



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**AMBASSADOR (DR.) NIMOTA AKANBI**

**AT THE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATE PARTIES TO THE  
ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**NEW YORK, 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010**

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your stewardship of the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of States Parties, and to express our appreciation for the efficient manner in which you have steered the affairs of the Assembly since the commencement of the Session. We remain convinced that the current Session will make important contribution towards the on-going evolution of the international criminal justice under your able leadership. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation in addressing the tasks ahead.

Mr. President

As the first Assembly of States Parties to be held after the first Review Conference, the 9<sup>th</sup> Session offers us an excellent opportunity to consolidate the achievements of the Review Conference and chart a new course for the future. In furtherance of this goal, I reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and to its noble objectives of helping to promote international humanitarian law as well as respect for human life and dignity.

Mr. President,

The conceptualisation of the Rome Statute and the subsequent creation of the International Criminal Court was the product of a universal necessity to check impunity whether committed as war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide - summary unilateral actions that often pose dire consequences for vulnerable populations especially in conflict areas. One significant contribution of our common efforts in developing an international criminal justice under the Rome Statute is the strengthening of the international community, acting in concert, to check the activities of armed non-state actors. As we all know, these are usually armed groups that operate outside state control or authority, often constituting threats to corporate existence of their victim states through operational styles marked by horrendous acts of impunity.

It is indeed gratifying to note that close to a critical threshold number of 114 countries have become parties to the Rome Statute. This underscores the importance to which States have come to attach to the reason for the creation of the Court. I would like, in this connection, to join other delegations in welcoming the new States Parties to the Rome Statute namely Bangladesh, the Seychelles, Saint Lucia and the Republic of Moldova.

While the accession of these four States represents a step towards universality of the Rome Statute, we urge those States that are yet to join the Treaty to do so as early as possible. The misconception should be dispelled that the Court was created to replace national justice systems. Rather, it was created to serve humanity and to strengthen the rule of law beyond national boundaries.

The expanding activities of the Court had evoked certain reactions among some stakeholders involved in various situations dealt with by the Court. My delegation would like to emphasise that the strong undercurrents underlying such reactions should be carefully addressed in order to build on the much-needed enabling consensus. The international community cannot afford to be interminably distracted from the common resolve to check crimes against humanity.

Mr. President

The Nigerian delegation would like to join the other delegations in applauding the resounding success of the Kampala Review Conference. The debate on peace and justice, for instance, dispelled the false dilemma that they are mutually antagonistic. In our view, they complement each other. Other stock-taking issues examined in Kampala, revealed that more progress is needed in the area of cooperation with the Court, strengthening of national jurisdictions under the principle of complementarity, and forging greater universality by working towards global ratification of the Rome Statute.

Besides stock-taking, the Kampala Review Conference afforded States Parties the opportunity to amend the Statute to include a definition of the crime of aggression and the condition under which the Court could exercise jurisdiction with respect to the crime. This, we believe was a landmark achievement, and a testimony of the readiness of the various groupings to strengthen the spirit of consensus that has come to be the hallmark of the Assembly of State Parties.

The Court's engagement has been steadily expanding, and we commend the innovations under the Rome Statute which allows participation of victims in proceedings even when not called as witnesses. We also support the creation of the Trust Fund for Victims and other efforts towards effecting reparations to victims of impunity. Finally, Mr. President, we wish to once again reaffirm Nigeria's support for the Court and also reiterate our hope for a fruitful deliberation during the current session.

Thank you.