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STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA AND LEADER
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TO THE

**FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL
COURT**

THE HAGUE, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2015

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to lead the Ghana delegation for the 14th Session of the Assembly of State Parties of the ICC. My delegation congratulates Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi on her election as President of the Court. Her election as the first female President of the Court is a welcome boost to the quest for gender balance in the Court and deserves our commendation.

Mr. President,

Ghana has always been an active supporter of World Peace and Security, and over the past 55 years or more has always contributed troops to the United Nations and other international Peacekeeping interventions. Ghana, therefore, sees the ICC as an indispensable mechanism to secure World Peace and Security. In this context, Ghana welcomes Palestine as the 123rd Member of the Rome Statute. Our fight against impunity and violence is a universal crusade.

My delegation, therefore, joins other voices that have expressed condolences to the families of the 100s of victims murdered by terrorists in France, Nigeria, Lebanon and other places. It is an unfortunate contradiction for some States to voice recriminations and express concern over such crimes against humanity and yet remain outside the Rome Statute that exists for the purpose of deterring such crimes.

So long as parts of the world remain outside the jurisdiction of the Rome Statute, some of the most serious crimes under international law will go unpunished. Ghana, therefore, takes note of the various activities the Court has undertaken to promote the Universality of the Rome Statute and calls on all States Parties to support initiatives aimed at achieving this objective. Ghana also welcomes the opening of preliminary examinations into the situation in Palestine, and particularly, the initiation of investigations in the situation in Georgia.

It is our belief that these recent developments will help to dispel some of the doubts about the Court's even-handedness in its decision making process and help promote Universality.

Mr. President,

My delegation associates itself with the observation made by the representative of the African Union regarding the need for the Court to employ true and fair application of the ICCs statutory rules of Procedures and Evidence.

The Call on the ASP to declare its legislative intention with regards to rule 68 cannot be a call for interference with an active legal process at the Court. It is a Call for clarity and for the use of diplomacy for resolution.

In this regard, my delegation takes note of the effort made by the President in the course of the year to meet with several African heads of State, the Chairperson of the Africa Union as well as the Chairs of the sub-regional groups of the African Union with whom he had very fruitful discussions. We welcome this strategic dialogue with African countries aimed at reconciling the continent with the Court as a step in the right direction towards increased Universality and Cooperation.

Mr. President,

Ghana welcomes the completion and handing-over of the permanent premises of the International Criminal Court and the movement of the Court from its temporary premises to its new, permanent home. It is an important milestone in the history of the Court not only because the permanent premises reflect the permanent nature of the Court and its activities; it also sends a clear message to the perpetrators of atrocity crimes that the age of impunity is truly over.

My delegation will like to take this opportunity to thank the Oversight Committee on Permanent Premises as well as the Office of the Project Director for the crucial supervisory role they played in bringing the project to completion. Ghana expects that the purpose built premises will enhance the Court's ability to discharge its responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner. We call on the Assembly to consider the Oversight Committee's recommendation to take a decision on the future governance and long term preservation of the value of the permanent premises, based on lessons learned.

Mr. President,

We welcome the appointment of the permanent Head of the Independent Oversight Mechanism and look forward to its full operationalization. As the activities of the Court continue to grow in scope and complexity, the need to have the IOM in place and fully functioning has become urgent. For an international organization dedicated to the pursuit of international justice, effective oversight that enhances the Court's legitimacy, transparency and accountability is crucial to the accomplishment of its objectives. We, therefore, urge the new permanent Head of the IOM to set up his office quickly and begin his oversight functions without any further delay.

Mr. President,

My delegation has taken note of the progress of the Registry's ReVision Process which was launched in 2014 for the purpose of reorganizing and streamlining the Registry of the Court. While acknowledging the need to carry out the exercise to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the Registry's operations, my delegation is of the view that the process could have been carried out in a more transparent and equitable

manner. In this regard, we urge the Registrar, in due course, to provide both the Bureau and States Parties with a cost benefit analysis of the exercise.

Ghana remains committed to the values and principles of the International Criminal Court and will continue to work towards the preservation of its independence, impartiality and the due consideration of the rights and obligations of all Member States.

Thank you.