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Statement
by
His Excellency Jonghyun CHOE,
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
to the Kingdom of the Netherlands
at the Fifteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute of
the International Criminal Court
November 16, 2016

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by saying that I firmly believe that, under your able leadership, this Assembly will indeed be guided to a successful outcome. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank former Vice President Ambassador Alvaro Moerzinger for his invaluable role in further advancing the ICC system during his term. And I would like to congratulate Ambassador Sergio Gerardo Ugalde Godinez on his election as the Vice President of the Assembly.

Mr. President,

This year the ICC has taken further strides towards the goal of putting an end to the impunity of the perpetrators of serious crimes against humanity. The opening of the new premises of the Court in April has provided an excellent environment for the Court to work towards its goals. In March, the ICC welcomed the 124th State Party - El Salvador. And it is worthy of special note that, even with limited resources, more than four hundred hearings, four active investigations and nine preliminary examinations have been conducted - and in a more efficient manner.

Furthermore, under the leadership of President Fernández and with the remarkable dedication from the Presidency, the Chambers, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry, the ICC has continued to emerge as more effective and efficient. Two key examples are the issuing of the Chambers' Practice Manual and the development of the Performance Indicators. And I believe that such efforts set an excellent precedent also for other international tribunals. Still, in order to further ensure the highest standards of efficiency and integrity, we would like to reaffirm that equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the recruitment of staff of the Court should be further improved.

Mr. President,

In spite of these notable achievements, however, no one would deny that the ICC is facing a number of daunting challenges. Promoting universality and the full implementation of the Rome Statute have always been great challenges. While we warmly welcome El Salvador as the 124th State Party, we have to be keenly aware that more than 70 member states of the United Nations are still outside the Rome Statute. Moreover, my delegation is gravely concerned over the recent decisions by a few States Parties to withdraw from the Statute. To be sure, there have been differing views on the interpretation and application of the Rome Statute since the ICC was established in 2002. However, it is imperative that these differences should be resolved through dialogue, not withdrawal. You may recall that we also encountered many difficulties in drafting the Rome Statute. However, in a spirit of compromise, we demonstrated great patience. In this spirit, my delegation urges all the States Parties to make every effort to overcome the present crisis through dialogue. We must not allow the efforts we have put into the ICC so far to prove to be in vain.

Cooperation is also a longstanding issue in the context of the ICC. The ICC will not be able to survive without the cooperation of State Parties and other relevant stakeholders. Indeed, it does not have its own enforcement measures. In this regard, it is a source of deep concern to my delegation that a few States Parties have been found to be in non-compliance by the Court since the previous Assembly. My delegation hopes that every State Party and relevant stakeholder will render strong, timely and consistent cooperation for the effective functioning of the ICC. At the same time, my delegation is of the view that in-depth discussions are still needed on ways to facilitate cooperation and consultations between the Court and the States Parties.

In the same vein, my delegation would like to emphasize that the ICC should continue to cooperate closely with such international organizations as the United Nations. As the UN is the only authority to refer the situations of States outside the Rome Statute to the ICC, the support of the UN is essential in the ICC fulfilling its duties. My delegation takes this opportunity to strongly urge the Security Council of the United Nations to accord its attention to the alleged ongoing human rights abuses in those States.

In this connection, the Republic of Korea is to co-host some valuable events during the Assembly. We are scheduled to co-host with civil society organizations a side event on "The ICC and Crimes against Humanity in North Korea," and with Germany a side event on the "Draft Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity." My delegation believes that, through these efforts, the international community will send a clear message to the perpetrators of serious crimes against humanity that there is no safe haven anywhere in the world.

Mr. President,

I look forward to this Assembly engaging in productive discussions on all these important matters. I would like to bring my remarks to a close by expressing my sincere gratitude to you, the Bureau and the Secretariat for the meticulous arrangements made for this Assembly. And, on this occasion, I reaffirm the Republic of Korea's full support for, and deep commitment to, the activities of the ICC.

I thank you very much.