

## Statement by Samoa's Representative to the 12th Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Madame President, Distinguished delegates,

Samoa is proud to take its place amongst fellow States Parties to the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court; an Institution it fully supports and is committed to, given the Court's crucial role in the maintenance of international peace, security and the general rule of law.

We are pleased with the gradual increase to 122 States Parties to the Rome Statute, and welcomes the 11 ratifications of the Kampala Amendments for the crime of aggression and 14 for forbidden weapons.

Samoa's commitment to the International Criminal Court is underscored by our ratification of the Rome Statute and its Kampala amendments, with our membership of the Bureau and through the service of one of Samoa's eminent jurists as an inaugural justice of the court.

## Madame President,

When Samoa ratified the Kampala amendments in September last year, our Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, recalled the faith our nation placed in the rule of law and the vital protection it provides to all States, especially to the small and vulnerable which was the primary motivation underpinning our decision to ratify the Rome Statute twelve years ago.

In furthering the commitment to the principles of the Rome Statute, forging partnerships are critical especially to Small Island developing States such as Samoa. Not surprisingly, the proposed theme for the Global Conference on Small Island Developing States that Samoa is privileged to host in September 2014 is "the sustainable development of SIDS

## through genuine and durable partnerships".

2014 will therefore be a significant year for my country. Apart from hosting the international conference, it represents 52 years of independence and marks our official graduation from the UN category of Least Developed Countries.

For states still undecided on whether to become parties to the Rome Statute or not, let me share 2 important lessons from our membership to the Court:

- 1. Firstly, by ratifying the statute, Samoa has not signed away its sovereignty. It can still investigate and prosecute any international crime committed in Samoa unless the gravity of the crime is such that Samoa chooses to refer it to the ICC;
- 2. Secondly, being a member of the ICC guarantees that Samoa will not be a safe haven for international criminals. And being a small island nation does not preclude it from contributing positively to resolving issues of global concern to nations issues such as the maintenance of world peace and stability, the upholding of principles that strengthen the Rule of Law, the struggle against impunity and the protection of the human rights of all.

## Madame President

In closing, Samoa would like to commend the Court and the Prosecutor for their diligence and tireless efforts. We acknowledge the Secretariat for its facilitative contribution to the Court and Assembly. We also would like to place on record our appreciation of your able leadership during your tenure as President at the helm of our Assembly which witnessed a significant amount of work undertaken by the Bureau and its respective Working Groups, in particular your work in furthering the discussions on complementarity, cooperation and universality with outreach activities.

I thank you.