

Madame President

I welcome this opportunity to deliver a statement on behalf of the British Government. I would also like to align myself with the statement made earlier by a representative of the European Union and its Member States.

I congratulate you, Madame President, on your first year as President of this Assembly. We also congratulate Prosecutor Bensouda as she begins her important role.

Already this week, this Assembly has made a number of important decisions that will impact on the future progress of the Court. I welcome these important appointments and offer all those appointed our full support. I would also like to welcome Guatemala who are joining us as an ICC States Party at this Assembly for the first time. Only when the Court is truly universal will justice for the victims of the most appalling of crimes be secured.

Madame President,

2012 saw the ICC deliver its first judgment and verdict. But it is clear that there is much work for the Court to do. World events in 2012 have been dominated by the continuing violence in Syria, but it remains a matter of deep concern that the situation in Syria is still outside the jurisdiction of the Court. We will continue to make every effort to ensure that impunity will not go unchecked and that justice will be served.

2012 has also seen a number of important events to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming into force of the Rome Statute. We have all been able to reflect on how far the Court has come in ten years, and to consider the challenges facing the Court in the years ahead. These of course include issues of co-operation and complementarity. Speaking here in July, Foreign Secretary Hague underlined again the UK's commitment to the ICC and called on all states to cooperate with it and apprehend indictees.

In this context may I draw attention to the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative which the Prosecutor mentioned in her remarks yesterday and will be discussed at a side event today. This

important initiative emphasises my government's commitment at the highest levels to practical delivery of justice and protection of the victims of violence, especially the most vulnerable.

This year's ASP will discuss a number of issues that will influence the continued development of the Court. We are grateful for the work undertaken by the Working Groups of the Assembly, the Study Group on Governance and the Bureau in New York. We note in particular that there is a proposal for an amendment to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. This amendment, if adopted, would help to improve the efficiency of the Court. We encourage such a continuous process of review of the legal framework concerning the management of judicial proceedings with a view to making the Court more efficient, effective and credible.

Madame President

My government is committed to ensuring that the Court has the funding it requires to maintain its core judicial activities and to handle its workload. We are also committed to providing financial support to key areas of the Court's work with voluntary donations – in July this year we made a donation of half a million pounds to the Victims Trust Fund. In this respect, I recognise the generous and important contribution made by the Host State in respect of the rent of the Court's interim premises.

However it remains the responsibility of all international institutions to manage their budgets efficiently and with restraint. The Court is no exception. We therefore welcome the constructive engagement of the Court on the budget during the past year and acknowledge the work of the Committee on Budget and Finance and the important role of the budget facilitator.

Madame President, I look forward to working constructively with all the States Parties, officials of the Court and members of the NGO community to achieve a successful outcome on all the issues that are to be discussed during this ASP.