

Statement by Mr. Hwang, Seung-Hyun

Head of Delegation of the Republic of Korea

to the Eighth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC

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Mr. President,

Before I begin, I would like to thank you for your efforts in organizing this session of the Assembly. I firmly believe that, under your able guidance, we will see many fruitful results.

I also would like to take this opportunity to offer my congratulations on the inauguration of Judge Sang-hyun Song as the President of the ICC. I am confident that the ICC will develop even further as a working judicial body under his excellent leadership. I would also like to extend my warm congratulations to the two judges elected yesterday, Ms. Kuniko Ozaki and Ms. Silvia de Gurmendi.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the two new States Parties, the Republic of Chile and the Czech Republic. We now have 110 members and we are moving ever closer to the goal of universality. However, we still need more countries to join us in order to make the Rome Statute a universal norm. In this regard, I hope the Court, as well as States Parties, will encourage non-member states to become parties by raising awareness for the need for enhanced justice in the world and sharing their experiences regarding the ICC.

As a strong supporter of the ICC, my delegation is pleased to see the substantial progress the Court has made during this year. One suspect made his appearance voluntarily; the historic first trial of the ICC is underway; and pre-trial chambers are engaged in three other cases. My delegation regards this achievement as a sign that the Court is now well-established as a judicial institution.

However, there are also some challenges: eight arrest warrants remain un-executed, and heinous crimes are still taking place. In order to make sure the ICC functions as a guardian of international justice, we, the States Parties, should do our best to cooperate with the Court and to protect its autonomous judicial function.

The most important and fundamental way to protect the Court is to respect the independence of its function and finality of legal judgments of the Court. In order to secure such independence and finality, we should guarantee the status and independence of judges as provided in the Rome Statute. Judges should be independent from politics, external pressure, and from the States Parties as well.

Mr. President,

Let me briefly refer to the agenda items before us. First, my delegation would like to express our sincere gratitude to the government of Uganda for hosting the review conference next year. During the review conference, we will discuss possible amendments to the Rome Statute, most prominently regarding the crime of aggression. I hope the conference will serve as an important opportunity to further substantiate the jurisdiction of the ICC and also to reflect on the current status of the Court by a sort of stock-taking exercise. In this regard, the Korean delegation wishes to maximize the efficiency of the review conference by streamlining the agenda items in advance in order to achieve concrete results.

Second, the budget is always an important factor in the Court's operation. My delegation is confident that we can balance financial efficiency with the smooth operation of the Court by analyzing and discussing the budget for 2010.

Regarding an independent oversight mechanism, my delegation supports the proposal by the Bureau. Still, the mechanism should be operated in a cost-effective way. In addition, when it comes to the scope of the mechanism, we should ensure that the status of judges should be guaranteed in any case, lest the independence in the performance of their functions be impaired.

Mr. President,

As a member state and the ninth largest financial contributor to the ICC, the Republic of Korea is enthusiastically engaged in the activities of the Court. This year, my government has focused on outreach program, particularly in the Asian region, which is the most underrepresented region in the ICC. In February, we held a useful international symposium on the ICC to facilitate the better understanding of the Court in Asia. In addition, my government made a contribution of 15 thousand dollars to the Court for its outreach activities in Asia. The Korean government will also contribute to Internship Programs before the end of this year. In the future, the Republic of Korea will continue to fulfil its part as a sincere supporter of the ICC.

Mr. President,

I sincerely hope that the ICC will continue to work diligently toward the eradication of impunity and thus to enhance its reputation as the only permanent international criminal court in the world. In closing, Mr. President, the Republic of Korea once again reaffirms its solid commitment to support the ICC in achieving its noble goals.

Thank you.

