

Notes for President O-Gon Kwon

Opening plenary, ASP19

- in place of the Bureau oral report -

As the President of the Assembly, I have the honour to report on the activities carried out by the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties during the inter-sessional period 2019-2020, and my term for the past three years.

The full oral report of the Bureau will be included in the official records of this session. In the interests of time I will not read it in detail. However I do wish to make a few remarks, as I come to the end of my term.

It has been an utmost privilege to have served in this prestigious position, which is the first diplomatic and political post that I have taken on in my career.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues, Ambassadors Horslund and Mlynaar, without whose cooperation and advice I could not have managed my function. I am grateful that we have been able to work so closely with each other, bringing together the two working groups of the Bureau.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to the members of the Secretariat for their invaluable, committed and self-sacrificing assistance. It was only thanks to them that I was able to perform my mandate so far.

My thanks go also to the facilitators, focal points, Bureau members, States Parties, the Principals of the Court, the staff, and civil society. Thank you for supporting me in this steep learning curve.

We have faced some challenges in my time in this position. These include a very heavy agenda of important matters for the future of the Court and the Assembly, and – this year – the additional challenges of a global pandemic.

However, there have been successes as well. In particular, I wish to highlight the Independent Expert Review of the Court and the Rome Statute system, which provides excellent momentum for the strengthening of the ICC and the system as a whole. The Experts have presented a report that is broad in scope and that contains an in-depth analysis of many areas that will require follow-up by States Parties and the Court. I have every confidence that, moving forward, the work of the Experts will be of tremendous benefit to the Court and all stakeholders.

When first elected as the President, I was ambitious with respect to the universality of the Rome Statute. I wanted to do my part to encourage growth in the number of States Parties, in particular from my region (the Asia-Pacific). In this regard, I was very pleased that we could welcome Kiribati as a State Party in 2020. There is still room for more progress on universality, and I am hopeful for the future.

The ICC and the Rome Statute system is a unique creation of mankind in the fight against impunity. Now, more than twenty years after its establishment, it has formed a critical part of the international rules-based order.

However, as I have emphasized on various occasions, the system of international criminal justice is still a growing organism. As such, we have a collective obligation to the future generation to care for its development.

By enhancing the performance and the effectiveness of the Court and the Assembly, through assessing and implementing the recommendations of the

Independent Expert Review, I hope that we can also take steps towards the universality of the Rome Statute.

I wish to once again reiterate my sincere gratitude for the support of all stakeholders in my time as President of the Assembly. It has been an honour.
