



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

245 East 49th Street • New York, NY 10017

STATEMENT

by

H. E. MR. ALLIEU IBRAHIM KANU
Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative
(Legal Affairs)

at the

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**Agenda Item 72:
*Report of the International Criminal Court***

New York, 1st November 2007

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- Mr President, Sierra Leone wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of ~~XXXXXX~~ on behalf of the African States Parties to the ICC. We also wish to make the following remarks born from our own national perspective, which has been shaped through the experience we have gained through the operations of an international criminal court on our territory.
- Before doing so, we would like to express our heartfelt welcome to those States that have joined the Rome Statute since the ICC's report to this body last year. Universality remains a critical goal if we wish to see the International Criminal Court reach its full potential as a key actor in the fight against impunity worldwide and as an important and necessary component of lasting peace. We look forward to welcoming more new States Parties in the future and continue to urge our friends who have not yet signed or ratified the Rome Statute to do so as soon as possible.
- The report delivered by President Kirsch, whom we thank once again for his ongoing commitment and his leadership of the Court, shows that, in many respects, tremendous progress has been made. The arrest and transfer of Germain Katanga to face trial for crimes allegedly committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo is surely an important step for which we have all been waiting. We very much hope that this second arrest will form the centre of a swiftly moving

snowball, around which more arrests will come, particularly those that have been outstanding for such a long time now.

- Like many others, we remain concerned that there are fugitives from justice, who continue to escape facing international criminal proceedings, and we fervently hope that this situation will not be allowed to continue, whether it is Mladic and Karadic continuing to evade the ICTY or the six individuals for whom there are outstanding arrest warrants at the ICC.
- The ICC may be the bold new centrepiece of the international criminal justice system, but it needs cooperation and support in order to flourish and to retain its strength and vitality. The real deterrence value of the ICC, and indeed of any criminal justice institution, is the likelihood of enforcement of its processes and the legal norms and proscriptions that are its foundation. The critical contribution of justice and accountability to assisting societies to reach lasting, sustainable and prosperous peace can only truly be realised when all components of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction are given sufficient space to do their job.
- Sierra Leone recognised this with the Special Court, to the extent that our Parliament decided that orders of the Special Court should have direct application in Sierra Leone, translating into law the level of commitment to cooperation that the Special Court needed then and the ICC needs now. We call on all States to cooperate with the ICC, in particular through enforcing the outstanding arrest warrants, and in so doing to strengthen the international criminal justice system and its potential to deter these horrendous crimes.
- We continue to welcome the emphasis the Court is putting on its strategic vision and the work it is doing to conceptualise, refine and present that vision. The primary purpose of the International Criminal

Court, indeed the *raison d'être* for the international criminal justice system as a whole, is to provide justice and redress to the thousands of men, women and children who have been victims of the most serious crimes. It is difficult to do that from thousands of miles away from the scenes of the crimes and we must recognise and commend the efforts being undertaken to ensure that affected populations understand, engage with and feel a stake in the Court's work.

- For this reason, we welcome the emphasis in this latest report on the Court's outreach work. The prominence given to this issue underscores what Sierra Leone has learnt through our own experiences with the Special Court, which we hope will stand as a lesson for all international courts and tribunals: outreach is a core function of the Court and it is an operational necessity.
- We therefore continue to insist that the Court's outreach program be given top priority and urge the Court to continue to develop its strategic vision, to intensify its efforts for Darfur and to implement its plan for outreach in the Central African Republic as a matter of utmost urgency.
- As we have said before, we have a strong preference for proceedings to be held in the countries or regions where the crimes took place and we trust that this remains an important goal also for the Court. We continue to look forward to further developments in this respect.
- Mr President, the presence of President Kirsch here today is an important, outward symbol of the ever-growing relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. We have always said that the cooperation and support of the United Nations will be of critical importance for the ICC to become a fully effective international criminal justice institution.

- We can now see in action how important it is to nurture and develop that relationship, particularly with the support the UN provided for the arrest and transfer of Mr Katanga. We look forward to the continuing dialogue and cooperation between the Court and international and regional organisations and all other actors around the world who remain committed to ensuring that the Court can reach its full potential.
- Mr President, allow me to conclude by re-stating our hope and desire that one day, the building blocks of international criminal justice, which we are discussing here today, will be at the foundation of a world in which everyone can rest assured in the knowledge that those who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide will be brought to justice.
- Thank you