

**Assembly of States Parties
of the
International Criminal Court
Thirteenth Session**

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**Statement by Denmark during the
General Debate**

**Delivered by Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of
Denmark to the United Nations**



Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to welcome the participation of Madam President Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic and Minister Sako of the Republic of Guinea at this session. Their participation in our meeting is testimony to the continuing commitment of their governments to the International Criminal Court. We would like to record our appreciation for this strong signal of support.

At the outset of my remarks I would like to associate Denmark with the statement delivered by Italy on behalf of the European Union. We also would like to thank Ambassador Tiina Intelmann for her services as president of this Assembly and express our gratitude to her and her team for all the work done to advance the Rome Statute system. We wish her all the best in her new assignment.

Mr. President, this is the first time you chair our proceedings. We congratulate you on your election and look forward to working with you. The presidency of the Assembly of States Parties is a key office in the framework of international criminal justice. Denmark has great faith in you as an able steward of our Assembly in the next three years. And you can count on our full support and collaboration during your tenure.

We share the sentiment conveyed in your statement during a meeting with the Bureau here in New York a couple of months ago when you reminded us that

“the establishment of the ICC is a response to a request from the peoples of the World (...) We created this institution to provide them with hope, and to tell [the victims] that regardless of the power of their tormentors the international community is committed to bring them justice.”

Mr. President, in the following I would like to focus on two issues that are crucial to the effective functioning of our Court: cooperation and universality.

Let me start with the topic of cooperation. Through the Rome Statute, each State Party has made a commitment to work together towards ending impunity. We have agreed that the most serious crimes must not go unpunished. We therefore welcome this year’s special segment as a timely opportunity to discuss concrete steps on how to improve cooperation with the Court. We believe more could be done from the side of the States Parties to increase the effectiveness of the Court.

This also applies to how we respond to instances of “non-cooperation” which violate the Rome Statute and undermine the rule of law. It seems timely to review our existing procedures in this area to determine whether we can do more to preserve the integrity of the Rome Statute and to make time for the relevant discussions.

Mr. President, it is important to highlight that the ICC does not only receive cooperation from us, the States Parties. Also non-states parties, international organizations and civil society extend highly valuable cooperation to the Court. This is remarkable, as it illustrates the broad commitment of the international community to fighting impunity. In this context we would like to particularly acknowledge the role of the United Nations. This year marks the tenth

anniversary of the cooperation agreement between the ICC and the United Nations. Under the leadership of the UN Secretary General, the UN over the years has provided the Court with important assistance ranging from logistics on the ground to developing and applying a policy of avoiding non-essential contacts with persons under arrest warrants issued by the Court.

This support by external actors should inspire us to redouble our efforts to adhere to our obligations. This includes the question of outstanding arrest warrants. Today 13 individuals sought by the Court remain at large. Some of them have been escaping justice for almost ten years. Our promise to end impunity demands that we work harder on securing these arrests. We commend the work done in The Hague Working Group on this topic. And look forward to finalizing a plan of action on arrest over the coming months.

Mr. President, this brings me to my second point: the universality of the fight against impunity. We all know that there are a number of situations around the world in which men, women and children are subjected to unspeakable atrocities. In Syria alone, thousands of victims have been tortured, raped and killed without any real progress on bringing justice to these victims. We all support universality – but we have to ask ourselves: are we doing enough to achieve this goal? This year, 2014, is the first year since the Rome Statute was adopted in 1998 that no new State has joined the Statute.

We currently count 122 member states to the ICC. This is an impressive achievement, but we should aim higher. Each one of us should work with and call on their partner countries and neighbors to join the ICC. Civil society is instrumental in this process, but as governments we should show leadership and

share our commitment with other governments. Each one of us should make universality part of our commitment to victims and the ICC.

Mr. President, let me conclude by wishing all of us fruitful and constructive deliberations. Let us adopt decisions which will strengthen the Court and the Rome Statute system. We need to be guided by the overarching goal of preserving the Court's independence and integrity to enable the ICC to fulfill its role in the international community and for the victims.

Thank you, Mr. President.