



**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P., Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government
of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, at the 15th Session of the Assembly of States Parties
to the Rome Statute**

The Hague, Netherlands, 16-24 November 2016

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H.E. Mr. Sidiki Kaba
President of the Assembly of States Parties
President of the International Criminal Court
Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court
Registrar of the International Criminal Court
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me first to felicitate Your Excellency Mr. Sidika Kaba for your excellent stewardship of the Fifteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. We pledge our full cooperation and support to you and the members of your bureau in the discharge of your mandate.

We also like to register our appreciation for the Presidency, Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry of the International Criminal Court (ICC) 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 ICC. We deeply identify ourselves to the collective conscience of mankind that led to the codification of the Rome Statute to bring an end of the impunity to the crimes against humanity and war crimes. We express our unequivocal support for the Statute, to the ICC, and to 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 efforts 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 justice past crimes.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has committed itself to promoting universalization of the Rome Statute. We appreciate the work done by the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties in implementing its Plan of Action for promoting universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute. Bangladesh welcomes El Salvador's accession to the Rome Statute. However, we share concerns over the decision or consideration by certain States Parties to withdraw from the Statute. Let us remind ourselves that we succeeded in the post-World War II era by pursuing our interests within multilateral forums like the United Nations, ICC - not outside of them.

Mr. President,

The success of International Criminal Justice system should be measured in terms of a dialogue with, and empowerment of, national jurisdictions wherever this may be possible. We, therefore, strongly encourage the Assembly of States Parties to be innovative and generous with the issue of 'complementarity', which we believe to be a fundamental principle underlying the ICC's functioning as the Court of the last resort. It is of paramount importance that the international norms and standards enshrined in the Rome Statute and exemplified by the ICC's judicial and prosecutorial activities are shared with the interested national jurisdictions for further strengthening 'complementarity', bearing in mind the varied contexts in the national criminal jurisdictions.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh committed itself to work towards preventing sexual and gender based violence that constitutes one of the gravest breaches of international humanitarian principles during armed conflicts. We reaffirm our readiness to share our national experience in ensuring justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and the judicial and administrative efforts taken to promote due recognition and reparation for such victims.

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. It is with the same spirit, Bangladesh has submitted a set of pledges for combating sexual violence in armed conflict at the 32nd International Conference of Red Cross. As expressed in the pledge, Bangladesh will work in partnership with the ICC to generate awareness and promote implementation of the Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes launched by its Prosecutor's Office in June 2014.

Mr. President,

One of the most compelling narratives emanating from the ICC is the significant number of victims it has been supporting through its determination of reparations and also through its Trust Fund for victims. Bangladesh, in a humble way, is trying to play its role as The Hague Working

Group Facilitator for Victims under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Bangladesh 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.

Mr. President,

It is imperative to promote the strengthening of national judicial capacity to address war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The ICC's Internship and Visiting Professional Programmes is an appropriate knowledge sharing conduit towards strengthening the national judicial capacity of the States. The inordinately poor representation of interns and the visiting professionals at the ICC from the Least Developed Countries is a painful oversight that requires immediate rectification. If the ICC is to address its skewed structure in terms of fair geographical and gender representation, it needs to find innovative means like dedicated funding arrangement to cater to the applicants from the Least Developed Countries for its Internship and Visiting Professional Programmes.

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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