

*President of the International Criminal Court*

*H.E. Justice Sang-Hyun Song*

*Honourable Justices*

*Distinguished Members of Court*

*It is one of the highest honours of my life as a diplomat to come to The International Criminal Court and in the presence of the distinguished President of The Court an eminent jurist himself, with an illustrious career, both as a Professor of Law and a Judge, as well also in face of the Prosecutor of the Court H.E Fatou Bensouda and all the here present Justices that represent this wonderful institution. The future is with you. The hope of humanity for justice is with you. The tasks ahead are of course, challenging and complex, the nature of your work is linked essentially to the safeguarding and well being of humanity. Guatemala, my country, has a commitment to fulfil its international obligations, the President of Guatemala, Mr. Otto Pérez Molina, is a great supporter of the Court. He has shown his commitment to implement national legislation to comply with the Rome Statute*

and the entry into force of the Statute is a long awaited dream for many Guatemalans. My country is a country of laws, a Constitutional State of Law, and with a dedication to respect human rights and prosecute those who violate them. But also, a State that dreams with justice, the Guatemalan people is hungry for justice and the Government is committed to applying the law and to respect the law in the framework of a democracy that prides itself of its tradition and also its ability to evolve, transform itself into a more ample and functioning system that has the horizon of justice and human rights as the goal and fundamental objective of its actions and programs.

The world is a dangerous place. Evil walks free all over the world. The battle between the Children of Light and the followers of darkness is fought in all corners of our planet. Horror strikes everyday and in many ways, crimes of unspeakable forms take place on rich and poorer countries. Drug lords, warlords, traders of weapons, corrupt officials rampantly submit victims to suffering and pain, even children, children soldiers, serving warlords or drug traffickers. You have passed a historical sentence that deals with this kind of crimes.

And the silent hope of the suffering ones waits for your work and justice. We all await and hope. Then we can start raising the hand of justice to strike with the power and might to stop these inhumanities to continue it's harvesting of impunities. States have to act. And then the Court can act. And the States have spoken. We are now 121 and in the near future this number will increase. My region is almost totally present the few missing ones shall become soon even less. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Guatemala allow me to express our pride and joy for finally being able to become a full member state of this magnificent Court and join you in your work to fight these crimes and contribute to the expansion and universalisation of justice. Thank you very much, Mister President for allowing me to be part of this historical moment for my country and myself.