

International Criminal Court
Tenth Session of the
Assembly of States Parties

Statement on behalf of

THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

by
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Madame President, Members of the Assembly,

It is an honor to address you here today. The adoption of the Rome Statute opened a new chapter in the history of aspiring to end impunity. Its noble aim is to ensure that the worst crimes under international law do not go unpunished. Today with 14 cases currently ongoing, as well as a wide spectrum of preliminary investigations carried out in almost every region of the world, the Court has developed into a leading actor in the enforcement of international justice.

This session is of special importance for the Court's leadership. In light of the recent fundamental developments in the composition of the Court that took place two days ago, I would like to congratulate the new Prosecutor, Ms. Bensouda for receiving consensual support of the State Parties. The consensus-finding procedure avoided horse-trading and factions, that is election patterns all too common at international organizations. The recent unanimous agreement was a true success, and I hope it becomes a precedent for the future. In addition I would like to congratulate the six newly elected judges.

The 10th Session also marked the end of the presidency of H.E. Mr. Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. Let me pay special tribute to his leadership of the Assembly and to his tireless and persistent advocacy of the Court. Of course, I would especially like to thank the State Parties for trusting

Ambassador Intelmann of Estonia with the post of the new President of the Assembly of the State Parties. This is a great honor for my country. I can assure you that Ambassador Intelmann enjoys the full support and trust of my government.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Together with the evolution of the Court, we have witnessed a shift in the role of the President of the Assembly. Communicating the Court's nature and its activities to audiences around the world is vital for its success. The President of the Assembly plays a significant role in these efforts. The ICC is currently active in many parts of the world and thus the engagement of regional actors is essential to build confidence on the spot. It is the responsibility of states to ensure that their judicial systems are capable of investigating and prosecuting the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. The jurisdiction of the Court is only complementary to national ones. To this end it is important to develop a better coordinated approach among all actors involved in complementary activities.

The European Union, donor countries, as well as international organizations, including the United Nations, make available notable resources to support national capacity-building in the field of the rule of law and judicial reform. It is however indispensable to increase synergy between the empowerment of national jurisdictions and the development activities of all actors. In this regard, I wish to commend the work done by the facilitators and The Hague

Working Group, the Secretariat of the Assembly and the NGOs, particularly the International Centre for Transitional Justice. Initiatives such as the setting up of a one-stop web portal for information sharing or the inclusion of complementarity in existing rule of law and judicial reform programs, are concrete steps that will ensure better coherence. Estonia encourages this approach as a means to maximize our joint efforts.

Madame President,

Estonia is particularly pleased to note a rapid increase in the number of State Parties to the Rome Statute. Let me convey our congratulations to six most recent states - Cape Verde, the Philippines, the Maldives, Tunisia, Grenada and Vanuatu - for completing the ratification process. As of today, 120 states are party to the Statute of the Court, including all of South America, nearly all of Europe and roughly half the countries of Africa. The steady growth of members signals the increasing political and diplomatic will of states to combat impunity and enforce accountability. The recent unanimous resolution by the Security Council to trigger the Court's jurisdiction over the situation in Libya illustrates the growing international confidence in the ICC.

Madame President,

The Assembly is to consider the Court's budget for the year 2012. We, however, need to bear in mind the continuing of the global financial crisis. A conservative approach to budgeting and the search for possible reductions and

efficiency savings by the Court will remain a priority in the coming years. On the other hand, the rapid increase of Court's workload needs to be taken into account. Thus it is important to provide the Court with sufficient resources necessary to implement its mandate under the Rome Statute.

We strongly encourage steps towards reviewing the existing legal aid system and streamlining the criminal process. As the Court is to conclude its first trial, it is time to carry out a "lessons learned" exercise to improve current procedures, if necessary.

Madame President,

Let me conclude by stating Estonia's unwavering support for the work of the Court. We must keep focusing on the vision laid out in the preamble of the Statute.

I thank you for your attention.