

**Welcoming Ceremony for Bangladesh as the 111<sup>th</sup> State Party to the  
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court  
12 November 2010**

**Remarks of President Song to H.E. Muhammad Ali Sorcar,  
Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the  
Netherlands**

Excellency,

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to open this welcoming ceremony to celebrate the People's Republic of Bangladesh becoming the 111<sup>th</sup> State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. I wish to extend a very warm welcome to Bangladesh and to you personally, Ambassador Sorcar, on behalf of the entire Court.

I would also like to extend my congratulations on your appointment as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Netherlands.

With us today are also several of my fellow judges, Judge Erkki Kourula, Judge Daniel Nsereko, Judge Christine Van den Wyngaert, and Judge Tarfusser, as well as Ms. Shamila Batohi on behalf of the Office of the Prosecutor and the Deputy Registrar, Mr. Didier Preira. The Assembly of States Parties is represented by the Vice-President of the Assembly, His Excellency Ambassador Jorge Lomonaco.

Excellency,

By ratifying the Rome Statute, Bangladesh has joined the growing number of the world's nations that have combined forces to end impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to humanity. Each State that joins the ICC sends out a strong signal of commitment to peace, justice and the rule of law.

The ratification by Bangladesh was the result of years of work on the part of the government and civil society, and I wish to express my appreciation for everyone who participated in that process.

I had the pleasure of visiting Bangladesh in December of last year. I met with government officials as well as civil society organizations. As the ICC's first Asian president, I feel a particular responsibility to increase knowledge of the International Criminal Court in Asia which is the least represented of all regions in the ICC. I was delighted when I learned that soon after my trip there, in March 2010, Bangladesh took the historic decision to ratify the Rome Statute becoming the first South Asian State Party.

I hope this will encourage other states in the region to follow your lead. Through Bangladesh's deep historical experience and struggle for independence, Bangladesh has emerged as a strong supporter of democracy, human rights, and international justice not only within the South Asian region but throughout the world.

Within a short period of time, Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to justice and accountability in relation to the future as well as the past. The ICC's jurisdiction in relation to Bangladesh is forward-looking; it runs as of 1 July 2010 when the country formally became a State Party. Earlier this year, Bangladesh also took a significant measure to secure justice for past atrocities by setting up a national tribunal to try those accused of committing war crimes during the country's war of independence in 1971.

Bangladesh showed its strong support for the ICC by sending a delegation to the Review Conference in Kampala in advance of officially becoming a State Party. The Review Conference confirmed the commitment of the international community to the Court and we

now look forward to strengthening the work the ICC and the wider system around it.

On that note, it was very encouraging to notice that the statement by your Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Shafique Ahmed, in Kampala emphasized the need to combat impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes both at the national and international level.

I fully agree with that assessment. The fact that the world now has a fully functioning international criminal court is a remarkable achievement, but the ICC is not a substitute for national jurisdictions. It is the national justice systems that will continue to be the front line in the struggle against impunity.

Excellency,

Once again I congratulate the nation of Bangladesh on its decision to join the Rome Statute and I warmly welcome your country to the International Criminal Court.

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***[Go back to your seat while Ambassador Lomonaco speaks]***

*[Join Ambassador Lomonaco in presenting the Rome Statute to Ambassador Sorcar]*

***PRESENTING THE ROME STATUTE***

In the presence of the Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties, I am pleased to present to you, Ambassador Muhammad Ali Sorcar, this special limited edition of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

It symbolizes our joint commitment to the rule of law and the commitment of all States Parties to this Statute to honour it.