

**Cour
Pénale
Internationale**



**International
Criminal
Court**

**Judge Sang-Hyun Song
President of the International Criminal Court**

*Remarks at Ceremony on the Occasion of the Signing of an
Exchange of Letters between the International Criminal Court and the General
Secretariat of the Organization of American States for the Establishment of a
Framework Cooperation Arrangement*

*Washington D.C., United States
18 April 2011*

Your Excellency Secretary-General Insulza,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an immense pleasure for me to be here today for the purpose of concluding a framework cooperation arrangement between the International Criminal Court and the Organization of American States.

Our two organisations, the ICC and the OAS, share values of fundamental importance to humankind. The first sentence of the first Article of the OAS Charter says that American States have developed this organisation “to achieve an order of peace and justice”. These very same goals are the *raison d’être* of the International Criminal Court.

In 1989, the head of government of an OAS member state – Prime Minister Robinson of Trinidad and Tobago – made a proposal at the General Assembly of the United Nations to establish a permanent international court to deal with the transnational drug trade.

That proposal set in motion a process that would lead to the creation of the ICC, world’s first permanent international court mandated to prosecute the most serious crimes of international concern – genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court came into force on 1 July 2002 and today, nine years later, the ICC is a fully functioning judicial institution with six situations under investigation or prosecution, three trials ongoing and several other cases in different phases of the proceedings.

The ICC is providing justice, deterring future crimes, and generally strengthening the global protection of the most fundamental human rights. Already 114 States have joined the Rome Statute and several others have announced their intention to do so in the near future.

In a nutshell, we can now say that the ICC has earned its place among permanent international institutions in charge of questions of peace and justice.

We would not have been able to come this far without the relentless efforts of civil society, States and intergovernmental organisations. Among these, the Organisation of American States has been one of the most consistent and vocal proponents of the ICC, for which we are very grateful.

Through its resolutions on the ICC, the OAS General Assembly has consistently extended high-level political support to the Rome Statute system and urged the OAS member States to further strengthen their cooperation with the Court. These resolutions have also called on States not party to the Rome Statute – of which there are nine among OAS members – to consider joining the ICC.

I must add that the annual OAS working meetings convened by the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs have provided an excellent venue for substantive discussions on the development of the ICC and the participation of States in the Rome Statute system.

Today, I am truly delighted to sign a document that will enable us to further strengthen and develop the working relationship between the International Criminal Court and the Organization of American States. This will provide a basis for exploring new forms of collaboration in pursuit of our shared objectives.

The benefits of such cooperation are very real – as you are aware, Rome Statute crimes still plague our world and innocent children, women and men continue to fall victim to unimaginable atrocities.

The emerging system of international criminal justice can only become fully effective with the strong support of States and the international community as a whole. Regional organisations such as the OAS play a vital role in paving the way toward that goal.

Mr. Secretary-General, I thank you and the Organization of American States for your willingness to enter into the Framework Cooperation Arrangement that we are concluding today, and I look forward to developing our good relations on the basis of this important agreement.