

DAVID DONAT-CATTIN: Thank you very much.

I speak this time also on behalf of the organisation with which I collaborate, Parliamentarians for Global Action. Our network of about 1.300 parliamentarians in 105 countries, last year, created an informal gathering in supporting the work of the International Criminal Court. It's called the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC, and the next meeting will take place in New York on the 12th of September, on the occasion of the last day of the ASP next session. That forum is a place to sort of sum up the work of one year of our network and maybe launch a new initiative for the future here, and we're looking forward to look at, during the preparations for this session and the follow-up to that one that will take place in September, to several items that should be included in their agenda so that when they go back to national parliaments, they can work more actively than before or in a new fashion on topics that are of concern to the ICC.

Now, in doing all these exercises, it's clear that parliamentarians represent the legislative power. You are a judicial -- an organ of justice, you are part of the judicial branch, and no interference shall be exercised between the legislative power and your independent role as an organ of justice. So I just wanted to make that as a caveat.

Now, some of the items that should be identified may relate, for example, to this immense area of work which is communicating to the public, not only to the media, and also to make sure that additional resources are made available to the ICC to fulfil these expectations. We have heard now this word "expectations gap", which is, indeed, a huge issue relating, for example, to victims or to many other persons that are maybe directly or indirectly affected by your work and may not receive the type of care or assistance that your limited capacities would not

allow you to offer to them. So I'm talking about ensuring that additional resources in terms of reparations are made available at the national level for victims of ICC crimes in addition to what may be made available through the ICC through Article 79. This is all money that must be appropriated by national parliaments if we want governments to pay for those in addition to the assessed contributions.

The other area is the voluntary contributions under Article 116. I'm very interested, and I'm looking also at other court officials here, to know what will be provided for in the budget in connection with that opportunity that the Assembly of States Parties has to create additional funds, and again, they must be adopted, approved and adopted, by national parliaments through national legislation on budgets. So this is something that is very, very important.

And of course the issue of ensuring that national systems are equipped not only in terms of legislation, legislation that is often lacking - and it's very welcome that the Netherlands and other countries are now adopting finally these pieces of legislation - but that those national systems are equipped also with the political will to tackle these crimes. Because in most situations legislation may be already present but there is no political will on the side of those that are at duty to exercise the criminal action to perform that duty. In most cases, they are not organs of justice as in certain countries, but they are connected with the executive in certain systems. So there are ways and means by which parliaments may interfere with the performance of their functions in respecting the national constitutions and promoting the prosecutions at the national level.

A final issue on your strategies of communication. What are the questions that we are receiving from our parliamentarians almost on a daily basis? First, yes, this ICC is now in place. We are very happy

about that. But what about the perception of the ICC vis-a-vis our voters? Because out of these Security Council resolutions aimed at deferring investigation for 12 months on a certain category of people, or out of these bilateral agreements that unfortunately we have seen propagating, aren't we losing some purpose here? How do we go back to our voters? And I always have to deal with journalists contacting parliamentarians who are not able to provide an answer, and then as a triangle they go back to me and refer all of this.

So communicating this, there is still a lot of purpose in your endeavour and a lot of things that came better last week than a year ago and may be better next year and so on and so forth, and I think the NGO community is fully on track on that.

Secondly, issue of accountability. This is the perception: This is an accountable court. It is not true. It is not true because you are removable. I mean, they don't know, and I'm trying to explain that in each and every meeting, that a 51 per cent vote by Member States in the Assembly of States Parties may remove you from office, something that in my country, like in Italy or in other systems, it's unconstitutional. There is the irremovability of prosecutors. So you are even more accountable than the highest magistrate in charge of prosecuting people in our own systems. So there are many mights that have been utilised to attack the ICC and to discredit its value upon which a lot of work needs still to be done, to be done in a political framework because politicians are very interested, and also with the general public.

Thank you very much for this opportunity again.