



STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF NIGERIA'S DELEGATION

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Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal
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Madam President,

1. May I on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, express our profound appreciation for the efficient manner you have conducted the affairs of the Assembly and the Bureau since your assumption of office in 2011. My delegation is convinced that with your rich experience and wisdom, the affairs of the 11th Assembly of States Parties will be conducted to a fruitful conclusion. Let me assure you and the Bureau, of our full support and cooperation.

2. My delegation wishes to express its warm congratulations and felicitations to the new members of the Advisory Committee on Nominations, as well as, members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims on their elections. We wish them success in their new and challenging assignments and assure them of Nigeria's full support and cooperation.

Madam President,

4. As a State Party, Nigeria remains firmly committed to the ideals of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in ensuring that grave crimes of concern to the international community do not go unpunished. To realize these objectives, it is important that the Court remains independent and free from any form of political pressure or interference in carrying out its mandates. In this regard, we strongly believe in the need for the Court to continue to demonstrate a purely judicial character and operate independently in a transparent way, regardless of shifting political considerations. This is particularly important in ensuring the credibility of its actions and decisions and to enable it sustain the confidence of the international community.

Madam President,

5. The adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998 and the establishment of the International Criminal Court as the world's first permanent, international criminal tribunal in 2002 were indeed momentous steps, reflecting the resolve of the international community to put an end to impunity and to contribute to the prevention of crimes that threaten international peace and security. It is gratifying to note that the International Criminal Court has since its establishment engendered positive change of attitude towards international criminal justice and the prosecution of crimes of concern to the international community. Over the last decade, in spite of some of its initial challenges, the Court has notably, increased global awareness that acts of impunity will no longer be tolerated and that those responsible for the perpetration of atrocities will inevitably be held accountable.

6. My delegation is pleased with the continuous increase in the membership of the Rome Statute representing an encouraging development towards achievement of universality. Increased membership should, of necessity, require diversification in the investigations and other activities undertaken by the Court to cover other regions of the world where crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court are being committed as a means of countering perceptions of double standards.

Madam President,

7. Within the context of ensuring effective cooperation with the Court, I am pleased to inform the Assembly of the visit of the Chief Prosecutor of ICC to Nigeria in July at my invitation during which she held fruitful discussions with various arms and levels of Government and the civil society. Discussions with the Prosecutor also involved exploring areas of cooperation with Court as it concerns the African continent. Nigeria will continue to engage constructively with the Court on matters relevant to the Court's mandate.

8. My delegation recognizes that under the Rome Statute, prosecution is just one aspect of justice for the victims. However, achieving true healing and reconciliation requires that the plight of victims, survivors and affected communities be accorded deserving and sustained attention by the Court. It is, therefore, important that public information and outreach activities of the Court are further strengthened and given the support necessary to build on partnership strategies that support and make the Court visible to the victims and communities where crimes had been committed. We continue to strongly support outreach activities of the Court as essential in promoting understanding of the international criminal justice process, the Court's work and mandate to victim communities as well as managing victim's expectations.

Madam President,

9. The expectations of the international community for justice delivery by the Court have continued to increase, with the emergence of new situations and cases. Mindful of the expanded responsibilities thrust upon the Court by these developments, my delegation would support initiatives including budgetary proposals that will further strengthen the ability of the Court to effectively discharge its mandate and meet increasing demands and expectations. In the meantime, States Parties should continue to engage Court officials on the efficient use of resources made available to it.

Madam President,

10. I thank you and all the delegations for your kind attention.