

**STATEMENT BY H.E MR. AMR.AIYA NAIDU,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE
OF THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES
(INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT)
9 SEPTEMBER 2002, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Mr. President,

I add my Government's congratulations to you on taking on the mantle of this, the first Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court. Your leadership, supported by your very able bureau has, to date, yielded a very productive week of meetings. Amongst the draft reports and items adopted is the determination of a particularly difficult yet very significant issue in the election procedure for the Judges of the ICC. We are very confident that the first elections will indeed render to the court judges of the highest caliber from Member States each possessing the actual experiences that the Rome Statute stipulates.

We are equally pleased to see that fair gender representation will become a reality at the Court's inception, and that equitable geographical representation remains a steady principle, and that both will allow little room for discrimination in future elections to this very important institution. In this regard, it is helpful to recall that the formula for the election of the prosecution team equally demands adherence to the same elements. Indeed, as this will provide the first physical and professional face of the ICC, their respective elections would serve as a benchmark on how we pursue those ideals of the Rome Statute.

Mr. President,

The number of States Parties continues to rise and we note the progressive preparations in those Member States towards ratification or accession to the Rome Statute. We would encourage other UN Member States which are not yet parties to consider ratifying, or acceding to the Rome Statute and help this Assembly to build the strength and integrity of the court into the future.

In the same vein, we caution on the many challenges that the court continues to face and plead for goodwill and solidarity to prevail. This would afford the Court the beginning it needs in order to set its solid foundation upon which it can begin to develop international criminal jurisprudence within its jurisdiction. Thereafter, analysis and time would have also provided us with a clearer perspective on issues, which the court may in future require additional leverages of support from Member States.

Thank you, Mr. President