



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

13TH Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome
Statute of the International Criminal Court, New York

New Zealand statement

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11 December 2014

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Mr President

I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the Assembly of States Parties and wish to express New Zealand's support for the objectives you have outlined for your term as President and assure you that you will have New Zealand's full support to achieve these ends. I would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing President Ambassador Intelmann for her tireless efforts to support the ICC and to President Song for his many years of commitment and service to the Court.

Mr President

In recent years, the Court has made a significant contribution to international justice. It has also faced a number of challenges. How it rises to meet those challenges in the years to come will contribute to the effectiveness, legitimacy, and future of the Court.

New Zealand considers that there is a need for a more positive relationship and structured dialogue between the Court and States Parties to ensure that there is a sense of shared responsibility for the Court's success by all those centrally concerned with the Court's functions.

It is essential that differences are resolved constructively, and that we foster an environment in which we work with, rather than against, each other in the interests of global justice.

We need to recognise the role that the Assembly of States Parties plays as a forum for frank and open dialogue. The ASP not only has a role in providing management oversight of the Court, but States Parties have the responsibility to help ensure the effectiveness of the Court and the system of international criminal justice.

There have been a number of initiatives by States and civil society which aim to address the need to improve the Court's efficiency and effectiveness. Rigorous investigations, strong evidence, and consistent judicial determinations are all hallmarks of a sound judicial system.

We welcome the implementation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the 2012 - 2015 Strategic Plan, and its work in diversifying its approach to investigations, and working towards the goal of ensuring that cases are as 'trial ready' as possible from an early stage. We recognise the challenges these goals pose in light of the increasing workload and finite resources. We encourage the Prosecutor to continue to build on this work.

We also welcome the Registrar's ReVision project and the work of the judicial Working Group on Lessons Learnt. Further opportunities exist to explore issues such as improving the confirmation of charges process; enhancing understanding and harmony between the work of the three Divisions; and implementing practical measures to ensure that interlocutory processes do not cause undue delay. A Court with facilities and processes that are 'fit for purpose' can be realised through greater use of video and other technologies, the completion of the new premises, and ongoing training and development.

Improvements in Chambers processes are supported by high calibre Judges who are committed to ongoing development. We acknowledge and welcome the Judges who have been elected so far this year and the dedication and experience they will bring to the Court.

Mr President

The principles of universality, cooperation, and complementarity lie at the heart of the Rome Statute system. The Court's effectiveness is guaranteed when as many States as possible recognise its jurisdiction, discharge their obligation to cooperate with the Court, and implement the necessary legislation to adjudicate core crimes where they are willing and able to do so.

New Zealand was pleased to join with Liechtenstein and the Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression to co-host a workshop in Auckland, New Zealand on the Universality of the Rome Statute and the Kampala Amendments. This provided a forum for representatives from Pacific and Asian States, academia, and civil society to discuss the successes and challenges faced by the ICC in its first chapter and the relevance of the Rome Statute and Kampala Amendments to our region.

Mr President

New Zealand recognises that the relationship between the Security Council and the Court remains as important as ever. New Zealand welcomes dialogue on the circumstances in which referrals by the Council to the Court are appropriate and how referrals can and should be managed to ensure they contribute to peace and accountability.

We are of the view that when a referral is made by the Council, there must be a clear commitment to follow up and to ensuring that the Court receives the cooperation it needs to discharge its function under the Rome Statute. New Zealand is committed to exploring a range of practical, effective means of strengthening the relationship with the Council and the General Assembly.

Mr President

The establishment of the ICC in 1998 was a moment in which the international community came together and expressed a collective will to respond swiftly, impartially, and thoroughly to crimes that shock the global conscience. In 2014, while we acknowledge the Court's important achievements, if we are to achieve lasting respect for international criminal justice, we must also take time to reflect on the challenges we have faced. We must then move beyond reflection and invest in practical, credible solutions to shape a Court that will stand the test of time for years to come. As we look ahead to next chapter in the Court's history, New Zealand remains committed to working alongside others to secure its role as a permanent and effective legal institution.

Thank you.