



Pre-Recorded Statement by

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DR. AMERY BROWNE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

to the

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE
ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands

14 December 2020

Mr. President,

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes this opportunity to address another General Debate of the distinguished Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The ASP represents for us, an opportunity to renew our commitment to international peace and security, and the pursuit of justice.

This past year has been particularly challenging and we must express our heartfelt appreciation to those who have persevered and sacrificed to discharge the mandate of the ICC to bring to justice the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

Mr. President,

As this is the final Assembly of States Parties before the end of the term of Ms. Fatou Bensouda as Prosecutor of the ICC, I take this opportunity, on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago, to recognize her dedication and steadfastness despite the many unprecedented efforts to dissuade her and her office. In the face of this challenge, the Prosecutor and her office have demonstrated those singular qualities of duty and commitment to the ICC. We look forward to seeing this level of fearlessness and independence from her successor. Indeed, our national position continues to be one of unwavering support for the Court and its officials, and we remain part of the collective voice upholding the integrity of the Rome Statute system.

The ICC is, after all, a Court of last resort and the Court's jurisdiction is only invoked when States are unable or unwilling to prosecute those alleged to have committed

grave crimes. The presumption of innocence until guilt is proven remains a tenet of the Court.

That being said, Trinidad and Tobago calls upon States to cooperate, as necessary, with the ICC at all stages of investigations and proceedings, including cooperating in issuing arrest warrants and transfer of suspects to be tried by the Court. States should also adopt legislation at the national level to ensure that criminals are not allowed to act with impunity.

In light of this, we underline our support for the current budget to ensure that the Court has adequate resources, and call on States that are in a position to do so, to also contribute to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Mr. President,

Trinidad and Tobago read with interest the Independent Expert Review of the ICC, and while concerned at some of the findings, we look forward to the implementation of the required recommendations. It cannot be denied that the ICC, within its jurisdiction, continues to be a symbol of hope to victims of atrocities who are seeking justice.

As a responsible State Party, Trinidad and Tobago will remain steadfast in our support for the ICC. As such, we will continue to pursue the goal of universalization of the Rome Statute and will maintain efforts within our region towards implementation, including through the hosting of ICC meetings in the Caribbean as was last done in 2017.

Finally, Mr. President, I use this occasion to remind States Parties of the excellent candidate of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Madame Justice Althea Alexis-Windsor, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago. She is our candidate for election to the bench of the ICC, at elections to take place during the reconvened ASP in New York in the coming days.

Strongly endorsed by CARICOM, Judge Alexis-Windsor possesses over 23 years of experience in criminal law, human rights law and international humanitarian law. She is currently a Judge of the Supreme Court in Trinidad and Tobago, enhanced by almost 10 years of experience at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The ICC Advisory Committee on Nominations of Judges also considers her “highly qualified” for appointment as Judge of the ICC, and Trinidad and Tobago is requesting the support of all States Parties for her election.

Mr. President, I thank you.