

Statement
by His Excellency Jonghyun CHOE,
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
to the Kingdom of the Netherlands
at the Fourteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Mr President,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to you for the preparations of this 14th Session of the Assembly of States Parties, together with the Bureau and the Secretariat of the Assembly. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to offer its congratulations to the newly-elected President, Judge Silvia Alejandra Fernández, and her two Vice Presidents, and also the seven new judges of the ICC.

Mr. President,

This year, the ICC has taken significant steps forward towards its goal of putting an end to the impunity of the perpetrators of serious crimes against humanity. A significant number of precedents have been established, such as the decisions regarding reparations for victims, interim release, and the reduction of sentences. In addition, two new trial proceedings have been commenced, and a third trial is due to commence early in 2016.

Furthermore, under the leadership of President Fernández, achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness has become one of the top priorities of the ICC. I welcome the publication of the first-ever ICC trial practice manual. I firmly believe that the greater efficiency and effectiveness of the Court will serve not only to expedite the criminal process but indeed to secure greater cooperation from States Parties.

Mr. President,

While tremendous steps forward have been taken, I believe that no one would deny that the Court is faced with a number of challenges.

The cooperation of States and other organisations is crucial for the proper functioning of the ICC. Thanks to the efforts by the Working Group on Cooperation, we have seen the development of valuable instruments for the promotion of cooperation this year. However, we should not be content just with having quality instruments in place, but should strive to ensure that they yield effective and beneficial results.

Promoting universality and the full implementation of the Rome Statute has always been a great challenge for us. The fact that there has been no further increase in the number of States Parties is certainly a matter which warrants our attention.

I believe that the exchange of information and sharing of our own experience with non-States Parties may be of great value in this regard. This will serve to prompt them to give fresh thought to their positions and come to see that the ICC is truly playing a valuable role in preventing and deterring egregious crimes.

It is also imperative that States Parties further develop the competence of their domestic courts to fight against serious crimes. And I believe that the ICC has an important role to play also in that process. And, equally, as domestic courts further enhance their competence, I believe that this in turn can be of value in further enhancing the efficiency of the Court.

Furthermore, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to once again reaffirm its support for the Working Group of Complementarity for their work on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes. For us, eliminating injustice based on gender at the national and international levels is a key priority. The sharing of experience and information with the States Parties should be further strengthened in carrying out investigations and preliminary examinations while ensuring the continued protection of victims and witnesses.

I believe that it is also important to acknowledge that some intrinsic limits have been encountered in the efforts to further

enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal procedure. The limits may arise due to the need to establish the substantial truth, the principle of due process of law, and the protection of the rights of the victims and the accused. We should exert utmost efforts to achieve a balance between efficiency and the fundamental values of criminal procedure taking great care to ensure that we do not sacrifice any of them in the name of efficiency.

Mr. President,

My delegation takes note of the proposed Programme and Budget for 2016 of the ICC and commends the efforts by the Registry and the Committee on Budget and Finance to balance the resources required for the effective functioning of the ICC with the strict budgetary discipline required by the States Parties.

My delegation is of the view that a reduction in all budget items should not be our primary focus. Enhancing effectiveness to combat impunity at the national and international levels for the most serious crimes should be our guiding criteria in the consideration of the Programme and Budget. Regular reprioritization and evaluation of budget items will be important in enabling us to achieve this goal. I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that any increase for an item in this

year's Programme and Budget should be regarded as a one-time increase and should not be seen as a precedent for the 2017 Programme and Budget.

Regarding the ongoing major structural changes within the Court, my delegation appreciates the Court's efforts to increase the proportion of staff members from non- and under-represented States Parties. As stated in the Report ICCASP/14/7, we look forward to bring to fruition continuous efforts of the Court for improving geographical balance in the recruitment process.

Finally, my delegation is pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea will make voluntary contributions to both the ICC internship program and the Trust Fund for Victims. And the Republic of Korea will continue its efforts to promote these and other valuable activities by the ICC.

Mr. President,

The new permanent premises of the Court have now been completed. I believe that in the new premises, the ICC will open a new chapter in its efforts to realize the goals, values and principles of the Rome Statute. I am delighted to announce that the Republic of Korea will donate a "Sinmungo", which literally means "a claim-hearing drum" and is sometimes referred to as

a “petitioner’s drum” or a “drum of justice”, for the new premises. In the past, the “Sinmungo” played a role in rectifying serious infringements of human rights and in safeguarding justice by allowing the public to submit petitions and appeals regarding serious injustices that they had suffered. It represents the values long embraced in Korean society of upholding the law and respect for fundamental human rights.

I look forward to this Session engaging in productive discussions on all these important matters and adopting measures that are of great value in furthering the objectives of the ICC. I would like to bring my remarks to a close by reaffirming the Republic of Korea’s deep commitment to and full support for the activities of the ICC.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.