

The 18th session of the Assembly of States Parties
Intervention by Japan at the Plenary Session on Cooperation
5 December 2019

Thank you Ambassador,

First of all, let me express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, our gratitude to the co-facilitators for their leadership in the working group on cooperation and organizing the plenary session this morning. I would also like to thank the panelists for their insightful presentations and contributions to the discussion.

Cooperation of States Parties is the basis for the ICC to fulfill its mandate to prosecute the most serious international crimes. Lack of State cooperation not only undermines the work of the Court but also risks its legitimacy as an international court of last resort. In this connection, a great concern goes to 15 arrest warrants that have been pending for a long time.

The importance of cooperation between the Court and States Parties cannot be emphasized more at this moment when the Court is in need of its reform. I have referred to the arrest warrants before, but even after successful arrests and commencement of trials, we have seen a series of acquittals in recent years that came after years-long criminal proceedings.

Japan believes that the States Parties can contribute to the betterment of the Court by encouraging dialogues between the Court and national prosecutorial bodies. Relevant authorities of each State Party have extensive experience, skills and techniques in the areas of investigation and prosecution such as financial investigation, collection of evidence, witness interview, and presentation of evidence and examination of witnesses at court. Such know-how at national or regional level can be utilized by the Court to become more efficiently and effectively functioning.

We are of the view that the seminar on cooperation in the field of arrest, which the co-facilitators organized in November last year was a very useful first step in this regard. Japan would like to encourage similar efforts and is ready to contribute to such an event through sending experts and sharing experience. We would be happy to have an in-depth discussion in this regard.

We hope that the States Parties and the Court work closely to make the Court stronger and further enhance its functioning.

Thank you.