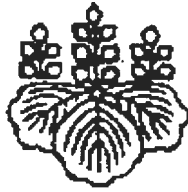


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JAPAN

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata

Ambassador of Japan to the Netherlands

**At the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

The Hague, 6 December 2018

*H.E. Mr O-Gon Kwon, President of the ASP,
Judge Chile Eboe-Osuji, President of the ICC,
Madam Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the ICC,
Mr Peter Lewis, Registrar of the ICC,*

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my statement by expressing the strong support of the Government of Japan for the cause that the ICC pursues, namely, the fight against impunity and the rule of law. Japan's consistent support is manifested in the attendance of Mr. Manabu Horii, who was the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time of the commemoration ceremony of the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute held in July this year, as well as in the provision of highly qualified human resources to various organs of the Court and the Assembly of States Parties. Furthermore, I am proud that Japan has supported the Court with financial contributions amounting to more than 236 million Euros in total since joining the ICC in 2007. Japan appreciates the efforts made by the ASP President, the Presidency, the Judges, the Prosecutor, the Registrar and other staff of the Court in all their undertakings to fight against impunity amidst various challenges.

Mr. President,

Looking ahead to the next decades, the ICC is expected to produce tangible

outcomes with the support and trust of the international community. In this connection, I would like to make the following three points that Japan believes should be prioritized in order to further strengthen the Court.

The first point relates to the election of the next Prosecutor, who will succeed Madam Bensouda whose tireless efforts are greatly appreciated. The States Parties have the responsibility to elect the most qualified Prosecutor who will lead the Court's investigation and prosecution. Discussions among States Parties are ongoing with regard to the process of the election, including establishing a search committee. Japan has actively participated in the discussion, emphasizing the importance of transparency, inclusiveness and an appropriate timeline of the process, and calls on the States Parties to work together to identify suitable candidates.

The second point concerns the efficiency and effectiveness of the Court. Japan fully appreciates the efforts undertaken by the Court and the States Parties thus far in this area. Through these efforts, I think we all share the viewpoint that instituting expedited proceedings is the key to achieving the desired efficiency and effectiveness, which will not only save on costs but eventually help to deter criminals and bring justice to victims. For the Office of the Prosecutor, the current efforts to prioritize situations/cases under a well-defined investigation strategy should be further strengthened so that the Court's limited resources may sufficiently cover the prioritized activities. For the Judiciary, in addition to many ongoing initiatives, I would like to refer to the large volume of legal documents produced and translated throughout the proceedings. Reducing the amount of documents would partly

contribute to timely proceedings as well as to curbing the costs incurred.

At the same time, we the States Parties can play a role in striving towards greater efficiency as well. While preserving the tradition of an active and engaging ASP on many important issues facing the Court, I would like to pose ourselves the question if we could be more efficient with fewer meetings and more concise documents.

Also related to the matter of efficiency, I would like to recall that States Parties are making serious efforts to fulfil their financial obligations while facing severe financial difficulties at home. Within their individual governments, many States Parties are coping with an increasing workload under a zero growth budget while maintaining the quality of their work. Japan strongly believes that all international organizations, including the ICC, should make similar efforts. Japan therefore highly appreciates the initiatives undertaken by the Registrar to contain the budget growth to a minimum, and encourages all sections of the Court to do the same. This is indispensable for the whole ICC to continue to enjoy the trust and support of the States Parties. I, as co-chair of the Study Group on Governance, would be happy to discuss any ideas to further promote good governance of the Court.

The third point relates to the promotion of the universality of the Court and dialogue with non-States Parties. Japan strongly believes that the ICC needs to gain the support and cooperation of not only the States Parties but also of non-States Parties to be a truly universal court. It is for this reason that Japan has been organizing outreach events, such as the one that we organized at the 57th annual session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization in Tokyo in October this year, and we

have been holding bilateral dialogues with some key non-States Parties in an appropriate manner. We call on States Parties to engage in constructive dialogue with non-States Parties.

Internally, the Court itself could be more universal by improving the geographical and gender balance of its staff. It is regrettable that out of the 123 States Parties, 19 are under-represented and 54 are non-represented. Japan requests the Presidency, the Registry and other organs of the Court to address this issue seriously so that visible results may be achieved.

Mr President,

Last, but not least, I am pleased to announce that following its contributions in the previous years, Japan will make a contribution of approximately 52,000 Euros to the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) to support the victims of sexual and gender-based violence. As this is the last ASP session for Ambassador Motoo Noguchi as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the TFV, I would like to express our deep gratitude to him for his dedication and great contribution to the TFV over the past six years.

Thank you.

