

**Cour  
Pénale  
Internationale**

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**International  
Criminal  
Court**

**ADDRESS BY PRINCE ZEID RAAD ZEID AL HUSSEIN  
PRESIDENT OF THE ASP**

**THIRD SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES  
TO THE ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

The Hague, 6 September 2004

Distinguished delegates,

As we survey the last twelve months, we, the International Criminal Court's principal community of supporters – its States Parties – must feel some satisfaction. Confronted by what are, in many instances, immense pressures to enter into other arrangements or resolutions, the cumulative effect of which would likely weaken the Court, perhaps even cripple it altogether, we, the States Parties, have protected this institution, our institution, in a manner that I believe has been both spirited and noble -- for in defence of the Court, many of us, including some of the poorest among us, have seen fit to forfeit great material advantage.

We have all done this, I believe, not because we see in it narrower interests or profit, but because we view the International Criminal Court as the only new institution which offers us hope for a twenty-first century more honourable than preceding centuries. And ultimately, if we reason well, we would probably conclude we have little choice in the matter. Unless we can demonstrate that we are indeed able to lift ourselves, our conduct, into those previously unexplored areas of human experience: to conceive a future where the perpetrators of these most terrible offenses can no longer skirt justice and where their victims will see justice done; unless we do this, we will be leaving our collective fate once again to the cold calculus of expediency, of politics and power and -- after the disasters of the twentieth century – could we, humanity, possibly reach into another century without the company of atrocities? Perhaps it is this logic that has compelled us to support the Court in the resolute manner that we do.

The Court and the Trust Fund for the benefit of Victims also require of us that we match our political commitment to the Court, which is beyond reproach, with the financial resources necessary for their operation. The Court is not, and cannot be considered – no matter what its eventual size or the extent of its budget – as too expensive. Certainly not at a time when we, the international community, are willing to spend almost a trillion US dollars a year on weapons. What would be too expensive, are the consequences of having no Court at all.

I therefore appeal to all States Parties that we view the Court, as it should be viewed – an institution of tremendous significance -- and not see it as just another international institution; that we make our assessed contributions available to the Court in full and on time, and, for those in arrears, that they settle their accounts as soon as possible with the Court. Unfortunately, I must also remind States Parties, that by the next regular session of the Assembly, those States who will not have paid anything over the previous two financial periods, will run the risk of losing their vote both in the Assembly and in the Bureau as of 1 January 2005.

I also appeal -- and here I am honoured to recognize the presence of Madame Simone Veil, who represents today, at this meeting, a most distinguished Board of Directors for the Trust Fund for the benefit of victims – that States Parties: the very States Parties who decided on making reparations possible for victims; the States Parties who created a voluntary trust fund for this purpose and who elected its first distinguished board, that States Parties, all of us, ensure the Trust Fund finds strong support – not least because of the prominence of its board members, but also because of the likelihood that cases could shortly come before the Court .

Finally, as this is the last full regular session that I, as President, will have the honour of chairing, I very much look forward to your cooperation, and ask also for your patience should there be any teething problems over the next few days. Our new Secretariat, led by our most able Secretary Medard Rwelamira, has performed magnificently in organizing this conference, however, should any issue crop up that merits our attention, I request from delegations that they inform us of it as soon as possible so we can address your concerns speedily.