



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT

BY

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**ON THE OCCASION
OF THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 18TH SESSION OF THE
ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE**

**02 DECEMBER 2019
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS**



Mr. President,

1. My delegation wishes to join the speakers before me, to congratulate you for proficiently steering the work of the Assembly in the last two (2) years.
2. Under your able leadership, together with members of the Bureau, you have worked tirelessly to ensure that the Assembly discharges its mandate; and in this regard, we applaud and urge you to continue to do more in pursuit of this noble course.
3. Mr. President, Botswana fully supports the principles that are the basis for the existence of the ICC and therefore we continue to support its work, as it is the last hope in delivering justice for the vulnerable, as well as upholding universal human rights, the rule of law, and ensuring that those who have been given the mandate to lead Governments, do not use their power to commit atrocious crimes against their people with impunity.
4. It is therefore our wish to see the ICC and Rome Statute Systems fully empowered both with resources and political backing to ensure that they are able to achieve universal adherence to the Rome Statute.
5. Mr. President, last year we converged here to celebrate the twentieth Anniversary of the Rome Statute, which for our delegation was a big milestone worth the fanfare and celebration; because it was twenty (20) years of commitment from States Parties to say '**we shall not watch as crimes of aggression and atrocities are committed against the people of the world**'.
6. As we meet here a year later, we are happy to note that significant progress has been achieved in delivering part of the programme of work of the ICC.

7. We are pleased as a delegation to observe that the President of the ICC has prioritized the conduct and support of fair and expeditious judicial proceedings, as well as the Implementation of Reparations Awards in his work programme. As we all know, justice delayed is justice denied.
8. The Report on the Activities of the International Criminal Court (2018-2019) demonstrates that a lot of work is being done to reach out to the victims of serious crimes, to ensure that they participate and are given the necessary support by the Court.
9. Furthermore, the Court has issued important judgments on atrocious crimes relating to war, aggression and acts against humanity. These judgments give hope to the victims that their suffering shall not go unnoticed and that justice will be served on their behalf. And to those in positions of power, these judgments are a warning and a clarion call that their abuse of power shall not go without check and retribution.
10. Mr. President, I mentioned earlier that the Court needs our full support as States Parties in order for it to deliver on its mandate. This cannot happen when we have 57.7 per cent of assessed contributions for the budget of 2019 still unpaid, and when some Members are way behind in arrears.
11. We therefore wish to urge all States Parties to meet their financial obligations to the Court, and for those in arrears to take advantage of the multi-year payment plan to clear the arrears. If we fail to provide resources for the Court, we will be failing to ensure justice for the victims of serious crimes.

12. Mr. President, our wish as Botswana is to see the Court attracting more members and expanding, with those States who are still outside, joining the Rome Statute. We have seen in the last few years a number of disgruntled States Parties; with some threatening to quit the Rome Statute while others have left already.
13. An expanded membership of the Rome Statute is very important as it will bring more acceptability and more political will for States Parties to support the work of ICC. It is for this reason that Botswana fully supports the Resolution on the Review of the International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute System.
14. This Resolution is very relevant and comes at the right time, when we need to open discussions between us as States Parties and non-states parties to see how we can come up with an ICC and Rome Statute System that can be attractive to non-states parties but also addresses the issues that have caused some members' disgruntlement to the point of leaving.
15. Moreover, the Review will also help to strengthen the operations of the Court and the Rome Statute System to ensure its accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in delivering justice.
16. We therefore advocate for, and support a very inclusive review that will ensure that all the stakeholders, state and non-state, are fully consulted and involved to make input on how the ICC can be further strengthened.
17. Mr. President, let me reiterate Botswana's commitment to continue supporting the ICC in all its endeavours to accomplish its compelling mandate as a deterrent against acts of serious crimes and an advocate of political accountability.

Thank you.