



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

Eighth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

Statement by Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President

The Hague, 19 November 2009

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to address this Assembly in my capacity as President of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) and its 155 member organisations from over 100 countries.

This year, we present to the Assembly specific recommendations concerning the position and the role of victims before the Court. Victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court saw in the ICC Statute a long-time awaited recognition of their rights. We argue that the political support of this Assembly is essential to enable meaningful participation of victims in proceedings, as well as preparations for the first reparations awards.

We invite you to consider in your discussions the views and concerns of victims and to recall that they are the primary reason why you have created this Court. Victims have huge expectations on the Court and it is time to listen to them, to take them into account, to acknowledge that their suffering is at the heart of the establishment of the ICC.

FIDH draws your attention to the Court's draft victims' strategy, which we welcome. We urge you to request the Court to devote to its implementation as of 2010 while continuing to improve it and to regularly adapt it to new situations that may arise.

In addition, FIDH recommends that you ensure that the system of legal aid for victims takes into account the specific needs of victims and their legal representatives. In this regard, we wish to reiterate the benefits of the involvement of "external" lawyers for an effective legal representation and a concrete contribution of the Court and the Assembly to the implementation of the principle of complementarity in countries where the Court investigates.

On this matter, FIDH recalls that it is essential that more efforts be made for an effective implementation of the principle of complementarity. In this regard, FIDH welcomes the new Prosecutorial Strategy and calls for its implementation.

Finally, we urge you to contribute to the Trust Fund for Victims.

Regarding the Review Conference, FIDH recommends that the integrity of the Statute and the independence of the Court be protected.

Thank you for your attention.

Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President