

**Statement by
Mr. Kazi Russel Pervez, Charge d' Affaires, a.i., Embassy of Bangladesh in The Hague
at the 14th Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

The Hague, Netherlands, 19 November 2015

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Mr. President,

Allow me to felicitate you for your excellent stewardship of the fourteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. We are confident that under your able guidance, the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion. We pledge full cooperation and support to you and the members of your bureau in the discharge of your mandate.

We also like to register our deepest appreciation for the Presidency of the ICC, Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry for their hard work and dedicated service for the Court and pursuit of international justice. I also take the opportunity to register our admiration for the dedicated work of all members of the Bureau and the Working Groups in The Hague and New York.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh had been at the forefront of the global campaign for the early adoption of the Statute and the creation of the International Criminal Court. We deeply identify ourselves to the collective conscience of mankind that led to the elaboration of the Rome Statute, and an end of the impunity to crime against humanity and war crimes. We express our unequivocal support for the Statute, to the International Criminal Court, and the evolving landscape of international criminal justice.

Our conviction to such an instrument has been as old as the struggle that led to our independence more than four decades ago. Our ongoing effort to bring to justice those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during our War of Liberation in 1971 is a natural expression of intention of the people of Bangladesh to end the culture of impunity to crimes against humanity. This has, in fact, created a new paradigm in international criminal justice by allowing purely domestic courts the mandate to hold trials for the internationally defined crimes. This has been in full conformity with the 'complementarity' principle of the Rome Statute as it demonstrates our nation's ability and willingness to bring to closure past crimes.

We believe that only a sound international mechanism and a well-established international institution can prevent future instances of crimes that have plagued the humanity over the ages. This is where we consider the contribution of the Rome Statute and the role of the ICC is paramount. It is through the ICC that the collective conscience of mankind is expressed, and a mechanism thorough which the rule of law transcends boundaries.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has committed itself to promoting universalization of the Rome Statute. The Government of Bangladesh duly observes the International Day of Global Criminal Justice

every year. We reaffirm our commitment to remain in the forefront of global efforts to ensure justice for victims of international crimes and to end the culture of impunity around them. We wish to remain engaged in contributing to the evolving discourse on prevention of genocides and mass atrocity crimes.

Bangladesh also committed itself to work towards preventing sexual violence that constitutes one of the gravest breaches of international humanitarian principles during armed conflicts. In this regard, we appreciate the Office of the Prosecutor's Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes of 2014.

Bearing the memory of the two hundred thousand women and girls that were violated and tortured during our War of Liberation in 1971, the Government of Bangladesh has decided to recognize those women and girls as 'freedom fighters' in their own right and entitled to the same privileges of a freedom fighter. The Government of Bangladesh has already recognized 41 such women as freedom fighters and many more are in the process of being recognized as freedom fighters.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh reaffirms its commitment to making constructive and forward-looking contributions to further strengthening the ICC's mandate and work. Bangladesh appreciates the formation of the Trust Fund for Victims and in this connection we, in our humble way, tried to play our role as The Hague Working Group Facilitator for Victims under the leadership of Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of the Netherlands H.E. Mr. Sheikh Mohammed Belal.

Global communications have made war, conflict and conflict resolution an everyday issue and have also been serving as catalyst for societal change. They have also increased the sense among its people that we are all connected, we should be concerned about distant others, and that all human beings have certain inalienable rights. The ICC and its work are of interest to a wide audience and it clearly has a strong global community of people who support it.

It is in this spirit, Bangladesh has made a modest contribution to the Trust Fund for Victims this year and encourages potential donors to provide enhanced and predictable resources to allow the Fund to make a real difference in the lives of the victims around the world. We commend the work of the Bureau of Cooperation in enhancing the Court's international cooperation activities. Bangladesh wishes to engage more with the Court to further enhance our enabling legal compliance with the Rome Statute. We also wish successful completion of the negotiations on an international instrument on Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition in Domestic Prosecution of Atrocity of Crimes.

Mr. 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 perpetrators of the world's most heinous crimes are brought to justice, wherever they are.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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