



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

FELIX E. AWANBOR

MINISTER,

PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

ON

AGENDA ITEM 146: INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

SIXTH COMMITTEE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

59TH SESSION.

NEW YORK, 14 OCTOBER 2004

Mr. Chairman

The Nigerian delegation is delighted to note the significant progress made by the International Criminal Court since it became operational. Our sincere appreciation goes to the United Nations Secretariat for its outstanding role in the entire process of establishing the Court. We also commend the Secretariat for ensuring the orderly and smooth transition of work to the Permanent Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and for taking necessary steps to close the relevant trust funds administered by the Secretary-General.

We are pleased to note that the UN Secretariat recently signed a relationship agreement with the Court. We believe that this is an important development, which marks a new phase of positive, and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two bodies. We are delighted to note that the composition of elected positions in the Court has been completed with the election of Ms. Fatou Bensouda as the second Deputy Prosecutor at the third session of the Assembly of States Parties, held in The Hague in September 2004. We reaffirm our belief in the credibility and acceptability of the Court as a global judicial institution to fight impunity and to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. The impeccable records, professionalism and competence of the Judges and principal officers of the Court underline our belief. We have no misgivings that the ICC would live up to its fundamental goals as an independent and impartial Court

Mr. Chairman

Nigeria welcomes the positive developments in the International Criminal Court (ICC) since the entry into force of the Rome Statute on 1st July 2002. We are impressed with the successful holding of the third session of the Assembly of States Parties in The Hague, from 6 to 10 September 2004. My delegation also notes that the Court now has ninety-seven (97) States Parties in contrast to the sixty states recorded at its inauguration. We welcome this encouraging development, which is

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indicative of the increasing confidence of the international community in the Court's ability to fight against impunity, genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity.

In light of the fact that the ICC is still a relatively young institution, Nigeria urges that the holding of the meetings of the Assembly of States Parties be alternated between The Hague and New York in line with the provision of Article 112 of the Rome Statute, on a yearly basis. We strongly believe that this arrangement would enhance political visibility of the Court in New York, where there is already global representation and encourage the participation of many more developing countries, which are States Parties, particularly African States that have no adequate diplomatic representation in The Hague.

Mr. Chairman

On the relationship between the ICC and the Ad Hoc international criminal tribunals, that is, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Nigeria sees the roles as complementary, we therefore expect the ICC to take advantage of the precedents already accumulated by the three Ad Hoc international tribunals. We welcome the contributions of the Non-governmental organizations in enhancing the effectiveness and impartiality of the Court.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Let me reiterate the firm commitment of Nigeria to the principle of cooperation with the ICC. Our delegation will continue to contribute to the enhancement of the work of the Court and also cooperate with other countries in this regard. It is our view that only a universal adherence and participation by all States that would engender the desired confidence and acceptance of the Rome Statute. We therefore call on States that are not yet Parties to the Statute to do so.

I thank you.