



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

By

Mr. Eden Charles

Head of Delegation of the Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago
in the General Debate

Eighth Session of the Assembly of State Parties
to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The Hague, Kingdom of The Netherlands,

18-26 November, 2009

**Statement by Mr. Eden Charles,
Head of Delegation of the Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago
Eighth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the
International Criminal Court,
The Hague, Kingdom of The Netherlands, 18-27 November, 2009**

Mr. President:

Trinidad and Tobago has the honour to participate in another session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). For us, participation in the Assembly is not only consistent with our obligations under the Rome Statute, but is also a demonstration of our deep commitment to upholding the rule of law at the international level. The founders of the ICC must be proud of its achievements since the Rome Conference of 1998 which paved the way for the establishment of the ICC. The Review Conference which is scheduled for Kampala, Uganda, next year, will provide another opportunity for States Parties to redouble their efforts to ensure that the court has a secure future.

Mr. President:

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to congratulate President Sang-Hyun Song on his election as President of the Court. We also offer our best wishes to the nationals from Argentina and Japan on their election yesterday as the newest members of the illustrious bench of judges which constitute the judicial arm of the ICC. In the same vein, we also welcome the Members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims who were also elected during yesterday's elections.

Trinidad and Tobago is convinced that the court is striving to make a difference in the lives of the thousands of victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes who are seeking justice against those individuals who have committed violations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The commencement of the court's first trial: *The Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo* is an important landmark in the development of international criminal law as it provides an opportunity for victims to participate in the proceedings against the accused who is on trial for the alleged conscription and use of children as active combatants in armed conflict. The Dyilo case and the Germain Katanga case, are not only important in the fight against impunity, but are also useful mechanisms for restoring the human dignity of the survivors of these grave atrocities. Trinidad and Tobago will remain seized of the issues involved in these cases and is convinced that, despite the concerns raised by some detractors, the court will continue to observe all the tenets associated with the conduct of a trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.

Whilst we recognize the importance of the current matters before the court, Trinidad and Tobago is very concerned about the failure in some quarters to cooperate with the court in the execution of arrest warrants aimed at bringing to justice those who have committed and who continue to commit grave crimes. We are of the view that the continued failure by those concerned to cooperate with the court in the execution of the outstanding arrest warrants is not only in breach of their international legal obligations, but is also an affront to all victims including those who have perished. At this instant we

wish to remind all entities of their legal obligations to arrest and surrender to the Court all those for whom warrants of arrest have been issued.

Mr. President:

This Assembly will deliberate on matters which are germane to the Review Conference. In Kampala we will not only assess the work of the court since its creation, but we will also examine the state of international criminal justice and the role of the ICC in its continued development. We look forward to these deliberations as they can only serve to enhance the role of the court as an important global institution.

Trinidad and Tobago, however, recognizes that the Review Conference provides an opportunity for States Parties to propose amendments to the Rome Statute in keeping with the provisions of articles 121 and 123 of the instrument. It is our hope that this meeting would carefully examine all of the proposals for amendments which have been duly submitted by States Parties. In this regard, we draw the Assembly's attention to the proposal submitted by Trinidad and Tobago and Belize for the inclusion of international drug trafficking as a crime in the Rome Statute. It will be recalled that this proposal did receive some measure of support at the Rome Conference and this is reflected in Resolution E of the Final Act of that conference. We submit that the menace of international drug trafficking is trans-boundary in character and is of increasingly grave concern to many States because of its effects on the maintenance of law and order. This scourge is also linked to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, organized crime, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism. It has also placed an inordinate

burden on the law enforcement and judicial institutions of many States and therefore greater international cooperation is necessary in order to prosecute those who are largely responsible for this serious problem.

We look forward to working with other delegations in the Working Group on the Review Conference in an effort to arriving at consensus on this subject and other matters to be included on the agenda of the conference.

Mr. President:

Trinidad and Tobago as one of the founding States of the ICC reiterates its unequivocal support for this permanent criminal tribunal and wishes to reiterate previous calls for all Observer States to become State Parties to the Rome Statute thereby contributing to its universality and the fight against impunity.