

INTERVENTION OF ASP PRESIDENT ELECT

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Excellencies,

Distinguished representatives

I am honoured to address you all at the closing of this exceptional 19th session, which marks the start of my mandate as President of the Assembly of State Parties of the ICC.

I thank the Latin American and Caribbean Countries, my region, and all other State Parties for their support, which has given me the opportunity to come back to the ICC system in this new capacity.

As you well know, I have devoted almost my entire professional life to the establishment and consolidation of the ICC, including, most recently as Judge and President of the Court.

While the system, for that reason, feels to me in many ways as well- known territory, there is no such a thing as a “ comfort zone” at the Court’s system. Both the Court and this Assembly need to be always alert and ready to anticipate and respond to the new challenges that may arise in the evolving environment in which we all need to operate.

2020 has given ample proof of unprecedented challenges that may confront the ICC system. The Court and this Assembly were subject to an unprecedented global health crisis compounded with an also unprecedented hostile political climate. Indeed our shared values and commitments under the Rome Statute were tested as never before and we came to realize both the vulnerabilities and the strengths of the institution that we created two decades ago.

Mr. President

It is clear that we cannot take the Court for granted. We need to be always ready to ensure firm and proactive support. At the same time, we cannot but recognize with appreciation how the Court’s system has managed to continue with its important work against all odds.

During this extraordinary crisis, the Court was extremely resilient and able to give the required innovative responses in order to continue its important work. This Assembly also continue to fulfil its tasks, including, most notably by establishing an extremely important Independent Expert review process, which resulted in concrete recommendations to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the ICC and the Rome Statute system as a whole.

I wish to thank President Kwon and congratulate him for the work he has accomplished during his mandate. I wish to congratulate also his two Vice Presidents, Ambassadors Horslund and Mlynar and I take this opportunity to thank them for their support to me and for their efforts to facilitate a smooth transition.

It is now for me and the new Vice Presidents and incoming Bureau to build upon the good work of our predecessors. I congratulate the two newly elected Vice Presidents, Ambassadors Katerina Sequensova and Robert Rae. I look forward to working with them, other members of the Bureau and all states parties. I also intend to contribute to promote an inclusive and effective dialogue with non-parties, the United Nations and other organizations and civil society and, last but not least, with the Court itself. I know I can count on the support of Mr Villacis and his team at the Secretariat in order to discharge our duties effectively.

Mr President

The consideration and follow up of the Independent Expert Review is, in my view, a top priority of this Assembly. The Report prepared by eminent experts provides a formidable tool to accelerate much needed reform of the ICC system, some of which are already underway. I am committed to promote this follow up and to provide all the necessary support to those in charge of this endeavour. We must all ensure that the great effort put into this excellent initiative continues and bears fruit.

While we promote better and more expeditious justice we must also look into ourselves, at the Assembly, to see how states can contribute to this end through its own activities, including through more political support and concrete cooperation with the investigations and prosecutions.

Last but not least, like my predecessors before me, I will seek to promote understanding of the Court in order to enhance its universality. The end of impunity for atrocity crimes is a global aspiration but the Rome Statute has not yet attained universal participation. We must continue to work for this. I am eager to do my part together with all of you.

Thank you for your attention