

**STATEMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**BY IAIN MACLEOD
HEAD OF UK DELEGATION**

ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2013

Madame President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

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

Madame President, support for international criminal justice and for securing accountability remains a fundamental element of the foreign policy of the United Kingdom. This is why we contribute actively to the work of the international criminal courts and tribunals every year; why we support the protection of witnesses; and why we have agreed to enforce sentences imposed by international courts by holding prisoners in the UK.

Our support for the ICC is unswerving. The Court is a cornerstone of international justice and a deterrent to atrocities; it places a spotlight on individual responsibility, supports victims and helps to establish an historical narrative of accountability. One of the key principles of the Rome Statute, to which we are all parties, is that it shall apply equally to all persons, without regard to rank, title or position. This is the fundamental principle which underpins the Court's work.

Justice for victims is also a key principle of the Rome Statute. The United Kingdom continues to believe that the work of the Trust Fund for Victims is of great importance, and is supporting jointly funded long-term projects, including in the DRC, focussing on support for victims of sexual violence, education support for girls and rehabilitation of child soldiers. I am delighted to confirm today a further contribution of \$480,000 for the Trust Fund so that it may continue this essential humanitarian work.

The UK continues to actively promote States' development of domestic capacity to prosecute the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Through our Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, we aim to challenge the culture of impunity that exists for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, and to increase the numbers held to account through promoting more international action and strengthening national capacity. Since it was set up in 2012, the initiative has deployed expertise and supported projects in Bosnia, the DRC, Mali, the Syrian borders and Kosovo. The UK will host an International Conference on this issue in 2014, focusing on global practical implementation of international commitments to end sexual violence in conflict.

Madame President, it is also right that we consider at this meeting measures to support the effective functioning of the Court. I will touch on a few of the issues before us.

A number of amendments to the rules of procedure and evidence have been tabled for discussion at this Assembly, including one by the United Kingdom on presence through video technology. We hope that States will engage constructively on these proposals. We also thank the Court, the SGG and Working Group on Amendments for their work this year in approving amendments to Rules 100 and 68 which we hope will be adopted at this ASP, and which would serve the purpose of increasing the Court's efficiency and effectiveness.

The Court's budget for 2014 still needs to be agreed formally at this Assembly. But we appreciate the way in which the Court has worked in partnership with States during the negotiations this year. The proposal on the table represents what we consider to be an appropriate balance between providing extra resources, especially in order for the Office of the Prosecutor to implement its new strategy, and a process of reform. Looking to the future, I have to underline that my Government believes this ongoing reform programme is essential in ensuring an increasingly efficient and effective Court. We look forward to the Court's reports on progress throughout 2014.

The Assembly will adopt a resolution fully operationalising an Independent Oversight Mechanism, with powers of inspection, evaluation and investigation. We are grateful to the organs of the Court for working so constructively with States this year to resolve what has been a difficult and controversial issue over the years.

We are pleased that work on the Court's permanent premises is advancing quickly and successfully. The new building will be the public face of the Court and of international justice. We are grateful to all involved for their work, from the host state to the Project Director and the wider team.

Finally, Madame President, we are all aware that this Assembly takes place at a time when the work of the Court is under scrutiny as never before. This meeting of the ASP follows last week's decision by the United Nations Security Council not to defer the cases involving President Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto under Article 16 of the Rome Statute. The United Kingdom was unable to support the draft resolution at last week's vote because we did not consider that criteria for an Article 16 deferral were met.

We do however fully understand the desire to allow the President and Deputy President of Kenya to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities; and although we regret that the issue was taken to a vote at the Security Council we remain actively engaged in trying to address the concerns that have been raised. We look forward to the discussions during the Special Segment tomorrow.

Madame President, the UK looks forward to joining with all States Parties, officials of the Court and members of the NGO community throughout this meeting of the Assembly, to achieve a successful outcome on this, and all of the issues before us.