

SURINAME'S SPEECH  
AT THE General Debate

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply honored and privileged to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of Suriname to the first review conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

At the same time my delegation feels fortunate to be here in this beautiful and hospitable city of Kampala. We would like to thank the Government and People of Uganda for graciously welcoming and hosting us and for providing the necessary infrastructure for our work during the coming days. We also thank the ICC Secretariat and the Members of the Bureau for their excellent work in preparation for this important Conference.

The expectations for a successful outcome of this First Review Conference are very high and we look forward to productive deliberations.

In this regard we pledge our full support and cooperation.

I would like to align myself with the statement to be delivered by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

The International Criminal Court can safely be viewed as one of the most important relatively new institutions of the emerging international system and more specifically in the area of international criminal justice.

This Court therefore stands as a commitment of the international community to upholding the principles of justice and equality before the law.

In the maiden statement of Suriname to the 7<sup>th</sup> Assembly of State Parties we had made reference that “despite skepticism about a speedy creation of the Court; practice and the resolve of the international community to end impunity, have shown otherwise”. The ICC has in a relatively short time matured in a fully functional and operational Court.

In Rome in 1998, countries committed themselves to justice as a contribution to international peace and security.

Suriname was not present in 1998, but we joined ten years later in 2008, in underscoring the significance of the ICC.

We congratulate Bangladesh on its recent accession to the Statute, therefore bringing the number of state parties to 111 and steadily advancing to universality.

This undoubtedly assists in strengthening the effectiveness of this new system of international criminal justice. It is therefore opportune to call on States who have not yet done so to consider becoming party to the Rome Statute, since universal adherence to the Rome statute remains our long-term goal.

It would be a remiss of me not to recognize the invaluable support of civil society and their successful outreach in the efforts to enhancing universal support for the Court as well as their assistance to the activities of the Court.

Mr. President,

Suriname highly values the rule of law and obligations under international law.

At the time of adoption of the statute in 1998 there was not only insufficient time available for discussion on the crime of aggression, but there was also no positive atmosphere to come to a conclusion.

Since then considerable work was undertaken and remarkable progress has been achieved.

Consequently, we expect this conference to clearly define:

the crime of aggression;

the elements of this crime;

and the conditions under which the Court would exercise its jurisdiction.

Referral of the Security Council in aggression proceedings may be useful, because of the sensitivity of the issue and more importantly because of the implications for international peace and security and the Council's mandate according to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

However to empower this political organ as the sole determinant of a critical decision, whether to initiate investigations into alleged breaches of this statute, may seem challenging and at times impossible given the realities of the workings of the security council and the political power currently been exercised by its permanent members.

In closing Mr. President, allow me to reaffirm our commitment to the objectives and purposes of the statutes. We further more reiterate our dedication to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To this end my delegation will participate constructively in the discussions at this Review Conference in order to celebrate a successful outcome at the end of the day. An outcome that would further the cause of strengthening international criminal justice.

I thank you kindly for your attention.