right to say never again. Therein lies the enduring value of the Statute.

Let me conclude by expressing Denmark's sincere gratitude to all those contributing to the realization of the Court's mandate. A special thank you to the ICC staff, who spend their days and sometimes nights in this building, and in the ICC field offices around the world. They work for the Court to end impunity for the most serious crimes. It is no easy task, and 20 years is, unfortunately, just the beginning of this crucial effort. We must stand together in meeting the challenges of the next 20 years. Denmark is ready to do its part.

Thank you.