

**Statement by**

**Ms. Tiffany Bethel  
First Secretary**

**to the General Debate of the Twenty-third (23rd) Session of the Assembly of States Parties  
to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

**The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands  
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Madam President, distinguished delegates, on behalf of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago it is my distinct honour to address this General Debate of the 23rd Session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Madam President,

From the onset, Trinidad and Tobago has played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Court, recognizing the imperative of putting an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. By its nature and architecture, the Court has been put in place to benefit all and remains a symbol of hope to victims who are seeking justice. The ICC is a key institution in the preservation of the international rules-based system and Trinidad and Tobago remains unwavering in its support of the Court in the execution of its mandate. We remain a strong advocate for the Court in the Caribbean.

In these very challenging times, Trinidad and Tobago calls on this Assembly to put mechanisms in place to deepen and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Court so that it could effectively withstand the headwinds to come. Justice must not only be done but seem to be done and in order for this to happen the Court's processes and mechanisms must be strengthened.

Moreover, the Court's independence and impartiality must be preserved and protected at all costs. Trinidad and Tobago calls on this august body to ensure that at the end of the proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session, our Resolution reaffirms these core principles.

Distinguished delegations, the Court represents the last hope and voice for the many victims of the crimes under the auspices of the Court. The rights of the victims must remain paramount in our deliberations for they have no other recourse. The impartial delivery of justice should be the very reason for our convocation this week.

This Assembly must stand firm in empowering the Court and its hard-working officials to withstand any attempts of intimidation. Coercive measures, including sanctions, have no place and should gain no foothold against staff and any efforts in this regard are truly regrettable and unacceptable. States Parties have a key role to play in resisting these pressures as Members of this Court and on behalf of the very institution and the ideals it represents.

Madam President,

No individual or State should fear this Court of last resort, as the presumption of innocence has universal appeal, with an individual presumed innocent until proven guilty. There are many safeguards in the Court that help to reassert this fundamental principle.

Trinidad and Tobago takes the opportunity to call upon States Parties to cooperate with the Court at all stages of investigations and proceedings, including in complying with the dictates of the Court.

Madam President,

Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the important work undertaken by the Review Mechanism to enhance the Court's efficiency and which has contributed to the strengthening of the Rome Statute system. We commend the Review Mechanism for its tireless and important work and look forward to imminent discussions on the future of the review process.

In closing, Madam President, Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the 26 years of existence of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as an international criminal justice model enjoying the support of two-thirds of the United Nations. This support is worth remembering in the important work to be continued in international criminal jurisprudence and in the reinforcement of institutional resilience in the Court's mandate.

I thank you.