



Mrs. Fatou Bensouda
Prosecutor-elect of the International Criminal Court

Tenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties

Election speech

New York

12 December 2011

Check Against Delivery

Madam President of the Assembly,

Mr. President Khama,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kindly allow me to say a few words of thanks following my election as Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Let me start by thanking all States Parties present here today for your confidence and trust in me, as well as for the ownership taken over this election process. It is humbling to have received this truly great honour and I gladly accept the role as your Prosecutor.

Permettez-moi maintenant de m'adresser à vous en français.

Je suis particulièrement fière du fait que ma région m'ait soutenue de manière si proactive depuis le début. Le continent africain a encore une fois démontré son soutien et son engagement en faveur de la justice internationale et de la Cour. Mais laissez-moi également insister sur ceci: je serai le Procureur de tous les États Parties, de manière indépendante et impartiale. Je suis forte du consensus exprimé aujourd'hui dans cette salle, et je compte sur votre soutien continu dans les années à venir.

Depuis que j'ai commencé à travailler, alors que j'étais encore adolescente, en tant que stagiaire dans un tribunal local en Gambie, j'ai consacré ma carrière à la poursuite de la justice. En tant que Procureur général et ministre de la Justice de la Gambie, au Tribunal pénal international pour le Rwanda, et en tant que Procureur adjoint à la Cour pénale internationale, j'ai toujours plaidé

en faveur de la primauté du droit, de la protection des citoyens et de leurs droits.

Suite à mon élection aujourd'hui, et dès le début de mon mandat en tant que Procureur en juin 2012, je compte poursuivre cette ambition.

Allow me now to continue in English.

It is an honour to work for this Court, a truly unique institution.

In Rome in 1998, representatives from civil society and from States with different legal traditions debated the creation of the Rome Statute from different perspectives, but all knew that the new legal design would profoundly impact the way international relations are governed. It is impacting other institutions and indeed, as Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo said, changing international relations forever.

As the next Prosecutor, I hope to contribute to solidifying this change, remaining committed to the goals of the Court and the legal mandate entrusted to the Prosecutor to end impunity for those responsible for the gravest offenses, bringing justice to their victims, and preventing future crimes.

The Office of the Prosecutor is a key component of the Rome system. It is the trigger of the Court and the driving force behind the cases brought forward for prosecution. Yet, the Office is not, and cannot be, an isolated organ, divorced from the other components of the system. On the contrary, the Office must, in a manner respectful of the divisions of functions and

responsibilities established by the Statute, and in accordance with its independent mandate, have a fluid relationship with the other organs of the Court, under the one Court principle, and with the Assembly of States Parties.

This is what we have operationalized in the last eight years, and I will continue to work towards an integrated Court, based on inter-organ dialog, coordination and support. Communication with States Parties and our civil society partners is also key to ensuring that their views and concerns are listened to, but also that our positions are adequately presented and explained.

I will also build on what has been accomplished so far in terms of institutional development of the Office, with a view to continuing to ensure the consistency, predictability and transparency of our work.

I thank the current Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, for his inspiration and his total commitment to the mandate of the Court, allowing me to start my tenure as Prosecutor of a global judicial institution that he has greatly contributed to transforming into a key actor in international relations. This Court is where it is today thanks to his dedication and tireless efforts.

I am proud to inherit a well respected and sound functioning Office with high calibre dedicated staff, and organised policies and practices. This solid basis will be the starting point of my work, and any adjustment will be well considered. I will continue efforts to uphold the highest standards in Court.

Madam President of the Assembly,
Mr. President Khama,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to our future cooperation and to implementing this important mandate, which you have bestowed on me.

Thank you.

Merci.