

**Remarks Kingdom of the Netherlands ,**

**Assembly of States Parties, ICC, The Hague, November 19th 2015.**

Monsieur le Président, ladies and gentlemen,

I align myself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member states'.

The horrors of the recent attacks on innocent people in various parts of the world remind us that a threat to one is a threat to all. We have a shared responsibility to build a more secure world. Let me express my deep condolences to the representatives of those nations present here today.

The acts of terror we saw, are a grave violation of the values we hold dear.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am sure I am not the first to welcome you to The Hague.

For centuries, this city has been home to national and international legal conferences and institutions.

And to philosophers and legal thinkers like Hugo Grotius and Spinoza, who fundamentally changed our ideas about freedom, law and peace.

So I am sure you will understand us, when we so proudly say:

“The Hague is the international city of peace and justice.”

I am very pleased that there are so many countries here today.

The Assembly of States Parties is an invaluable platform for a constructive dialogue between States Parties of the International Criminal Court.

Here, we can discuss what’s best for international justice.

Where the biggest challenges lie for the ICC.

And how to perfect this organization as the cornerstone of our system of international investigation and prosecution of the most serious crimes.

This is of the utmost importance in a world with so many places where justice is still hard to find.

Where human rights are violated.

And where, time and time again, the perpetrators of atrocity crimes manage to escape justice.

Because of this, it is very important that the ASP strives for universal adherence to the Rome Statute.

The more countries join the ICC, the better the system works.

And that is what we owe to victims of mass atrocity crimes around the world. They deserve our greatest efforts.

Today, I would like to focus on three topics.

I would like to say something about complementarity.

About cooperation.

And I would like to mention ReVision, the reorganization of the registry.

First, complementarity.

The Netherlands would like to stress that, first and foremost, countries themselves are responsible to make their own system of investigation and prosecution work.

Only if countries are not willing or able to do so, then the ICC comes in.

Because of this, we believe it is essential that each country does its best to improve national judicial systems, and we work together in achieving this.

Belgium, Slovenia, Argentina and the Netherlands, together with a growing number of like-minded states, are committed to improve their mutual legal assistance for the national investigation and prosecution of international crimes.

Later today we will host a side-event about these efforts. We welcome your attendance.

Then cooperation.

We welcome the special segment on cooperation, focusing on voluntary framework agreements between the ICC and States Parties, that is taking place tomorrow.

These agreements between the ICC and States Parties are crucial instruments for the proper functioning of the Court. With no territory, no police or penitentiary facilities it is clear the ICC depends on the State Parties for the implementation of its mandate.

For instance, the security and well being of both victims and witnesses is essential for its functioning.

The Netherlands values the Trust Fund for Victims and the Special fund for Relocation at the Registry.

Therefore, the Netherlands will contribute 175.000 euro to each of these funds.

Lastly, I would like to stress the importance of ReVision.

The registry of the ICC is dealing with a bigger workload everyday.

On the one hand that is a good sign: justice at work.

On the other hand: the organization of the early years does not suffice anymore; Adaptation to new challenges is indispensable.

The Netherlands fully supports the aim of this operation.

To conclude, monsieur le Président, I am happy to note that this is the last time we meet whilst the ICC is in its temporary location.

Right after this Assembly, the ICC will move to a permanent and impressive location, elsewhere in the Hague.

The fact that we are moving to a permanent facility shows that the ICC is an organization that is growing stronger and that is here to stay.

The Netherlands is very proud to be host of this indispensable institution and we commit to continue giving our full support as a host state.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a very productive Assembly and a nice stay here in the Netherlands.

Thank you.