

Ceremony for the Solemn Undertaking

**International Criminal Court
12 December 2013**

Statement by the President of the Assembly of States Parties Ambassador Tiina Intelmann

President of the Court,
Honourable Judges,
Mr. Deputy Prosecutor,
Mr. Registrar,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to represent the Assembly at this solemn ceremony.

States Parties established the Court through the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998. The Statute reflects our determination to put an end to impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

We stand now in the second decade of the life of the Court. During its first eleven years, the Court has made significant strides: it has consolidated its institutions; it is carrying out investigations, conducting trials, fully respecting the rights of the accused in accordance with the Statute and international standards, as well as ensuring the right of victims to participate in the proceedings; it has rendered verdicts; and the appeals judgment of its first conviction is expected.

There is also the possibility of the first order for reparations in this first case. The regime of victims' participation in the proceedings of the Court provided by the Rome Statute is being applied, leading to numerous applications by victims, which are by their numbers an indicator of the success of the Court.

We all know that the Court continues to face challenges, especially in the areas of cooperation and non-cooperation. And the Court's challenges are our challenges. While the Court continues to gain acceptance, which is attested to by the fact that there are 122 States Parties to the Rome Statute, and significant progress has been made towards the goal of universality, the lack of strong and effective political and operational support in some quarters continues to pose challenges.

This state of affairs is all the more regrettable since, in this second decade of the 21st century, the most atrocious crimes continue to be committed in many parts of the world.

The Court's institutional reputation and its place in the international system are contingent upon States' ability to support it to deliver justice with all the guarantees of a fair trial, in accordance with the Rome Statute. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the Court discharges its important role, and to ensure that the Rome Statute system as whole functions to hold perpetrators accountable and to deliver justice to the victims.

While the Court is based in The Hague, its impact is felt around the world.

Mr. President,

On 23 November 2013, the Assembly proceeded to elect Mr. Geoffrey Andrew Henderson as judge of the International Criminal Court in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute and of resolution ICC-ASP/3/Res.6, to fill a judicial vacancy.

Mr. Henderson, you have been elected by the States Parties because you meet the highest standards in the area of international criminal justice and you possess the qualifications required in your State for appointment to the highest judicial office. You are called upon to apply the law and the spirit of the Rome Statute, to perform with full independence, and thus fulfil the role entrusted to you by States Parties, for the benefit of the international community as a whole.

On behalf of the Assembly of States Parties, I welcome you to the bench of the Court and I know that you will earnestly assume your role and meet the challenges that may arise.

I thank you, Mr. President.

* * *