

Madame Prosecutor, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

We have all been witness here today to a historic event! We attended the solemn and moving swearing-in ceremony of the new prosecutor of the ICC, Mrs. Fatou Bensouda. This event is not only the beginning of a new mandate at the Office of the Prosecution. As it is closely linked to the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, it marks as well the success of an institution which has notwithstanding all the difficulties encountered in fulfilling its mandate, proven that it contributes decisively to make the world a safer place for the most vulnerable. A seamless transition from the previous to the new chief prosecutor reflects the strength and solidity of the institution which more and more plays a leading role in the international political architecture.

I speak to you in both my capacities, as vice-president of the Assembly of States Parties, but also as the Ambassador of Switzerland. As you know, Switzerland has been very actively involved in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Rome Statute and the establishment of the Court and continues to be a strong supporter of the Rome Statute and the Court - and will do so with full commitment and dedication in the future!

By conducting investigations and prosecutions, the Office of the Prosecutor is in a key position to contribute to the overall objective of the Court - to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Its role and the light of justice it thrusts to all corners and dark spots on the earth contribute as well to the prevention of such crimes.

The Office of the Prosecutor has a new face from today – I take great pleasure in welcoming and congratulating the new prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, to your new office! Though, new is in your case not entirely true. You have been with the Office of the Prosecutor for almost as long as Mr. Ocampo and have contributed to the achievements of the Office in a significant way. With the acceptance of your new and as ever challenging mandate, you show a lot of courage and determination to continue the fight for justice all over the world. Me and all my colleagues here are convinced that you will lead the Office of the Prosecutor in a most capable manner and in a spirit of good cooperation with States parties. We are looking forward very much to working with you and be assured that we will give you all our possible support!

Last but not least, I would also like to use the opportunity to thank the outgoing prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, for all your relentless efforts and dedication to the cause of the Rome Statute. For that, you have earned our deepest respect and gratitude!

The old Romans (maybe not real champions of global justice, but champions in many other things...) used to say, *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy spirit in a healthy body. When I look around me, I only see healthy spirits. In order to provide for these, I take particular pleasure in my capacity as the Ambassador of Switzerland to sponsor this reception together with the CICC.

Allow me now to conclude and raise my glass to the prosecutors - in the name of justice, and for justice!

(I will now pass the floor to Bill Pace from the Coalition for the International Criminal Court.)

Thank you for your attention.

H.E. Ambassador Markus Börlin
Swiss Ambassador in the Kingdom of the Netherlands