

**22<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME  
STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**SPOKEN REMARKS BY BELGIUM AT THE PLENARY SESSION ON  
COOPERATION**

**SEGMENT 1 – 25 YEARS OF THE ROME STATUTE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND  
PERSPECTIVES**

**(NEW YORK, FRIDAY 08 DECEMBER 2023)**

Co-facilitators,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Firstly, I would like to thank Madam President of the Assembly and the senior representatives of the Court for their highly informative statements.

As has been emphasised, the States Parties have a shared responsibility for cooperation and it is essential for the Court to achieve the objectives assigned to it.

In a number of cases, cooperation by States Parties is mandatory under the Rome Statute system.

Other forms of cooperation, which could be described as “voluntary cooperation”, are not formally prescribed but are nonetheless essential to enable the Court to fulfil its mandate.

This is why Belgium has signed several cooperation agreements in these areas. Examples include:

- An agreement on the relocation of protected victims or witnesses,
- An agreement on the enforcement of sentences,
- An agreement on interim release,
- Plus the new framework agreement on the release of persons, signed on 7 July of this year by Belgium and the Registry, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute.

I would just like to say a few words about this agreement.

We know that the Court has no territory to host suspects or detained persons once the Court orders their interim release, or once they have been acquitted following a final judgment, or after they have served their sentence.

Yet without cooperation from the States, these persons would need to remain under the supervision of the Court, which would be wrong.

States Parties must therefore share the load equally.

It is important to note that the agreement between Belgium and the Court on the release of persons does not involve a fresh obligation for cooperation. Requests made by the Court under this framework will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

However, this framework is essential because it enables the Court to identify a State which is available for this aspect of the proceedings and it encourages requests to be processed efficiently by addressing the relevant legal and practical aspects in advance.

Drawing on its experience, Belgium would once again like to urge the States Parties to take all the necessary steps to cooperate as extensively as possible with the Court, in particular by signing cooperation agreements.

Co-facilitators,

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity offered to me by this speech to confirm that Belgium is extremely honoured to have signed its tenth enhanced cooperation agreement with the Court on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December for the storage of weapons and the use of training infrastructure by the Court's security personnel in high-risk environments.

Thank you for your attention.