

SECRETARIAT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

Second Resumed Nineteenth session

International Criminal Court

Assembly of States Parties

8 February 2021

Notes for President O-Gon Kwon

(Opening plenary, ASP19R2)

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening,

Your excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

While I am not able to be there in person for the last meeting of the nineteenth session of the Assembly, I am pleased to be able to join you virtually.

It has been a great honour to serve as President for the last three years. We have faced some interesting times during that period. These included a very heavy agenda of important matters for the future of the Court and the Assembly, and – over the last year – the additional challenges of a global pandemic.

There have been successes as well. In particular, I wish to highlight the Independent Expert Review of the Court and the Rome Statute system, which provides excellent momentum for the strengthening of the ICC and the system as a whole. The Experts have presented a report that is broad in scope and that contains an in-depth analysis of many areas that will require follow-up by States Parties and the Court. I am pleased at the steps we have already been able to take,

and I leave the topic in very capable hands with the incoming President, Ms. Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi. Her notable experience and energetic dynamism will be an invaluable asset to the Review process.

I also look forward to the election of the next prosecutor of the Court at this session of the Assembly. I wish the successful candidate all the best.

Another challenge we have faced in my time as President was the unprecedented measures taken against the International Criminal Court (ICC). In this regard I applaud the relentless commitment of the States Parties and key stakeholders to upholding and defending the principles and values enshrined in the Statute, and preserving its integrity undeterred by any measures and threats against the Court and its officials, staff and their families. I call upon the new US administration to normalise the relationship with the Court in support of the global fight against impunity and I welcome the efforts made in this regard.

When first elected as President, I was ambitious with respect to the universality of the Rome Statute. I wanted to do my part to encourage growth in the number of States Parties, in particular from my region (the Asia-Pacific). In this regard, I was very pleased that we could welcome Kiribati as a State Party in 2020. There is still room for more progress on universality, and I am hopeful for the future. By enhancing the performance and the effectiveness of the Court and the Assembly, through assessing and implementing the recommendations of the Independent Expert Review, I hope that we can also take steps towards achieving the universality of the Rome Statute.

The ICC and the Rome Statute system is a unique creation crucial for the international rules-based order. However, as I have emphasized on various occasions, the system of international criminal justice is still a growing organism.

As such, we have a collective obligation to the future generation to care for its development.

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues, Ambassadors Horslund and Mlynár, without whose cooperation and advice I could not have managed my function. I am grateful that we have been able to work so closely with each other, bringing together the two working groups of the Bureau. My thanks go also to the facilitators, focal points, Bureau members, States Parties, the Principals of the Court, the staff, and civil society.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to the members of the Secretariat for their invaluable, committed and self-sacrificing assistance. It was only thanks to them that I was able to perform my mandate so far.

It has been an utmost privilege to have served in this prestigious position, which is the first diplomatic and political post that I have taken on in my career.

Once again, I wish to reiterate my sincere gratitude for the support of all stakeholders in my time as President of the Assembly. It has been an honour.
