



Check against delivery

STATEMENT BY
BY
HON. VASSILI BASIRU POTIER MAHONEY
ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES
"GENERAL DEBATE"

NEW YORK
WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2014

**Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Assembly of States Parties,
Your Excellency, President of the International Criminal Court
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure and honour to extend to the Chairman and Representatives of the States Parties of the International Criminal Court the assurances of the highest consideration of the Government and people of The Gambia.

We join other States Parties in congratulating the President of the Assembly of States Parties His Excellency Maitre Sidiki Kaba of our sister Republic of Senegal and to the six newly elected Judges of the International Criminal Court, two already elected and four to be elected later at this session to this high office and wish you every success in your mandate with the guidance of the Almighty in your quest for justice for humanity at large. We also congratulate the outgoing President for a job well done.

The Gambia has taken note of the inaugural statement of His Excellency the President of the Assembly of States Parties and encourages him to vigorously pursue his agenda to address the challenges he has identified namely: to reconcile misperceptions between all regions and the ICC; to develop Cooperation between the States and the ICC; to strengthen Complementarity; and to work towards the Universality of the Rome Statute.

The Gambia also extends support to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in fulfilling her mandate without fear, affection or ill-will but in the pursuit of justice in accordance with the Rome Statute and international law. The ICC including the Office of the Prosecutor should be commended for its steadfast adherence to the fundamental principle of judicial independence and the resultant strengthening of its reputation for judicial integrity.

The Report on Preliminary Examination Activities for 2014 demonstrates the professionalism and zeal of the Office of the Prosecutor in executing its mandate. The Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 and Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes is further testimony of the unprecedented achievements of the Prosecutor's Office despite all odds. In this regard, resources commensurate with the volume of requests for investigations and subsequent prosecutions should be made available if the ICC is to fulfil the expectations of the international community. The need for proper funding of the Office of the Prosecutor cannot be over-emphasised, for, after all, it is the worst crimes against humanity that are pursued at this level and without which impunity would prevail. It is also goes

without saying that referrals of cases from the UN Security Council to the ICC should be followed up by UN member states funding for such cases.

On Cooperation, it is disheartening that only a handful of the 122 States Parties have entered into agreements with the ICC for the relocation of witnesses and for enforcement of sentences. States Parties to the Rome Statute should demonstrate their support for the ICC by rendering more cooperation with the Court; it is not sufficient to only accept the jurisdiction of the ICC without giving the necessary cooperation for the Court to effectively deliver on its mandate.

My delegation supports the Trust Fund for Victims and in this regard, welcomes the recent contributions of some States Parties.

Finally, The Gambia would want to call upon those States that have not accepted and ratified the Rome Statute to desist from dictating to others on alleged violations of human rights when they themselves have not accepted the mechanism of the United Nations representing humanity at large as a judicial pillar and last bastion of hope for human beings who have suffered the worst atrocities known to mankind. Is it not double standards for such States to criticise other States' human rights records and yet not submit themselves to scrutiny by the international community through mechanisms of none other than the United Nations?

In conclusion, The Gambia applauds the work of the International Criminal Court including the Judges and the Offices of the Prosecutor and of the Registrar, and encourages the Court to maintain the momentum in investigations and prosecutions in order that perpetrators of the most heinous crimes be made accountable for atrocities committed on defenceless individuals and by extension on humanity.

Thank you.