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STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Ambassador Rodney Charles
Permanent Representative - designate of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations**

in the

**General Debate of the
Ninth Session of the Assembly of States Parties
To the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**



**United Nations Headquarters
December 7, 2010**

Mr. President

The Ninth Session of the Assembly of States Parties (“the ASP”) to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is being convened only a few months after the hosting of the Review Conference of the Rome Statute in Kampala, Uganda.

Trinidad and Tobago was among those States Parties and other entities which reaffirmed our commitment to the Rome Statute as an important mechanism in the fight against impunity, as well as the promotion and maintenance of international peace and justice.

The Review Conference (“the Conference”) will always be remembered as the occasion when representatives of States, in a spirit of compromise, adopted amendments to provide for a definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the court will exercise its jurisdiction over that crime. We commend the Government and people of Uganda for setting a high standard through the successful hosting of this event.

The international community now has to wait on the entry into force of these amendments, and, in this regard, we welcome the recent notifications issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations notifying States Parties of these amendments, as well as those under Article 8 of the Statute. The adoption of the amendments has strengthened the Statute and has added to the corpus of crimes under international humanitarian law. Trinidad and Tobago will seek to put in place the required legislative and other measures that are necessary to ratify the said amendments. It is our hope that by 2017 there would be the deposit of the required number of instruments of ratification by States Parties to ensure the entry into force of the amendments by the prescribed time frame.

We also found to be very useful the rich discussions during the Conference which assessed the state of international criminal justice. The exchanges helped to clarify and fortify issues emanating from the Statute including cooperation, witness protection, enforcement of sentences, victims’ rights and participation and the execution of outstanding arrest warrants.

The successful implementation by States Parties of these provisions which flow from the Statute is essential in assisting the Court to effectively discharge its mandate to bring to justice the principal offenders who commit genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and in the foreseeable future, the crime of aggression.

At Kampala States also pledged to undertake certain activities to aid in the implementation of the Statute at the national level, as well as to promote its universality. Trinidad and Tobago was among those States which made pledges by undertaking to do the necessary political and diplomatic work to achieve universality of the Statute and its full implementation in the Caribbean region. To this end, Trinidad and Tobago will be hosting, together with the Permanent Mission of Slovakia, a side event on universality of the Rome

Statute for Caribbean States today at the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago. Moreover, it is our intention to utilize our position as current Chair of the Commonwealth to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to advance the universality and full implementation of the Statute among Member States of this group. In this regard, we are convinced that the newest States Parties to the Statute, including our own sister CARICOM Member State, Saint Lucia demonstrate the continued acceptance of this instrument by countries from different regions.

Mr. President

This ASP will have to take decisions on a number of issues related to activities of the Court. Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the decision during the Eighth ASP to establish the Independent Oversight Mechanism. However, in seeking to confer powers on this body for inspection, evaluation and investigation of the Court in order to enhance its efficiency and economy, States Parties should ensure that any measure adopted is not inconsistent with the provisions of the Statute.

At the Eighth Session of the Assembly of States Parties, Trinidad and Tobago with the support of Belize reiterated our call for consideration to be given to amend the Statute to provide for the crime of international drug trafficking. This proposal is not a new one as it was discussed at the 1998 Rome Diplomatic Conference on the ICC and this is reflected in resolution E of the Final Act of that conference. We therefore welcomed the decision of the

ASP to establish a Working Group to examine other amendments which were not considered at the Review Conference. It is our view that notwithstanding the provisions of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, or the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, drug barons continue to operate with impunity within the international community. In fact, trans-boundary criminal activities by international drug barons in the form of murder, extortion and money laundering constitute serious crimes of concern to the international community. No member State of the international community is immune from the deleterious socio-economic effects of international drug trafficking. The security of the State and the well-being of individuals are at stake. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to working with the Assembly of States Parties on this issue, whilst recognizing the need for there to be consensus on any proposal to include a new crime within the Statute.

Mr. President

Trinidad and Tobago will continue to be a staunch supporter and defender of the Statute. For us, there is no other viable alternative to bring to justice those accused of perpetrating the gravest crimes of concern to the international community.

I thank you.