



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

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STATEMENT

by

His Excellency Allieu Ibrahim Kanu
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of the Republic of Sierra Leone
to the United Nations

at the

**Fifth Session of the Assembly of States Parties
General Debate**

The Hague, Netherlands

Check Against Delivery

Mr President, Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, allow me to express my thanks and the appreciation of my Government to the Presidency of this Assembly and to the distinguished delegates here assembled. We look forward to another fruitful session of this Assembly and to the discussions on critical issues for the effective and efficient functioning of the International Criminal Court. ~~[My delegation also aligns itself with the statement by XX on behalf of the African Group.]~~

It is with great pleasure that I take the floor on behalf of my delegation. We are very pleased that this “general debate” has been included again on the agenda of the Assembly and we reiterate its importance in providing an opportunity to discuss important policy priorities, issues of concern and our common vision for the Court.

Mr President, the last year has seen the ICC undertake a tremendous amount of groundbreaking work. This week, the first confirmation of charges hearing is taking place. It is commendable that the ICC is working so tirelessly and drawing ever closer to the first effective trial. We have a tremendous responsibility, as the body tasked with providing oversight and support to the Court, to make sure that the Court is in a position to undertake its work effectively and efficiently, always striving to make its mark in bringing an end to impunity across the world, for this and future generations.

The International Criminal Court is fortunate and this Assembly is fortunate: we have the experiences not only of the ICC’s work to date but also of other International courts and Tribunals from which important lessons can be drawn



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and mistakes avoided. Surely, one of the most important lessons from these previous tribunals must be the colossal importance of Outreach. At present, the ICC Outreach program and accordingly the success of the Court is in danger of being compromised through under-investment and lack of commitment. We recognise with appreciation the Court's efforts over the past year to fulfil this Assembly's request to intensify their outreach activities and to provide an outreach strategy, to help put both their work and their budgetary requests in context.

The ICC does not have the advantage of being based in the country where the crimes were committed. To the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, of Uganda and of Sudan, the ICC is not yet tangible, it cannot really be visited, its building cannot be seen. In Sierra Leone, the Special Court worked hard to design and implement an effective outreach strategy: the ICC must work even harder to make its presence and effect felt, through its outreach efforts, and we must provide support to help them fulfil that tremendous responsibility.

Mr President, in our countries and in the DRC, in Uganda, in Sudan, our people do not have instant access to the "information super-highway", to the website of the ICC, with its informative news and live "webcast" of proceedings. These are useful tools. They project the work of the Court worldwide. However, they don't reach many people where it is needed most, in the situation countries. In order for the message to reach those people, we need Court Outreach staff on the ground, giving lectures, talking on local radio and disseminating information in person. The Court needs a public face and that face must be the Outreach department, tirelessly working to provide the people



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of these countries with a tangible court and a sense of having a stake in the accountability process. This is not a luxury: this is a necessity for the ICC to do what it is intended to do; to bring accountability and to help turn a page in the history of the situation countries. This Assembly must rise to help the Court meet that the challenge.

Mr President, I mentioned earlier the responsibility of this Assembly to guide and support the Court. As we all know, one of the most important tasks of this Assembly is to consider and decide the budget of the Court. These somewhat dry words do not really convey the responsibility of each and every State Party to play close attention to this issue, to consider what the Court is requesting and why and to supply the Court with the resources it needs, while ensuring there is proper financial management. Mr President, I am not talking about micro-managing the Court's budget: my delegation does not consider that to be a proper task of this Assembly; indeed, we feel it would be counter-productive. Our proper task is to provide guidance and oversight. In this task, the important and excellent work of the Committee on Budget and Finance is instrumental and we take this opportunity to recognise with appreciation the members of that Committee and their commitment.

Mr President, we would nevertheless be remiss in our responsibilities if we simply laid the entirety of the burden to consider and decide the budget of the Court on the Committee on Budget and Finance. We must find a way for this Assembly to discharge its responsibilities to the Court – and by extension to the people it has been created to serve – to engage in real discussions on the budget, with the Court and with each other. To keep the budget at reasonable



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levels and avoid micro-management, while ensuring that policy decisions are made by this Assembly. Let's look at the recommendations of the CBF; let's discuss them here. Let's take responsibility as the Assembly of States Parties for any cuts that may need to be made to the budget proposed by the Court and let's do so based on our shared vision for the Court.

Mr President, before closing, my delegation would like to express our gratitude to those who, particularly through the Trust Fund, have helped delegations such as my own to attend this crucial meeting of the Assembly of States Parties. We have supported and will continue to support the Court as a key element in the restoration of peace and the rule of law in all the corners of the world. To maximise its potential, we must continue our efforts towards universal ratification of the Rome Statute and, above all, we must assist the Court by providing it with clear guidance and support, particularly on outreach.

Mr President,

Thank you.