

*Statement by*

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United Nations*

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 MADAM

~~Mr.~~ President,

At the outset, allow me to express my thanks and the appreciation of my delegation to the President of the International Criminal Court, His Excellency Judge Sang-Hyun Song, President of the Bureau of the ASP and the Registrar for their lucid and comprehensive overview on the judicial and administrative activities of the Court. We thank the Government of the Netherlands for their hospitality and congratulate Fato Bensouda on her appointment as chief prosecutor as well as all elected officers of the Court.

Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to honour its obligations under the Rome Statute including cooperation in the ongoing investigations and cases before the Court. We welcome the significant judicial progress made by the Court in the fight against impunity and congratulate the Bureau of the ASP, States Parties, civil society organizations and all those who in diverse ways immensely contributed to these milestones. As we celebrate ten years of ICC's existence with landmark successes, adequate resources should be made available to the court for it to continue making historic achievements.

 MADAM

~~Mr.~~ President,

The universality of the Rome Statute is critical in the fight against impunity. In this vein, my delegation welcomes new states parties and equally encourages non-state parties to seriously consider becoming members of the Rome Statute. We commend the Government of Liechtenstein for taking a step-further to ratify the Kampala amendments such as the crime of

aggression and we hope that this will serve as an impetus to other countries to follow.

Like other International Courts and Tribunals,( ICTR, ICTY and Special Court for Sierra Leone) cooperation continues to be the main challenge facing the ICC. In this area, it is difficult to see specific lessons learnt that could apply to the ICC beyond the overwhelming importance of cooperation by each and every State Party and by as many international actors as possible. It is difficult to see specific lessons because each court and tribunal operates in different situations and with different tools for cooperation, be they political or otherwise. We can only encourage each and every State to do everything within its power to cooperate with and provide support for the court in the implementation of its judicial mandate. We should always remember that the Court's potential for deterrence lies mainly in the likelihood of the threat of prosecution being carried out. Any dilution of that threat makes the worldwide fight against impunity and the ICC's role within that process much more difficult and more at risk of failure.

As we all know, the ICC does not have the advantage of being focused only on one situation. It operates in situations that can be volatile, where the security situation can vary from day to day. It operates in situations where there are difficulties in spreading information, where the infrastructure is usually challenging at best. We know this type of situation very well: Just one decade ago, we were in a state of crisis. But look at us now: we have peace, we have justice and we have a functioning democratic system. Many challenges await us, but we are in a good position to meet those challenges. And one reason for our success is that we faced the need for accountability

head-on and took steps to address that need. Here we want to commend and acknowledge the support and cooperation of the international community, the people of Sierra Leone and civil society organizations.

MADAM

Mr. President,

In the area of complementary, we recognized the fact that the roles of national jurisdictions are crucial in the prosecution of perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In this respect, Government has drafted a bill for the domestication of the Rome Statute and currently collaborating with the Special Court for Sierra Leone for the establishment of a witness and victim support unit within the national judiciary. Thus, all actions and activities through potential partner countries aimed at supporting national jurisdictions in meeting their obligations under the Rome Statute are pivotal to the fight against impunity.

Justice must be protected, as justice is a critical component of peace: without justice, there can be no peace. And without peace, the lives of several thousands of people are put in jeopardy, right now and for future generations. We must not allow a weakening of international criminal justice processes; instead, we must support them, promote them, protect them and defend them. This is the only way forward to lasting peace and prosperous future for all.

To conclude, my delegation reiterates its supports to the Court as a key element in the restoration of peace and international rule of law. To maximize its potential, we must continue our efforts towards universal

ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute including the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression, we must provide the Court with clear and steady cooperation and, above all, we must assist the court by providing it with clear guidance and constructive support. We recognize the fact that capacity-building is the hallmark for the realization of these objectives.

I thank you.