



**16th Session of the Assembly of States Parties, New York, 7 December
2017**

General Debate Speech

Shawan Jabarin

Good afternoon your excellencies,

It is my great pleasure to address the 16th Assembly of States Parties in the name of Al Haq, and the International Federation for Human Rights - FIDH - and its 184 member organisations.

With the 20th anniversary approaching, the ICC is confronted with more challenges than in 1998. The 20th anniversary is a moment to take stock of the vast achievements of the Court, but also a moment to critically assess how the Court can further maintain a permanent position in the fight for international justice.

As Kofi Annan said in his speech in Kampala in 2010, “the remarkable success of the creation of the Court was the result of strong political will. Further progress will require vision, a strong sense of purpose, and even courage.”

With a new investigation into Burundi, and a request pending approval to open an investigation into Afghanistan, the Court is, courageously, taking on new and unprecedented challenges. The importance of the Court's investigations on other situations, such as the situation of Palestine, also

requires a quick decision from the OTP and strong support and cooperation from States.

These challenges will only increase as the Court further cements its permanent position in the world and will prosecute those who are most responsible for the gravest crimes.

We must reiterate, once again, that accountability is not an obstacle to the process of building peace, but rather a necessary ingredient for it.

Your excellencies,

Now it is time to redouble efforts to support the ICC in its pursuit of justice for victims of international crimes.

FIDH entreats you to make your support real.

The ICC needs its budget approved. By tying the Court's hands, by denying it funds, it damages and limits victims' access to the unique universal Court of last resort. A frank cooperation is urgently needed, whoever is prosecuted. Financial cooperation should be strengthened in order to satisfy the reparation mandate of the ICC, which gives it more legitimacy and can realistically impact victims' lives.

Make your support visible for the ICC as well as for the human rights defenders that tirelessly work for justice both in The Hague and in our home countries. We often face threats to our lives and our livelihoods precisely for supporting this institution.

We are all here to reinforce a strong and equitable Rome Statute system. Let us work together to build rather than limit.

Thank you.