



BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE ROME STATUTE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Venezuelan people we wish a successful Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which we consider a fitting scenario to debate on the strengthening and improvement of the international criminal justice, ten years after the establishment of the Court to prosecute those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern.

The Venezuelan delegation wishes to inform the distinguished delegates attending this Review Conference that yesterday, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Commander Hugo Chávez Frías, condemned in the strongest possible terms the brutal massacre committed by the State of Israel against members of the "Freedom Flotilla", where defenceless civilians died when they were attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Mr. President,

The Venezuelan delegation see this Review Conference as the most adequate forum at this moment to reiterate such condemnation and to request that an investigation on the circumstances surrounding those events be promptly carried out in order to establish the necessary responsibilities for the violation of applicable norms of international law.

In the light of this event the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ratifies one more time its firm commitment to the Rome Statute system and the International Criminal Court. Proof of that is the fact that it has been the third country in Latin America and the Caribbean to ratify the Statute, having actively participated in all the preparation processes of this

historic Conference, with the conviction that its results will bring about positive fruits for future generations.

Mr. President,

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the coordinators of the different working groups, the documents of which will undoubtedly become an important basis for the deliberations to be carried out within this important Review Conference.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is convinced that in order for a truly international criminal justice to exist, the Rome Statute should become universal, and as part of its contribution to this end, commits itself to promoting at the different fora in which it participates in Latin America and the Caribbean, its ratification among those countries which have not yet done so.

In the same sense, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela attaches great importance to the necessary process of updating its national criminal system. This is evident at the discussions that are currently taking place at our National Assembly, for the reform of its Criminal Code, with a view to incorporate and to consider as crimes in Venezuelan national law those crimes provided in the Rome Statute.

Mr. President,

We welcome most warmly the Popular Republic of Bangladesh as State Party of the Rome Statute as from today. Likewise, we hope that each year new ratifications or adhesions to the instrument will take place, which will bring us closer to the universal character of the Statute.

Today more than ever our country is convinced that to end impunity, the International Criminal Court should be independent and autonomous. Additionally, it considers essential that at this Review Conference the term crime of aggression together with its elements should be defined and the conditions for the Court jurisdiction be determined without the filter of the Security Council.

Mr President,

My delegation values positively the exercise of balance on the international criminal justice, taking into account that this first experience offers an important opportunity to update and strengthen the international criminal system.

To conclude, my delegation reiterates their commitment to fight impunity through the implementation of the Rome Statute and supports the Court's work, in their search of a universal international criminal justice.