

Statement by H.E. O-Gon Kwon  
New President of the Assembly of States Parties (upon election)  
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New York

<As Delivered>

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[Greetings]

Mr. President of the Assembly,  
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Members of civil society, Ladies  
and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege, an extreme honor, to be elected as the President of the  
Assembly for the next three years. I would like to express my sincere  
gratitude to all of you for your support and confidence in me.

I would like to thank the current President, H.E. Sidiki Kaba, for his  
preparation of this session and his significant role in improving the Rome  
Statute system during his tenure. I solemnly vow to continue his legacy  
and commit myself to further developing the system and achieving our  
lofty goal of enforcing international justice and creating sustainable peace.

I also thank the outgoing judges for their tireless efforts and devoted  
service to the Court. My special thanks go to the President of the Court,  
Her Excellency Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi, who has greatly  
contributed to the enhancement of the Court's efficiency and governance. I  
am confident that the six new judges to be elected at this session will  
further strengthen international criminal justice with the same dedication  
as their predecessors.

## [Accomplishments of the Assembly of States Parties]

To date, the Assembly has made significant progress in supporting and achieving the goals of the Rome Statute through the combined political will of the States Parties. The number of States Parties to the Rome Statute has increased to 123, nearly two-thirds of the members of the United Nations. A substantial number of these States have also implemented the Rome Statute into their domestic law to ensure national compliance. In addition, the cooperation between States Parties and the Court has increased in a number of ways. Crucially, the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression and war crime were adopted by consensus, setting a milestone in the development of the Rome Statute system. I sincerely hope that the Crime of Aggression would be activated by consensus during this Session through candid dialogue among the States Parties.

## [Challenges]

However, at this important juncture, approaching the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, we continue to face serious challenges. One-third of the United Nations members, including some of the most powerful States, are still outside the umbrella of the Rome Statute, hampering its universal application and the establishment of justice. We are still witnessing mass atrocities worldwide. In many cases the perpetrators of these crimes are beyond the Court's reach, due to the limited jurisdiction of the Court, non-cooperation of States, or lack of political will. Ending of impunity seems to remain a remote goal even two decades after the inception of the Court. I view international criminal justice as a living and growing organism, a work in progress, a project still in its infancy, and as such, we have an obligation to future generations to care for its development.

## [Responsibilities and Duties]

It is truly special to me to have been chosen for this position by my peers and colleagues at this critical time, and I stand prepared, together with all of you, to face the challenges that lie ahead.

I will do my best to be a channel for bolstering and coordinating our political will to support and develop the Rome Statute system. It is critical that the ICC retains its neutrality when facing the many political issues arising from its work. I will do my utmost to protect the impartiality and independence of the Court. I will also listen to the voices of the States Parties and maintain candid dialogue with those who may have concerns about the ICC's work, its process, or its impact on State Parties. This will require a careful balancing of viewpoints, and I hope to oversee this balance by using my experience and expertise in international criminal justice to find ways to resolve important issues affecting all State Parties. In the same vein, I will also endeavor to liaise and facilitate cooperation between States and the ICC. This cooperation is vital and indeed an indispensable part of a well-functioning Court. Together with interested parties I will make my best efforts to further the ongoing initiatives to achieve enhanced cooperation between States and the Court.

Further, as a priority, I will make every effort to promote universality by reaching out to those who have still not joined the Rome Statute. I believe that a strategic approach is needed to persuade and attract those non-State Parties. I will work closely with States Parties, the Court and civil society to establish effective structures and coordinate actions to promote universality.

[Closing Remarks]

I am humbled by the achievements of my predecessors, and I look forward to working together with my fellow colleagues in furthering the goals of this esteemed organization. It is an honor and a privilege to serve this court and I respectfully ask for your continued support. Thank you very much.

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