

Check Against Delivery

**International Criminal Court,  
Assembly of States Parties  
The Hague, Thursday 23 November 2006  
Statement by Mr. Richard Ryan, Ambassador of Ireland**

Mr. President,

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the assembly this morning. In doing so, I associate Ireland fully with the statement made by Finland as European Union Presidency.

We join previous speakers in commending the Court for the quality of its work over the past year, and the significant progress it has made on a wide range of issues. In particular, we congratulate the Court for adopting its first Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plan on Outreach, and very much look forward to the forthcoming debates on these important topics. Ireland further welcomes the first Report of the Bureau on ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute and believes that it will help renew the resolve of States Parties in striving to promote universal ratification. In this regard, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that earlier this week, Ireland ratified the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court.

It is almost four years since the international community overwhelmingly acclaimed the establishment of the ICC. Since then, much has been achieved, and the commencement this month of the pre-trial hearing for the confirmation of charges in the Court's first case is a clear affirmation that the Rome Statute works. But we, the States Parties, must ensure over the next phase that the Court retains, at all times, the operational means to fulfil its mandate. As noted during the recent Second Public Hearing of the Office of the Prosecutor, much still requires to be done as the Court faces ongoing challenges during these early, inevitably testing years. How the Court addresses these challenges, and how we, the States Parties, support it in its work, will determine the extent to which the international acclamation which greeted UNGA Resolution 57/23 will have been justified. This is the challenge before the Court, and before us, the States Parties.

Mr. President,

This delegation has two practical suggestions as to how we, the States Parties, could further enhance both the Court's effectiveness and international perceptions of its centrality to the international response to impunity.

As an independent judicial institution, the ICC must rely heavily on the strong cooperation and support of States Parties, and the wider international community. Only thus can the Court achieve the objectives which we have set and will continue to set for it. The UN Security Council's referral of the situation in Darfur (Resolution 1593) has demonstrated, for the first time, tangible cooperation between the Council and the Court in the fight against impunity. We suggest that the Court now needs to deepen its engagement across the range of relevant UN bodies and systems.

We believe that the ICC should engage systematically at all stages in the work toward and surrounding relevant Security Council Resolutions. This will not always be easy, but, given widening international perceptions of the value of the ICC, it is certainly possible. It could only enhance the Court and the Resolutions of the Council, if the Court's role and relevance to crisis situations form part of the conceptual and the textual fabric of Resolutions concerned.

We would suggest that the machinery and better thinking which, over recent years, the UN has developed toward more effective intervention in crisis situations can offer much to the ICC as it works to fulfil its own mandate. This good thinking and this machinery are available to the Court. Ireland believes that the Court's New York Office should establish itself quickly as an effective link into the UN system, facilitating systematic and comprehensive cooperation between the Court and the United Nations, particularly the Office of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office of Legal Affairs – and, indeed, the regular coordinated assessments and planning between troop-contributing countries as well as various bodies and agencies including OCHA and UNICEF. We urge States Parties to support the strengthening of the ICC's New York Office, as necessary, to give it this essential capability.

Mr. President,

A final point concerning the crucial issue of State support, without which the Court simply cannot operate. Should we not make clear our collective expectation from UN member states aspiring to membership of the Security Council that, in seeking the votes of the wider membership – our votes – they should make absolutely clear to us their commitment to make real contributions in the Council on those issues of relevance to the ICC? Given that, over the next ten years, fifty UN member states – more than 25% of the entire membership – will seek and obtain election to the Security Council, and that a large percentage of them will be States Parties to the ICC, it is suggested that the annual Council elections present us with an extremely useful mechanism to assess convictions and to compare presentations by these candidate states regarding their commitment, if elected, to action in the Council in support of the Court. With our vigilant support, and in their capacity as members of the Security Council, elected states could play very effective and influential roles in support of the Court's relevance to the work of the Council, and thereby centralise further the Court's role in the international response to impunity in the years to come.

Thank you.