



**Statement**

**by**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS MOSES,  
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs  
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**At the General Debate of the Eighteenth Session of the Assembly of States  
Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

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**The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands  
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Mr. President,

It is my distinct honour to address this Assembly of States Parties for the first time, underscoring the fact that Trinidad and Tobago accords high priority to the ICC and its mandate to help put an end to impunity for perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

Cognisant of the role played by Trinidad and Tobago in establishing the ICC through the visionary work of the late Arthur N.R. Robinson, former Prime Minister and President of Trinidad and Tobago, we remain resolute in our commitment to the Court. Within recent years, Trinidad and Tobago hosted two meetings for participants from the Caribbean Region to promote the universality of the Rome Statute and to build capacity. In conjunction with the ICC, we remain available to continue in this tradition.

Indeed, having wholeheartedly supported the establishment of the Court from the beginning, Trinidad and Tobago is pleased that after two decades, the ICC continues to discharge its mandate with impartiality and fairness.

In this regard, we commend ICC Prosecutor, Dr. Fatou Bensouda, for the excellence with which she performs her duties. Trinidad and Tobago was particularly impressed by Prosecutor Bensouda's outreach to the Committee of Ambassadors of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States in January 2019, which allowed for an open exchange of views. Activities such as these increase awareness and assist in addressing persistent misperceptions.

The commitment of the Office of the Prosecutor to addressing sexual and gender based violence and crimes against children is highly appreciated and very welcome, for these are scourges we must collectively seek to eradicate and we take note of the strategic plan of that Office for the period 2019 to 2021.

Mr. President,

Cognizant of the challenges facing the ICC in terms of opposition to its core mandate, and while respecting the sovereign right of States to take action as they deem appropriate, Trinidad and Tobago continues to advance that engagement, not disengagement, should be the prevailing approach toward the ICC.

Consistent with the principle of complementarity as enshrined in the Rome Statute, the Court's jurisdiction is only invoked when States are unable or unwilling to prosecute those persons alleged of committing grave crimes. The presumption of innocence has universal appeal and no individual or State should fear the ICC as it is a Court of last resort.

Furthermore, Trinidad and Tobago, as a small island developing State in the Caribbean, recognises that capacity building for domestic criminal justice systems is crucial to the full implementation of the principle of complementarity.

Appreciating that the success of the Court is intrinsically linked to the universality of the Rome Statute, we urge States which have not yet done so, to take steps to ratify and fully implement the Rome Statute. In fact, in the margins of this year's United Nations General Assembly, I reassured Judge Chile Edou-Osuji, President of the ICC, that Trinidad and Tobago remains steadfast in our support for the Court and in our commitment towards efforts to achieve universality.

On this note, Trinidad and Tobago calls upon States to cooperate, as necessary, with the ICC at all stages of investigations and proceedings, including cooperating in issuing arrest warrants and transfer of suspects to be tried by the Court. It is also important for States to adopt legislation at the national level.

Mr. President,

I take this opportunity to reiterate Trinidad and Tobago's previous proposed amendment to Article 5 of the Rome Statute to include the crime of international drug trafficking under the jurisdiction of the Court. Given the transnational nature of this crime, and in the absence of extradition agreements, governments are oftentimes unable to prosecute those accused of international drug trafficking, which is also linked to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, money laundering, murder and extortion, to name a few.

In closing, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the ICC to ensure it has the ability to discharge its mandate and put an end to impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

I thank you.