

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Statement by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland**

General Debate, International Criminal Court Assembly of States Parties  
14 November 2008

ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CRIMINAL COURT

14 NOVEMBER 2008

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION

Mr President,

I would first like to align myself with the statement made earlier today by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

This year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. We must obviously celebrate such an important milestone in the Court's life. This year has in any event been a significant one for the Court. It has seen the start of substantive trial proceedings and, although these have not always run as smoothly as any of us would have wished, we must nevertheless recognise that the Court is a new institution and will need to feel its way. The United Kingdom remains optimistic about the future of the Court and in particular about its ability to combat impunity whilst ensuring due process. In this connection, we note that the two ad hoc tribunals established by the UN Security Council are coming to the end of their lives. We believe that it is important that the rich jurisprudence and experience which they have established should be carefully taken account of by the Court in its future development.

We have also noted the continuing debate about the respective roles of peace and justice in settling conflicts. Frankly, this can become a rather sterile discussion. We believe that the Secretary General put it very well in his own speech to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. As he said, impunity cannot be tolerated, and amnesties of international crimes are unacceptable. In particular, we cannot give in to those who by their threats seek to escape justice. Justice must never be sacrificed.

I would like to turn to a few administrative issues. First, we have scrutinised carefully the proposed budget of the Court this year and we are grateful for all the hard work which the Committee on Budget and Finance have put into their consideration of it. As we have said in past years, we believe that in principle the ASP should accept the recommendations of the Committee as a package, and should not attempt to micro-manage. Nevertheless, we all face financial constraints and must not lose sight of our responsibility to ensure value for money. We look forward to further productive discussions about the budget during this meeting.

Second, we are pleased to see that significant progress has been made this year on the important issue of a new permanent premises for the Court. Now that we have a potential design for the building, we trust that this progress can be maintained in the future.

Third, I must of course thank all of those who have been involved in the organisation of this meeting, particularly Renan Villacis and his team. I must also thank those members of the working groups in both The Hague and New York for their hard work during this year.

Finally, Mr President, I wish you well as you begin the arduous task which lies before you.

Thank you Mr President.