



STATEMENT BY
H.E. PATRICK EDWARDS
HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR
THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
AT THE
REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE ROME STATUTE
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
KAMPALA, UGANDA
MAY 31 TO JUNE 11, 2010

Mr. President

On behalf of the Government of the Republic Trinidad and Tobago, I have the honour to address this Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Review Conference is being convened at a time when the Court needs the full cooperation of all members of the international community, whether States Parties or non-States Parties. Such support will enable the Court to efficiently and effectively discharge its mandate to prosecute those accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, in accordance with Article 5 of the Rome Statute.

Mr. President

Now is an opportune moment for us to assess the state of international criminal justice. Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that such an assessment would be incomplete if there is no commitment to, among other things: enact legislation to give domestic legal effect to the provisions of the Rome Statute; execute outstanding arrest warrants for perpetrators who continue to elude justice; or to affirm the importance of participation of victims in the criminal justice system, as well as to provide compensation for their rehabilitation.

Mr. President

While Trinidad and Tobago recognises the utility of the States Parties engaging in an exercise of stocktaking, we acknowledge the importance of the continued role of the ICC as a partner with the United Nations in promoting and maintaining International Peace and Security. This can only be achieved through the universal acceptance of the Rome Statute of the ICC. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago pledges to continue to do its part in advocating for greater adherence to the Statute through increased ratification within the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. President

In 1989 when the Honourable Arthur NR Robinson, former Prime Minister and later, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago took the political initiative to reintroduce on the agenda of the United Nations the urgent need for the establishment of a permanent

International Criminal Court, he envisioned a Court that was independent of any entity in the exercise of its jurisdiction over crimes which shock the conscience of humanity. The spirit and letter of the Rome Statute establish the independence of the Court, whilst recognising its relationship with the United Nations. Trinidad and Tobago is, however, concerned about the attempts to undermine the independence of this institution, which remains for thousands of victims of hapless crimes, the only beacon of hope for the realisation of justice. It is for this reason, Mr President, that we urge this Review Conference to defend the independence and integrity of the Rome Statute during its examination of the proposal to amend the Statute to adopt a definition of the crime of aggression so that the Court may exercise its jurisdiction over this crime.

Mr. President

Trinidad and Tobago as a small state committed to the rule of law in all matters affecting the international community, calls on all States assembled here in Kampala to demonstrate the requisite flexibility and agree to a definition of the crime of aggression, and enable the Court to exercise its jurisdiction over this crime without subjecting it, or subordinating it to any external entity.

Mr. President

Trinidad and Tobago as a founding State of the ICC, is proud of the accomplishments of the institution, which have been achieved over a relatively short timeframe. We submit that the adoption of a definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the Court will exercise its jurisdiction over the crime would be an achievement only paralleled by the adoption of the Rome Statute itself.

Finally, Mr. President

I wish to congratulate the Government and people of Uganda for their tremendous efforts as hosts of this Conference to ensure that we are well accommodated and that the arrangements are nothing short of superb. The hosting of this conference will certainly contribute to creating a greater awareness of the work of the Court in Africa and indeed, throughout the world.

Mr. President I thank you.