

**Solemn undertaking of the Registrar
of the International Criminal Court**

Thursday, 3 July 2003
The Arc
The Hague, The Netherlands

**Speech pronounced by
H.E. Allieu Ibrahim Kanu**

*Vice-President
Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute
of the International Criminal Court*

Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the United Nations

On behalf of the Assembly of States Parties and its President, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, allow me to begin by expressing our happiness to see the International Criminal Court fully operational. The President cannot be here today due to circumstances out of his control.

Some years ago, many skeptics thought the establishment of a permanent international court to be a dream. Today, the court's progress in one short year is remarkable, thereby making our dream a reality.

In February this year, we elected the eighteen judges who represent the embodiment of the collective hope of mankind to end impunity for those who commit the most heinous international crimes – genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In April just gone, we elected our first Prosecutor, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo. I can today say that Mr. Moreno-Ocampo fulfils all the requirements of what we wanted in our first Prosecutor. The commitment shown by all the court staff, the Judges and the Prosecutor truly reflects the aspirations of all the States Parties for a court that will serve international justice efficiently. I am gratified to see that the court reached its first anniversary ready to face up to the challenges of the work ahead.

We are gathered here today to cement the last building block in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. At this juncture, I would also like to express my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. Bruno Cathala, for your election to the position of Registrar of our court. I am confident that with your experience and enormous abilities and your unbounded dedication to the court, the Judges could not have made a better choice.

Let me thank the Judges for the expeditious and efficient manner with which they carried out their task.

Mr. President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the fact that the court is now up and running has important symbolic benefits for the peoples of the world. It sends a loud and clear message that abuses and atrocities of the past will no longer go unpunished. Now on a parochial level, the court's work will have a personal significance for me and the people of Sierra Leone, who have witnessed and suffered from those very serious crimes that this court has been established to bring to justice. While we hope that no other country will experience this violence, the court gives us confidence and those who seek to spread atrocities and hatred will be brought to justice.

After congratulations, there is always time for exhortations. We have a functioning court and it is our collective duty to support its work. We must continue to encourage more states to accede to the Rome Statute, we must work to ensure that the court receives sufficient resources to perform its work, and we must support the development of national legislation to implement the Rome Statute. In this way we can all be confident that the court will soon begin delivering the impartial and fair international justice expeditiously.

I thank you for your attention.