

Thirteenth Session of the Assembly of  
States Parties to the Rome Statute of the  
International Criminal Court

Statement on behalf of Australia

Delivered by Dr Greg French, Legal Adviser,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Mister President,

Australia takes the opportunity of this thirteenth session of the Assembly of States Parties to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to, and confidence in, the International Criminal Court.

2014 has again been a busy year for the Court. We welcome in particular the surrender to the Court of Blé Goudé in relation to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, and the finalisation of proceedings against Germain Katanga and Thomas Lubanga. Justice has finally been served for the victims of Katanga's attack on the village of Bogoto in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and for the children who were enlisted, conscripted and used in hostilities by Lubanga during the conflict there.

From Australia's perspective as a current member of the UN Security Council, we are acutely aware that innocent children, women and men continue to be victims of Rome Statute numbers crimes in horrific. While we are determined that the existence of the Court and the Rome Statute system should deter and prevent such crimes in future, right now, the Court's work is needed more than ever. With nine situations currently before the Court and another eight under preliminary examination, it is clear that the Court's activities are going to continue to expand in the foreseeable future. So there is much to be done.

Mr President,

We appreciate the work of the former President of the Assembly of States Parties, Ms Tiina Intelmann. We salute the service of the President of the Court, Judge Song, who will soon be stepping down, as well as the other judges whose terms are ending. We congratulate you, Mr President, on your election, and pledge to you our support. We welcome and share your commitment to deepen the bonds between the African region and the ICC, and to enhance cooperation, complementarity and efforts towards universality.

We also congratulate the new judges of the Court, and affirm that you, Mr President, as well as the judges, the Prosecutor and her office, the Registry, the Secretariat, - indeed all of the women and men of the ICC - have Australia's full support as the Court and the Assembly continue to work together in pursuit of the Rome Statute's objectives - in what we must acknowledge are often difficult circumstances.

Mr President,

In coming together at this meeting to seek solutions to the challenges we face, we recall that the ICC is only as strong as the commitment of its States Parties. While this requires all of us to offer the Court our full political and diplomatic support, first and foremost it requires States Parties to meet their cooperation obligations under the Statute, and other States to meet like obligations under Security Council referral resolutions. In this context, we look forward to the special session on cooperation. We also highlight the importance Australia

places on the language concerning non-essential contact in the draft cooperation resolution.

Mister President,

As Her Excellency the Interim President of the Central African Republic told us on Monday, this year the Transitional Government made a second referral of the situation in the Central African Republic to the ICC. Authorities in Ukraine also lodged an Article 12(3) declaration accepting the jurisdiction of the Court. These actions demonstrate the significance of the ICC for such situation countries. But 2014 was also the first year in which no States joined the Rome Statute. This signals the need for us as States Parties to redouble our efforts to work towards the Statute's universality. Australia, for its part, is committed to promoting the Statute, particularly among our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific.

We must also continue to build the relationship between the ICC and other regional and international institutions. During our tenure on the Security Council, Australia has focused particularly on ways to increase the Council's cooperation with the Court. That work is ongoing: we have consistently advocated that the Security Council must respond to the eight unanswered communications sent to the Council regarding non-cooperation in relation to the situation in Darfur, and we continue to do so.

Mister President,

Support for victims and witnesses is in many ways at the heart of the work of the International Criminal Court. That is why Australia this year donated \$200,000 to the Trust Fund for Victims and \$200,000 to the Trust Fund for the Relocation of Witnesses. Australia also recognises that we need to continue our review of the victims' participation system in order to ensure that the role played by victims in Court proceedings remains workable into the future. For this reason, we urge the Assembly to consider how it can best take this work forward in the coming year.

Mister President,

We look forward to working together at this Assembly with our common objective in mind: to put an end to impunity and ensure that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole are investigated and prosecuted.