



Statement to the 14th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Mister President,
Madam President of the Court and Madam Prosecutor,
Distinguished delegates,

Samoa welcomes this annual opportunity during our Assembly meetings to pledge once again its commitment and dedication to the principles of the Rome Statute and its full support of the mandate and work of the International Criminal Court.

This September in New York, our Prime Minister, Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi co-hosted a luncheon event with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Botswana and Liechtenstein on the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute. This event was held in the margins of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and was initiated by Liechtenstein, whom we would like to commend it for its leadership role in driving the outreach for the attainment of the required number of States Parties for the activation of the Court's jurisdiction on the Crime of Aggression in 2017.

Mister President,

On the issue of outreach, Samoa would like to encourage the Court and the President of the Assembly of States Parties to consider conducting outreach activities in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the Pacific where only six Pacific Island States have ratified the Rome Statute, namely the Cook Islands, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Vanuatu and our own country Samoa. Such outreach activities can potentially lead to the following:

1. Fostering of a better understanding and appreciation amongst the small island developing nations of the pertinent role of the International Criminal Court;
2. Assistance in the form of capacity building to help countries in domesticating the Rome Statute into their national laws; and
3. Promoting the importance of the universality of the Rome Statute in the region.

Mister President

Forging and cultivating genuine and durable partnerships have been an integral part of Samoa's history and journey as an independent island nation. Underpinning this whole approach is the value of working together in order to move forward as a country, a region or a global community to attain mutual or reciprocal assistance and benefits. In this regard, Samoa stands ready to support initiatives that would further strengthen the Court's interactions with States, regional organizations and the United Nations in the areas of complementarity, cooperation, universality of the Court and the rights of victim of heinous crimes.

Mister President,

Samoa would like to share with you some recent developments to underscore the message that we have complied with our international obligations as a States Party and as a Bureau Member through the implementation of Samoa's ICC Act of 2008 and ICC Amendments Act of 2014. With the enactment of these laws, Samoa has demonstrated an unwavering faith in the principles of the Rome Statute. As previously reported, victims of domestic violence and rape cases are further protected under Samoa's Family Safety Act and Crimes Act of 2013.

Mister President

We look forward to the consideration during this session of the Court's budgetary and financial matters. Mindful of the trying and difficult times we are faced with, one ventures the hope that States Parties who are experiencing difficulties meeting their past and current financial obligations will be able to do so as soon as possible.

We welcome the completion of the new Court Premises, a truly historic milestone in the history of the court that will serve as a permanent symbol of justice and the prevention of core international crimes.

Mister President

We also would like to reiterate that Samoa stands firm in its commitment to the rule of law and the fight against impunity. As Samoa's Prime Minister had noted at the Liechtenstein event:

“The vulnerability of small island states extends to the dangers of instability arising from criminal activity that the impact of small arms and or terrorist threats can be catastrophic for our very small societies. It is our keen awareness of this vulnerability that sustains our commitment to the principles of the rule of law and further underpins our commitment to the Rome Statute and the Kampala amendments.”

In closing, Samoa takes this opportunity to thank the President of the Court, Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi for her leadership in the work of the Court, Madam Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda for her due diligence in dealing with all the prosecutions and Court Registrar, Mr Herman von Hebel for his administrative support to all the organs of the Court. We also would like to thank the President of the Assembly, President Sidiki Kaba and Vice Presidents Sebastiano Cardi and Álvaro Moerzinger for their prudent stewardship of the Bureau's work and the Assembly as a whole. Lastly our appreciation is also extended to the Secretariat for their commitment and continued support in facilitating the work of the Court and the Assembly.

I thank you.