

Mrs. President,

Messrs. Representatives of the States Parties to the Rome Statute,

I have the pleasure and privilege of addressing you on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, on the occasion of the 20th Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. I take this opportunity to convey a respectful greeting from our constitutionally elected President, Luis Arce Catacora.

I begin my statement by expressing our congratulations to the recently elected Prosecutor Karim Khan. In the same way, we extend our congratulations to the next Deputy Prosecutors, whose functions, we are sure, will be carried out ensuring the integrity of the administration of justice and full respect for the rules governing the functioning of the Court.

We are convinced that the creation of the International Criminal Court has meant significant progress for international justice. Without the creation of this permanent court, many international crimes would have gone unpunished. However, the international community as a whole can still make significant progress to strengthen and protect this tribunal. Some of these measures are in the hands of our Governments and imply consent to the main instruments of the Court. Others, however, require collective action.

In this regard, last year we observed with perplexity the imposition of unilateral sanctions on senior officials of the Court. Fortunately, such measures that hampered the international judicial function have been revoked and we hope that all States, whether or not they are Parties to the Rome Statute, refrain from imposing illegitimate and illicit measures that weaken this important judicial body. It is a collective task to express our rejection of such sanctions, both in this forum and others of universal or regional scope.

Representatives,

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is perhaps one of the most committed countries with international criminal law; for example, our country has expressed its consent to the main instruments in this matter. We wish to recall that Bolivia was a negotiating State of the Rome Statute and ratified it in 2002. Likewise, our country has ratified the Amendment on the Crime of Aggression, with the instrument of ratification deposited in December 2020. In the same vein, I wish to announce that Bolivia has already begun the process for ratification of the Amendment to Article 8 of the Rome Statute, which incorporates new acts that constitute War Crimes.

Furthermore, the Bolivian State is a Party to the “Agreement on the privileges and immunities of the International Criminal Court”, of September 2002, having deposited the Instrument of Ratification in 2006. It is also important to inform this Assembly that the Executive and Judicial branches of the Bolivian government have cooperated with the Court so far when it has been required by it.

These events demonstrate our full commitment to international criminal justice and place Bolivia among those states which are respectful of the international legal order.

Besides this steadfast commitment, we vow that the functioning of the Court and its organs shall remain attached to international law and, above all, be respectful of its complementary and subsidiary nature concerning national jurisdictions. Particularly, in those circumstances where the cases or situations referred to the Court are essentially political and do not comply with the legal standards outlined in the Court's judicial practice.

We are aware that the progress made can be increased. Therefore, on this occasion, we wish to inform the States Parties, as well as the International Criminal Court, that our Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency has begun studies for the drafting of national regulations that will contribute to the implementation of the international crimes established in the Rome Statute into the Bolivian domestic legal system and the facilitation of international cooperation with the Court.

Undoubtedly, these regulations will be debated at various levels and with as many actors as possible, to lay solid foundations for the prevention and prosecution of international crimes through the Bolivian judicial authorities. This task will be challenging, and we will welcome any technical cooperation that the Court can offer us to reach the goal.

President and Representatives of the State Parties to the Rome Statute,

I conclude my statement by reaffirming the utmost importance of the International Criminal Court in guaranteeing access to international criminal justice. We make a cordial and fraternal appeal to all States to continue strengthening this court through the ratification of its main instruments, as well as cooperating with it when required.

The construction of an international society free from impunity requires our firm will to strengthen international institutions such as the International Criminal Court.

Thank you