



**Statement**

**by**

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**Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations**  
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**International Criminal Court (ICC)**  
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Madam President

This is a significant time in the life of International Criminal Court. We have a new Prosecutor, new judges and a new Bureau. Crucially, we have a new Assembly President in you, madam, following your gracious acceptance to assume this important office early in the week. It is fitting that within the ICC, gender balance and gender leadership are not mere aspirations, they are alive and are being implemented, and Samoa is excited to be part of this important chapter in the life of our court. In acknowledging these developments, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the outstanding work that has been done by the retiring prosecutor, president and judges.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific region, Samoa is pleased to welcome the ratification of the Rome Statute by the Philippines, Maldives and Vanuatu. Every new member matters, as it not only moves us closer to our ultimate goal of the universality of the ICC, but in numbers, it strengthens our resolve to be vigilant in our global fight to end impunity.

Madam President,

By choice and by design, Samoa has no army and its civilian police force is unarmed. In a world where we cannot influence the direction and pace of global affairs, economically and militarily, our only guaranteed security is the rule of law to protect us.

This was the overriding motivation in our joining the International Criminal Court. We regard the ICC as an important pillar in the overall architecture of world peace

based on the rule of law. We have no illusions that it can prosecute more than a handful of cases a year, but we are confident that what we have witnessed in the past two decades is a frontal assault on the pervasive climate of impunity that had reigned since the Tokyo and Nuremberg Trials. As a small player on the world stage, Samoa has to choose carefully the issues on which it can afford to spend its diplomatic resources. We have felt it important to contribute what we can to this one.

As a small token, we hope to be in a position soon to deposit our instrument of accession to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court.

We are also pleased that the Working Group on Amendments is up and running and we intend to participate in its work. We are particularly interested in following up the amendment to the weapons provisions of Article 8 of the Rome Statute that was adopted in Kampala last year. We want to explore further the proposed amendments dealing with weapons of mass destruction and with other devices causing unnecessary suffering, such as cluster munitions, that were on the table before Kampala. Such weapons should be made criminal, both in international and in non-international armed conflict.

Madam President,

Samoa was colonized late in the period of European and North American expansion. It emerged through the League of Nations Mandate system and the United Nations Trusteeship system to independence in 1962. In a little over two weeks, we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our cherished independence.

We live in an area of the globe which, though named "the Pacific", has had its share of what the UN Charter eloquently calls the "scourge of war" bringing "untold sorrow to mankind." The Pacific was also the scene of the only atomic bombs dropped in anger and of the testing of weapons of mass destruction by three major powers.

The ICC provides our region, and the world at large, with hope and dignity in an increasingly fragile and unpredictable world. And we express the hope that other states, big and small will one day decide to demonstrate their commitment to international justice and the rule of law by becoming members of the International Criminal Court.

Building an institution such as this is like erecting a cathedral – an enterprise that is perhaps doomed never to be fully completed. But the effort is worth it. Thank you.