



STATEMENT BY

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OF

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

AT THE

**18TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME
STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

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THE HAGUE

(Check against delivery)

The President of the Assembly of States Parties His Excellency O-Gon Kwon

Heads of Delegations and Representatives of States Parties

Judges of the International Criminal Court

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

Officers of the International Criminal Court

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Mr. President

Allow me to start by commending you for the excellent manner in which you are steering this session and reassuring you of my country's total support and cooperation during the session.

Mr. President

Let me also seize this opportunity and restate my country's commitment to the Rome Statute system and its goals and to assure you that we will continue to be part of the efforts towards the universality of the Statute and the values it represents.

Mr. President

Allow me to also, once again, report that since the last session, my country continued to work closely with the Court, particularly with regard to the ongoing trial of Mr. Dominic Ongwen, one of the first perpetrators of atrocity crimes to be indicted by the Court, and in other areas of mutual interest. We hope that through our common efforts, all the indictees that are still to be arrested will eventually face justice. In this regard, I wish to commend the Prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, and her team for their relentless efforts.

Mr. President

I also take the opportunity to once again inform this distinguished Assembly that through collaborations with the Court, the International Crimes Division of the High Court of Uganda which, as we have previously stated at, takes the distinction of being the only visible embodiment of the complementarity principle enshrined in article 1 of the Rome Statute, has continued to make great strides in terms of capacity-building, procedural streamlining, trial conduct, etc. We look forward to sustained collaboration with the Court and other stakeholders to ensure that the International Crimes Division continues to be a benchmark in the fight against impunity at the national level.

Mr. President

I consider this an opportune moment to state that, just like the other State Parties, we continue to keenly follow and, many times, take part in the debate that has been taking place since last year concerning the performance and prospects of the Court in view of some interesting international developments that we saw. The threats from circles and forces outside the international justice system, which have been alluded to by the President of the Court, have placed the Court under an unhelpful spotlight. We need to urgently have an open and robust debate on how to deal with those threats. They are common knowledge and, therefore, we need not elaborate further.

Uganda also watches with great concern certain dynamics within the Court itself which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. One of these is the additional costs that the Court has had to incur, and is still incurring, as a consequence of the numerous proceedings instituted by staff before the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal. In our view, these could have been avoided had the issues giving rise to the claims been handled with the appropriate level of care and coherence to protect the interests of the Court and, by extension, of the States Parties who have to bear the huge cost arising from the awards.

In the same vein, we wish to also register our dismay that no less than seven judges of the Court have instituted proceedings before the same tribunal to pitch for enhanced remuneration, a matter that we think could have been best handled internally, especially considering that a working group of the Assembly had been constituted to look into the issue. The negative consequences of such an act, especially at this particular time, need not be overemphasized.

We all need to not only acknowledge these facts but also focus our efforts towards helping the Court to recover from both these external and internal threats. On this note, we are pleased to recognize the step taken by the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties in organizing a retreat which resulted in the compilation of a Matrix of identified short and long terms issues that require the attention and consideration of this session of the Assembly. We commend the role of the Vice President of the Assembly, Ambassador Jens-Otto Horslund and his team in this regard.

We would like to stress the obvious and state that the responsibility to strengthen the Court and the Rome Statute system lies with States Parties and that it is, therefore, within our power and means to look into anything that was agreed upon in 1998 in Rome which may not be working well. There is no legal system in the world that does not evolve and, therefore, the State Parties should not fear to embrace this responsibility, for a better-functioning Court, respected by the international community, is an absolute necessity.

Mr. President

I wish to end by once again assuring you of our firm commitment to the ideals for which the International Criminal Court was established and of our total support as you steer the business of the Assembly during this session.

I thank you.