

Plenary session on cooperation at the 22nd session of the Assembly of States Parties

Segment I: High-level interventions on 25 years of the Rome Statute (assessment and perspectives)

Remarks by Emma Hutchinson, Assistant Legal Adviser, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

Thank you, Ambassador, for giving me the floor.

On behalf of the UK, I would like to thank the co-facilitators for cooperation, Ambassador François Alabrune of France and Ambassador Momar Guèye of Senegal for their excellent work on this important topic this year.

International cooperation is absolutely essential to ensure the ICC can carry out its mandate in full.

When the Rome Statute was adopted 25 years ago, it was well understood that its ability to operate would be dependent on cooperation from States Parties. With no police force of its own and no prison, the Court relies on the national law enforcement authorities of States Parties to arrest individuals, provide protection to witnesses and enforce sentences. These are fundamental functions which allow the Court to conduct its proceedings effectively.

Without this cooperation, there will be no trials and no effective sentences. The duty falls on all State Parties but unfortunately the burden is falling on too few states. There are 124 States Parties. But this number has not been mirrored in the ratification of agreements on cooperation.

The calls of States Parties on the Court to do more and do it faster is not mirrored by efforts to take the practical steps to help the Court. The reality is that too few States Parties have agreements to provide the cooperation the Court needs.

The Court is currently dealing with a high number of situations, vulnerable witnesses and arrest warrants and the need for greater cooperation is becoming urgent. There will be further need for States to help with sentence enforcement if, as we all hope, the Court is successful in securing more convictions.

The UK is party to all of the main cooperation agreements and has established procedures to respond to requests for assistance, closely working with the cooperation staff at the Court. We are happy to share our experience of doing so.

Today, the Court operates in an increasingly hostile environment – as evidenced by the recent cyber-attack and Russian coercive measures against Court officials. Now more than

ever, in the face of these attacks, strong political and diplomatic support for the Court by States Parties is a crucial form of cooperation. But while words of support are important, practical measures to back up these statements are needed even more.

The UK stands ready as it always has, to share that responsibility.

I thank you.