

**Speech of Nigerian Coalition on the International Criminal Court and the  
African Network on International Criminal Justice at the ASP17**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

We thank you Mr. President on your first ASP session since your election in December 2017, and congratulate the state parties on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute of the ICC. I speak on behalf of the African Network on International Criminal Justice which comprises national coalitions on ICC and civil society organizations working to fight impunity for international crimes across Africa. We fully support all effort of the ASP to strengthen the Rome Statute system, and increase popular support in Africa. We also congratulate you on the activation of the crime of aggression and urge Africa State parties to ratify the Kampala Amendment without delay.

As Rome Statute of the ICC turns 20 years, we encourage ASP and all organs of the court to take stock of the successes and failure of the court in the last 20 years and identify the opportunities for the next decades. This stocktaking is important to re-assure the world's population who are demanding for justice from the ICC that the court is still available and indeed committed to be the court of last resort for victims of international crimes across the world. Reviewing the challenges of the past will assist in future policies to make the court effective.

Mr. President, it cannot be said that the ICC has learnt from the lessons of many situations in Africa, many of which resulted in mixed outputs. From Kenya, to Uganda, DRC, CAR and Cote d'Voire, there are still unduly long period of Preliminary examinations and investigations. There is no doubt that victims who cannot find redress in the national system look up to the ICC, but when the processes becomes endless, the whole essence of justice is defeated.

Your Excellencies, the ASP should consider the prospects of encouraging the elaboration of policies on time standards in the work on ICC in a way that would not interfere with the independence and integrity of the court and its organs.

Mr. President, we congratulate their Excellencies, state parties in Africa who have opened the opportunity for consultations and cooperation with the court, and urge that ASP to again learn from the lessons of the past disagreement with some Africa state parties. We encourage African state parties to continue with informed dialogue with the court and consultations within and outside the continent in order to ensure that the purpose of the ICC is well understood among African leaders and the African public. The occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute of the ICC provides that opportunity for wide outreaches to the political society and the public.

Finally, African civil society organizations working to fight impunity in our respective countries fully support the ICC as an important institutions in the pursuit of justice in the world. We therefore condemn any effort to attack or undermine the court, because weakening of the court will not serve the interest of millions of victims who we represent. On the other hand, the weakening of the ICC will embolden perpetrators of atrocity crimes across the world, especially in Africa where violence conflicts and international crimes are still raging on. We encourage state parties to strongly speak out in support of the court at every opportunity, and engage in dialogue with state parties seeking to withdraw from the court.

Chino Obiagwu

6 Dec 2018