



Statement

by

**H.E. Ms. Sofia Borges
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
to the United Nations**

**at the
General Debate of the

Tenth Session of the
Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

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Madam President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election and assure you of my delegation's support during your tenure.

I would also like to thank the outgoing President of the Assembly of States Parties Ambassador Christian Wenawaser for his hard work and dedication over the last three years. The impressive outcome of the Review Conference in Kampala and the consistent increase in States Parties to the Rome Statute are a tribute to Ambassador Wenawaser's outstanding and motivated leadership.

Timor-Leste expresses its appreciation to the outgoing Prosecutor Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo for his commitment and tireless efforts in the pursuit of justice and the fight against impunity. I'd like to congratulate Mrs. Fatou Bensouda on her election as the next Prosecutor of the ICC and commend the Search Committee on creating a process based on merit rather than politics- a process that can hopefully be used as a model for the future.

Additionally, we welcome the newest members of the ASP, namely Vanuatu, the Philippines, Cape Verde, the Maldives, Tunisia, Grenada, and the Republic of Moldova, who together bring the number of States Parties up to 120, and taking us closer to the goal of universal ratification. It is important to highlight the recent ratifications as evidence not only of the Court's relevance in today's world, but of the international community's faith in the Court's mission to end impunity and deliver justice for humanity's most atrocious crimes. We urge all states that have not yet acceded to the Rome Statute to consider doing so in the near future.

The International Criminal Court represents the concrete realization of the international community's highest ideals: good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, justice and finally, peace. Timor-Leste has been a strong supporter of the ICC and the Rome Statute since the restoration of our independence in 2002 and welcomes the progress made by the Court in the past ten years. By targeting the most serious crimes in the most grievous circumstances, the Court is at the forefront of the international fight against impunity and the struggle for justice and accountability.

This year marks a pivotal moment for the International Criminal Court; a new Prosecutor has been elected by consensus, 6 new judges will take their place in the Court, and the recent Security Council referrals exemplify the ever-increasing confidence of the international community in the Court while also placing an additional burden on the OTP. As the Court's presence and duties expand, it is time for each State Party to revisit their commitment and support of this very important institution. Words must be followed by actions to ensure that the Court is strengthened and capable of carrying out its mandate.

Madam President,

I would like to take a moment to highlight three key issues that we hope will be addressed during this ASP.

First, strengthening the rule of law is a truly international effort. State cooperation is vital for the ICC to fulfill all of its functions, including investigations, coordination with victims and stakeholders, and the arrest and transport of perpetrators. Failure of a state to comply with obligations under the Rome Statute can seriously damage the Court's ability to fulfill its mandate and can stall a case indefinitely. Timor-Leste urges States Parties to fully and effectively support the Court in delivering justice to victims. Additionally, successful outreach-- from public information campaigns to activities relating to complementarity-- is critical for the Court to function, for victims to understand how the Court works, and for States Parties to build up their own justice systems in concert with the Rome Statute and international law. Timor-Leste supports the Court's outreach activities and encourages the ASP to properly fund and cooperate with these efforts.

Secondly, the budget of the ICC has been a matter of extensive scrutiny by States Parties. As we are all aware, the Court is overworked and underfunded. The recent cases referred by the Security Council, combined with the impressive number of cases that are ongoing and the additional cases under preliminary investigation make it imperative that the Court is given the appropriate financial resources to deal with the heavy burden of its work. While the world is feeling the impact of the recent financial crises, we must not lose sight of the long-term importance of the Court. It is the Court's responsibility to be transparent about its budgetary allocations and cost drivers, but it is our responsibility to ensure that the ICC is able to fulfill the mandate that we've placed upon it. We therefore support the approach described by the President of the Court in his opening statement.

Finally, I would like to address the needs of the victims that come to the ICC seeking redress. The Court should ensure the application process is easy for victims to navigate, and that those victims who are used as witnesses are protected throughout the process. Outreach to victims' communities through public relations campaigns is essential in enabling victims to understand the Court's ability to serve them and deliver justice. Moreover, women and victims of gender-based-violence must be cared for and dealt with in a sensitive manner to avoid revictimization.

As we continue with our 10th session of the Assembly of States Parties, Timor-Leste reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the International Criminal Court, and to the promotion of good governance, accountability, the rule of law, and most importantly respect for human rights and justice.

Thank you, Madam President.