

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

BY

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AT THE

**FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

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Mr. President

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

I have the honour and privilege to deliver this Statement on behalf of The Republic of The Gambia at this fourteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties. Permit me, Mr. President to firstly congratulate you on your first year as President of this Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's unwavering support to your presidency and our cooperation in this regard. My delegation also extends its gratitude to the Secretariat of the ICC as well as the Bureau and all other organs for successfully organizing this fourteenth session.

Mr. President

The Republic of The Gambia is deeply committed to the ideals of the Rome Statute and we continue to attach great importance to the Court's mandate in maintaining international justice and security. We also recognize that the execution of this mandate is indeed crucial to our shared goal to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes known to mankind

As the role of the ICC evolves to meet new global challenges, it is vital that we, the States Parties ensure that the organization functions efficiently and effectively to achieve its full mandate.

In doing so, we must adequately equip the court by augmenting its budget to address the growing number of preliminary examinations, investigations and prosecutions whilst at the same time being aware of the significant financial constraints many state parties are facing.

Mr President

Achieving retributive justice is important but so is ensuring that the voices of the countless victims feature in the court proceedings. Restorative justice is equally central in the deliverance of justice and we welcome the decision of the Appeal Chambers of the Court in establishing the principles and procedures to be applied to reparation. We also appreciate the activities initiated by the Trust Fund for Victims and urge Member States to continue to support the work of this important instrument.

Mr President

My delegation believes that it is vital to strengthen the cooperation between ICC and its African member states by creating a platform for cordial relationship through dialogue, compromise and understanding.

Fundamentally, our collective effort in this direction is critical to achieving the goals of the Rome Statute. We believe that ICC's recent engagement of African States through seminars and round table discussions, is highly commendable and will go a long way to cement ties, develop the public perception and understanding of the Court's role and therefore bolster greater cooperation.

Mr. President

The principle of complementarity is deeply embedded within the Rome Statute and as such, the ICC must encourage our respective national justice systems to also effectively contribute to the fight against impunity. The ICC can play an active role in this endeavour by assisting in the capacity building of national investigators and prosecutors where necessary.

Mr President

The continuous support of Member States for the work carried out by the Office of the Prosecutor is of the utmost importance, as the Court's ability to achieve justice mostly rests on the Prosecutors' strategy and selection of situations for investigations. We commend the Office of the Prosecutor on the recently

released Strategic Plan and the annual report on preliminary examination activities which, in our opinion, strives to promote transparency and greater understanding of the work carried out by the Office.

Mr President before concluding, my delegation wishes to congratulate the Court on the completion of its new permanent premises. This is a significant milestone for the ICC, and it is our hope that the permanent premises will serve as a symbol of hope, a face of international justice for all humanity. Furthermore Mr. President, the attainment of universal jurisdiction is of the utmost importance and crucial to the development of the ICC, therefore the Republic of The Gambia would like to take this opportunity to urge non States Parties to seriously consider the ratification of the Rome Statute.

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to once again re-affirm The Gambia Governments unwavering support to the work of the ICC. We once again acknowledge and congratulate you on the excellent work you are doing on our behalf, we hope that it would serve as a deterrent for the perpetration of genocide and other crimes against humanity thereby making the world a more peaceful place for the whole of mankind.

I thank you all.