



United Kingdom Mission
to the United Nations
New York

One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
(885 Second Avenue)
New York, NY 10017

Mailing Address:
PO Box 5238
New York, NY 10150-5238

Telephone: (212) 745-9200
Fax: (212) 745-9316

E-mail: uk@un.int

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**Statement by the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

General Debate, International Criminal Court
Assembly of States Parties
3 December 2007

Mr President

I would like to make a short statement on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The United Kingdom also fully subscribes to the statement made by the distinguished representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Firstly, our thanks to you, Mr President, for the distinction with which you have fulfilled your role and the personal contribution you have made to the consolidation of the International Criminal Court as a central pillar of international justice.

Our thanks also go to President Kirsch, his fellow Judges, the elected officials of the Court and all ICC staff for their hard work during 2007. We are conscious that for many staff of the Court, that work takes place in challenging and at times dangerous conditions on the ground.

The United Kingdom congratulates the newly elected Judges and members of the Committee on Budget and Finance, and wishes them every success in their endeavours.

I welcome the Secretary-General's participation in this year's Assembly. His strong commitment to helping bring an end to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes will set an essential lead in the international community's efforts to combat impunity for the perpetrators of these unpardonable crimes.

The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to driving forward those efforts, and to supporting the ICC through practical action as well as vocal support.

The Court has made further important steps forward this year. The United Kingdom would particularly like to welcome Japan's accession to the Rome Statute in July. Having Japan as a State Party is important in itself, but is also welcome as a major step in enhancing Asian representation in the Court.

I welcome the arrest and transfer of Germain Katanga, the second individual to be passed into the custody of the Court, as a further milestone in the fight against impunity. It is for the Court now to judge whether he is guilty of the crimes of which he is accused.

Mr President, despite the progress made, the Court faces a number of difficult challenges. Co-operation will rightly be a prominent theme during this year's Assembly.

This Court cannot operate without the support in practice of the States that brought it into being. I urge all States Parties to consider what additional steps they can take to help the Court implement the mandate we have set for it, for example by providing assistance in the fields of witness protection, information sharing and sentence enforcement.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, on 8th November, the United Kingdom signed a sentence enforcement agreement with the Court, becoming the first State to have entered into agreements on both the enforcement of sentences and relocation of witnesses. These are just two examples of areas in which the UK is assisting the Court's important work.

Mr President, in the Security Council on 5th December we will receive the Prosecutor's latest report pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1593 and his investigation into the situation in Darfur.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned that the two individuals for whom the Court has issued arrest warrants remain at large, and indeed that one remains a Minister in the Government of Sudan. I urge the Government of Sudan to comply with its obligations under Resolution 1593 and to co-operate with the Court, specifically to ensure the immediate arrest and surrender of these individuals to the Court. There can be no impunity for the terrible crimes committed in Darfur.

Justice is an essential part of delivering a sustainable peace, be it in Darfur, northern Uganda or elsewhere. In relation to the conflict in northern Uganda, the United Kingdom remains committed to a solution which is compatible with the Rome Statute, national laws and the wishes of those affected by the conflict.

Mr President, the United Kingdom looks forward to engaging with ICC States Parties, non-governmental organisations and others on the wider agenda before us at this year's Assembly.

Ensuring the most efficient use of resources should again be a priority. In that regard, the UK will be strongly supportive of the adoption of the recommendations of the Committee on Budget and Finance, which continues to perform an essential role on behalf of States Parties.

We welcome the good progress made this year on permanent premises for the Court. We hope that the Assembly can agree to proceed to the next stage of this important process.

On the crime of aggression, we look forward to participating in the continuing efforts to identify an outcome which can command the widest possible acceptance.

The United Kingdom is pleased to contribute to facilitating the participation of the least developed countries at this Assembly through a contribution this year of £20,000 to the Trust Fund established for that purpose. We will also again be contributing to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Mr President, in closing I would like to emphasise the United Kingdom's continuing commitment to support the International Criminal Court, and the other international criminal tribunals, in the fight against impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Thank you.