

NATIONAL STATEMENT OF THE ORIENTAL REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY DURING THE 24th ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

By Ambassador Dr. Álvaro González Otero

Madam President of the Assembly, Ambassador Päivi Kaukoranta, Court authorities, esteemed colleagues, distinguished delegates, representatives of civil society:

This year, the International Criminal Court (ICC) celebrated the twenty-third anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute and the twenty-seventh since its adoption.

In today's global context, we are constantly reminded of the need to uphold the pillars of international law, where the ICC sets its standard. The Rome Statute remains a fundamental instrument in our collective pursuit of justice and accountability.

Today, in line with our unwavering support, Uruguay wishes to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to peace, respect for the principles of international law, and especially encourages the ICC in its fight against impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious international crimes and in its efforts to prevent such heinous acts.

It is of utmost importance that all States Parties speak out explicitly in the face of the complex challenges confronting the international community today.

Uruguay reiterates its full support for the work of the ICC. At a time when the Court faces growing pressures, it is more urgent than ever to defend its mandate: to investigate and prosecute those responsible for heinous crimes when national systems fail to do so, in application of the principle of complementarity.

By strengthening the Court, we not only protect victims of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity, but we also reaffirm the principle that no one is above the law, sending a clear message that international law remains in force, especially in the current juncture facing multilateralism.

My delegation advocates for full cooperation by States, protection of its judges and prosecutors, and the commitment of the entire international community so that the highest International Criminal Tribunal can fulfill its mandate free from political interference or threats.

In Uruguay's case, we have the pioneering Law on Cooperation with the ICC (Law 18.026), which is comprehensive, as it incorporates international legal obligations and establishes mechanisms of cooperation between our authorities and the organs of the Court.

Furthermore, it creates a participatory national process for the nomination of candidates for judge or prosecutor. This strengthens the ICC's position globally and legitimizes its role nationally, progressively integrating multilateral institutions.

Additionally, our country has reaffirmed its strong commitment to the Court through the donation of a significant sculptural work by Uruguayan artist Roberto Vivo, entitled 'Totem of the Human Tribe.' We celebrate that this piece has been enthusiastically received by the institution, and we trust that we will be able to officially inaugurate it in the near future as a symbol of the universal values we share.

This artistic piece embodies the genesis of the fundamental values that inspire the mandate of the International Criminal Court, such as peace, justice, and the protection of human rights, and seeks to contribute symbolically to the strengthening of its universal mission.

The centrality of victims is a key element of the Rome Statute, and their participation in the various proceedings, as well as their right to reparations, must be ensured.

Uruguay appreciates the capacity and versatility of the ICC and its officials to adapt to the changing world around us. We support the need and urgency for all States Parties to actively participate in defending the positive role of the Court, especially in the face of possible future challenges that the coming year may bring.

Our country, like many States Parties, trusts that effective solutions will be found to the challenges currently affecting the internal and external functioning of the Institution. At the same time, we urge the Office of the Prosecutor to redouble efforts to achieve substantive progress in all complaints, so that the Court can put into practice its objective of being a beacon of justice and equality, acting as a firm warning light to those planning to commit crimes under the Rome Statute. In this regard, we emphasize that one of the Court's greatest strengths lies in its ability to represent all regions, offering diversity that enriches its work. In particular, from the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), we reaffirm the need for more Special Advisers, convinced that such representativeness will significantly strengthen the Office of the Prosecutor.

Finally, we reiterate our firm commitment to the work of the Court, which, after twenty-three years of existence, has consolidated itself as a valuable and indispensable institution for those who believe in a better world governed by rules of respect for International Law and the high values pursued by the Rome Statute.

Thank you very much.