

Remarks minister Dijkhoff, General Debate ASP 2016, The Hague.  
Monsieur le Président, ladies and gentlemen,

I align myself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member states.

It is truly an honor to address the Assembly of States Parties.

This Court is facing a heavy caseload.

That is a sign of justice at work.

Yet, there still are many victims of international crimes.

And there are still many situations, outside of the Court's jurisdiction, where justice is not being served.

That is why the United Nations Security Council needs to take responsibility for referring situations to the Court.

Without shielding allied states.

And by ensuring responsible follow-up after a referral is made.

In the end, it is our shared responsibility to ensure that justice is done wherever it is needed.

And to make sure that perpetrators of the most hideous crimes do not remain unpunished.

And let me be clear:

States that take justice seriously have nothing to fear from being a party to the Rome Statute.

Now, I am well aware that some States Parties have concerns about the functioning of the Court or the Assembly of States Parties.

But watering down its fundamental principles is not a solution.

Withdrawing from the ICC is not a solution.

Walking away is not a solution.

The only solution is to make the Rome Statute system better by discussing things that don't work well, and change them if necessary.

Ladies and gentlemen,

All States Parties have a shared responsibility to provide the Court with the tools needed to carry out its mandate.

In order to share the burden of the Court, there is a strong need for additional voluntary agreements between States Parties and the Court.

Complementarity is a key issue within the international judicial system when it comes to international crimes.

A cornerstone of the Rome statute.

And a strong underlining of the fact that Justice, as a principle, begins at home.

In that sense, ideally the ICC only acts as a 'watchdog'.

And investigations and prosecutions are all carried out at the national level by the States Parties themselves.

To enable states to thoroughly carry out its national task to investigate and prosecute the core international crimes, states need to work together.

And when needed, they should assist each other.

Through the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Through technical assistance and exchange of best practices.

And through mutual legal assistance and extradition in criminal matters.

Again, cooperation is the key word here.

Therefore, the Netherlands, together with Argentina, Belgium and Slovenia, continues to call for all states to join our initiative:

We want a treaty specifically aimed at providing a legal basis for international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes that concern humanity as a whole.

Monsieur le Président, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for the opportunity to address the ASP.

And please enjoy your stay in the Netherlands.