

**Cour  
Pénale  
Internationale**



**International  
Criminal  
Court**

**Judge Sang-Hyun Song**  
**President of the International Criminal Court**

*Opening Remarks to the Review Conference*

Kampala, Uganda

31 May 2010

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. President of Uganda,

Mr. President of the Assembly,

Mr. Former Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to represent the International Criminal Court at this first-ever Review Conference of the Rome Statute.

The development of the ICC has far exceeded expectations.

When the Rome Statute was adopted in 1998, the most optimistic observers expected it would take decades to enter into force. Yet, more than sixty States ratified the Statute in under four years, bringing it into force. Tomorrow, Bangladesh will become the 111<sup>th</sup> State Party to the Statute. I congratulate Bangladesh on this achievement.

At Rome, it was expected that it would take even more years before the Court would become fully operational. Yet today the Court has investigations ongoing in five situations, three of which were referred by States Parties. Two trials are underway, and a third will start in July. The Rome Statute can be seen in action not only in the courtrooms and offices in The Hague but also in our outreach and other activities in the field, including here in Uganda. Its effects are beginning to be seen around the world as potential perpetrators are now on notice they may be tried before the Court and as a culture of impunity is slowly being replaced by a discourse of accountability.

These are signs, on the one hand, of the world's yearning for justice and its support for the Court. On the other hand, they are indicators of the great need that still exists for accountability mechanisms, whether international or domestic.

In Rome, it was foreseen that the Review Conference would focus on amendments related to the subject matter jurisdiction of the Court. This is still part of the agenda, and the Court takes no position on these amendments. But the speed of developments has changed the character of this Conference. It has led to the inclusion of an important stock-taking component.

In the days to come, I look forward to the Assembly celebrating the achievements of the Rome Statute system. There is much to be proud of. We have come a long way since Rome in a very short time. Now is the time to trumpet success.

But this Conference is also a time to reflect on the considerable work that lies before us to achieve the goals of the Rome Statute.

Every year, the Assembly looks at the Court and how it is functioning. But the Court is only a small part of this system.

Without cooperation, there will be no arrests, victims and witnesses will not be protected, and proceedings will not be possible.

Without credible, fair domestic proceedings, the impunity gap will grow large.

If victims and affected communities are not adequately engaged, the potential of justice will not be realized.

And, if peace and justice are not pursued “hand-in-hand,” we risk losing both.

It is my sincere hope that this Conference will serve not only to refresh and renew the spirit of Rome but also to chart a path for the future. I look forward to concrete outcomes and tangible commitments in relation to each of the four stock-taking events. I welcome the pledges that will be made, and I am pleased that tomorrow I will conclude agreements on behalf of the Court with two States on the enforcement of sentences.

The Court, international organizations and civil society will all participate together with States Parties and non-parties in the Conference. But it is the States Parties who have a special role. This is your Statute. You created it. You ratified it. And your decisions will greatly influence its success. There is great momentum behind you. I encourage you to keep going.

Thank you.