

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT BY HON. FREDRICK RUHINDI, DEPUTY ATTORNEY
GENERAL/MINISTER OF STATE FOR JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

AT

**THE 11TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, 14
NOVEMBER 2012, THE HAGUE – THE NETHERLANDS**

President of the Assembly of States Parties,
Excellencies Heads of Delegations,
President of the International Criminal Court,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam President,

Allow me to begin by assuring you of my delegation's support as you lead the work of the 11th Assembly of States Parties. We have full confidence that with your skills, you will lead our deliberations to a positive result.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate States Parties and, indeed, the entire international community upon the significant milestone of the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the International Criminal Court to fight impunity universally. Uganda is proud to be associated with this achievement and wishes to reiterate her unwavering commitment to the objectives of the Rome Statute.

Madam President,

It is my pleasure, once again to take this opportunity to address this august Assembly on the progress that Uganda continues to register in her efforts to make the Rome Statute system part and parcel of our legal system and our contribution to the global fight against impunity.

Madam President,

Uganda's commitment and support of the Court, and the Rome Statute as a whole remain steadfast. Thus Uganda continues to support the principle of Complementarity as one of the cornerstones of the Rome Statute. Uganda's emphasis on this principle is informed by the conviction that one of ways of strengthening the Rome Statute is through its integration into our national systems. In this regard, Madam President, Uganda established the International Crimes Division of the High Court of Uganda in 2008 with the singular mandate of handling crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, in addition to offences relating to trans-boundary international terrorism, human trafficking, piracy and any other crimes under international law. The Division, as we have regularly reported, continues to grow from strength to strength both in terms of the enabling legal frameworks as well as in terms of institutional capacity building. As of today, the Division has five permanent judges who have received training with the assistance of a number of our partners and will benefit from direct assistance of individualized legal assistant and additional outside support from expert bodies where necessary. Court staff, including the Registrar of the Division, clerks and interpreters have been deployed and trained.

The premises of the International Crimes Division are complete with an independent structure housing the Court, the registry and a war crimes prosecution unit.

A number of initiatives aimed at assuring the effectiveness of the Division have been undertaken. Some of these initiatives are:

- (1)The development of Customized Rules of Procedure for the International Crimes Division;
- (2)Development of a draft legislation on protection of witnesses;
- (3)Development of a draft legislation on reparation of victims;
- (4)Drafting of a National Transitional Justice Policy;
- (5)Reviewing of the Amnesty Act to bring it in line with the Rome Statute.

Other initiatives are being undertaken to further strengthen the Division and we will share our experience with this Assembly whenever the opportunity arises.

Madam President,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform this Assembly on the ongoing efforts to apprehend the three Ugandan national indicted by the Court. As you are aware, the first case to be referred to the Court was from Uganda. As a result of the referral, some five Ugandans were indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Two of the indictees have since died and three are still on the run. Intelligence reports indicate that they are operating in remote parts around the common border of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Republic of Sudan and Republic of South Sudan. The Government of Uganda, with the support of these countries and other friendly countries outside the region, is continuing with its efforts to apprehend the fugitives. It remains our hope that this will be achieved in the near future.

Madam President,

Uganda has been elected as the Chair for Justice Rapid Response (JRR), an intergovernmental mechanism that was first initiated in the corridors of the Assembly a couple of years ago.

It is mechanism to support international criminal justice, through the creation of a roster of experts that can and has been deployed at short notice in order to assist in the rapid identification, collection and preservation of information relating to crimes under international law, and also takes note of JRR as a practical example of a mechanism to assist in the implementation of the complementarity principle.

Currently the JRR roster consists of 332 certified experts from 86 different countries. It is our hope that States Parties and international organizations will continue to support this mechanism that is important in complementing the efforts of the Court in the fight against impunity.

Madam President,

Uganda wishes to express support to the initiative launched recently by the Netherlands, Slovenia and Belgium to enhance mutual legal cooperation and to strengthen dispensation of international criminal justice.

Madam President,

I would like to end my statement by reiterating my country's commitment to the objectives of the Court and our readiness to continue supporting its activities whenever we are called upon.

I thank you.