



**STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA**

DELIVERED BY

THE LEADER OF NIGERIAN DELEGATION

**MALAMI ABUBAKAR, SAN, CON
HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE
FEDERATION AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,**

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

**AT THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, THE
HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS**

5TH DECEMBER 2022

Madam President,

I wish to thank you for giving my delegation the opportunity to speak at this Assembly. On behalf of the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I would like to commend you for your exemplary leadership and dedication in conducting the affairs of this Session and for the efforts put in place to ensure a hitch free 21st Session of this Assembly. We also extend our congratulatory message to the leadership of the Court and the Bureau for their tremendous contributions towards successful organization of this gathering. I would like to assure you of my delegation's unwavering support.

2. I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the Rome Statute in combating heinous crimes, as perpetrators of crimes that shock the conscience of humanity must be held accountable. For this reason, the diplomatic Conference of 17 July 1998 in Rome, which culminated into the creation of the International Criminal Court will continue to remain indelible in the minds of those who believe in a just and equitable world, where the rule of law reigns supreme. Nigeria's strong belief in the dreams of the founding fathers of the Rome Statute and its desire to join other likeminded States Parties at putting an end to impunities, informed its decision to accede to the Statute. Nigeria is also committed to the domestication of the Rome Statute and the National Assembly is working assiduously with my Office to achieve this.

Madam President,

3. As disclosed in our previous Statements, Nigeria firmly believes in the rule of law as a panacea to a just and equitable world. Consequently, our nation has continued to uphold her obligations under international law. With regards to the on-going preliminary investigation in Nigeria, the Federal Government has not reneged on its pledge to extend maximum cooperation to the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the Court in addressing the allegation of crimes against humanity committed within its territory. There has been increased exchange of correspondence between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the OTP, and Nigeria has appointed a Focal Point specifically designated to respond to all requests bothering on criminal law and prosecution issues. This has aided the seamless interactions between Nigeria, the analysts and International Cooperation Advisers of the OTP. The Cooperation extended to the Court culminated in the first official visit of the Prosecutor and his team to Nigeria in April 2022, during which he discussed the subject with His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, the Vice President, H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, and other Senior Government Officials. Nigeria is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Prosecutor with a view to galvanising regional support and buy in of the Continent for the ICC. This is further consolidated by the policies put in place, inclusive of enhancing the capacity of the Armed Forces on Rome Statutes and deradicalization.

4. I take this opportunity to reiterate the fact that Nigeria will continue to demonstrate strong political will to hold perpetrators of terrorism and other heinous crimes accountable, in line with our firm belief that protection of the fundamental rights of the victims of crimes against humanity are not negotiable. Nigeria believes in the principle of complementarity and will continue to play a leading role in ensuring that perpetrators of crimes against humanity are prosecuted and victims get deserved justice. The Government has put mechanisms in place to ensure that national judiciary is effective and efficient in dispensing justice. We are also constantly enhancing measures to ensure that vulnerable persons are adequately protected. My delegation affirms Nigeria's strong belief in the importance of the rule of law in guiding the actions of nation states, especially holding them accountable for their decisions.

Madam President,

5. My delegation specifically commends this Assembly for the measures taken to strengthen the Court system, most especially as it is currently assessing the Recommendations of the Group of Independent Experts. These noble steps are highly commendable. With the quality of the leadership of the Court, coupled with the assessments carried out so far, the world is anxiously waiting to see a new Court System that will be acceptable to all. If we are indeed, to rid the world of impunities, a strong and stable International Criminal

Court system is not negotiable. My delegation however, calls for the need to be mindful of implementing the IER recommendations, in order not to bear the risk of eroding the independence of the Court as ICC is a Court of law and should not become just another international organization.

6. In recent times, we have observed that the budget of the Court has continued to increase in view of the prevailing inflation around the world. The economies of most States Parties are just recovering from the impact of COVID-19. There is a need for the Court to be more innovative in carrying out its assigned mandate in an efficient and effective manner. As we call for timely implementation of the recommendations of the IER for maximum performance of the Court, Nigeria believes that prioritization of the implementation of the recommendation will ease the financial burden of the Court.

Madam President,

7. In view of the fact that this is the last Assembly of States Parties that Mr Peter Lewis will participate in as the Registrar of the Court, permit me to congratulate him in advance for his service and contributions to the reformation of the Court. We wish him well in his future endeavours. We hope that the best and the most qualified candidate will be elected to replace him. We would like to also extend our congratulatory message to the outgoing members of the Committee on Budget and Finance (CBF) for their good work and

wish them well in their future undertakings too. In like manner, my delegation congratulates the new members of the Committee on Budget and Finance and believes that they will sustain the successes recorded by these distinguished outgoing members. My delegation will continue to advocate for the need to elect the best and most qualified candidates for various positions in the Court.

Madam President and fellow delegates,

8. I thank you all.

ABUBAKAR MALAMI, SAN, CON
*Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation
and Minister of Justice*

DECEMBER, 2022.