

**Statement by  
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General Debate  
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Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court  
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Madame President:

The Philippines would like to thank you for your service and your commitment to international criminal justice in the last three sessions that you have led our Assembly.

We would also like to thank the members of the Bureau, together with the The Hague and New York Working Groups which facilitated our work for the past year.

Allow us to also thank President Sang-Hyun Song and his team for their report on the activities of the Court since our last session.

Before I go on, allow me to convey the profound gratitude of the President of the Republic of the Philippines and the Filipino people for the outpouring of support and expressions of solidarity and concrete assistance from the international community for the Philippines in the wake of the super typhoon that recently wrought massive destruction in central Philippines.

Today, the Philippine Government and the Filipino people affirm their commitment to fighting impunity. The rule of law should abide everywhere in the world. For us, genuine global peace is possible if it is solidly anchored on a rules-based international system, including a rules-based international criminal justice system.

We welcome Côte d'Ivoire as the latest State Party to the Rome Statute, bringing our number to 122. We join the call for many more countries to similarly ratify or accede to the Rome Statute, particularly from our Asia-Pacific region. Our goal is universality.

The world will always condemn the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Together, we will ensure that the perpetrators account for their crimes. By so doing, the international community will affirm that there will be no peace without justice, not just for our generation, but also for generations yet to come.

**Madame President:**

The Philippines pays close attention to developments in the on-going judicial proceedings, investigations, and preliminary examinations.

As all of us know only too well, the work of justice is never easy. Like every State Party and the larger international community, we are very concerned about current developments that threaten the integrity and credibility of the Court.

As a State Party, we affirm the Declaration of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Level held in New York on 24 September 2012, paragraph 23 of which recognizes the role of the Court in a multilateral system that aims to end impunity and establish the rule of law.

States Parties must ensure that our respective criminal justice systems are transparent, fair, effective and relatively speedy, allowing for the prosecution of the crimes contemplated by the Rome Statute.

At the same time, however, the reality is that justice can be particularly complicated and difficult in countries affected if not devastated by violence and conflict, whether sectarian or otherwise. Our concerned friends in Africa need our patience and our understanding, and not our judgment.

If there is a region that has shown more commitment to – and thirst for – international criminal justice, it is probably Africa. What more proof do we need apart from its having the most number of States Parties, at thirty-four. Despite their own individual developmental challenges, which the Philippines identifies with, they have decided to cast their lot with the Court.

Yesterday, Prince Zeid Raad Zeid of Jordan and former ASP President, speaking also on behalf of the two former ASP Presidents, Ambassador Christian Wenawesser and H.E. Mr Bruno Ugarte, recalled for us 'a kind of a glory that was Rome' when the Statute was adopted. He said and I quote, "we wept with joy because we had succeeded in ensuring that for us to be a human civilization worthy of some self respect, the strong would henceforth forfeit voluntarily their protections in respect of the weak, and most particularly, the victims, whenever allegations of criminal conduct crossed the boundary separating the ordinary from the outrageous." But he also put us in the present context, when he said that we have reached a juncture in the Court's development, where anxieties about its future are noticeable.

One speaker yesterday also said that Rome was not built in one day. True indeed. But it can also be said that Rome began its decay when it failed to be cognizant of the changing needs of the times.

The Philippines looks forward to working constructively with the proponents and fellow States Parties on the possible amendment of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence and to continue dialogue with concerned states with a view to resolving situations similar to what the Court currently faces, mindful of the truism that international law is ever evolving and that we need to adopt an open mind.

We must help each other to protect human rights and build domestic capacities for complementarity and cooperation, including through human resource development-related assistance like the training of judges, prosecutors, the police and the military.

The Philippines is hopeful and confident that we can surmount our current impasse, if the Court, the United Nations, and the international community will join hands to genuinely understand and help developing country States Parties, particularly in Africa.

Thank you, Madame President.