

Fifth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Plenary,
Opening Session with General Debate: 23 November 2006, Afternoon Session

Prepared by ELSA and CASIN delegates

**Informal and Unofficial Verbatim Notes from the ASP Plenary, General Debate:
23 November 2006, Afternoon Session**

These notes are not an official transcript of the meetings, but may serve as an informal and general overview of the proceedings. Please do not use these notes for official purposes.

President of the Assembly of States Parties, Ambassador Bruno Stagno Ugarte

President: I invite our first speaker, distinguished delegate of The Netherlands, to address the Assembly.

The Netherlands: Distinguished delegates, let me say that The Netherlands as EU member fully endorses the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union this morning. In 1948 the world community adopted the UDHR, since then the same community witnessed breaches of its principles, there were a lot of victims. Solemn declarations on human rights are meaningless if humankind does not work in accordance with them. The permanent and universal International Criminal Court has been established to encourage and promote respect to basic human values. This Court is an instrument to stop impunity. Justice and peace are complementary goals, and no peace should be without justice.

The ICC relatively smoothly passed beyond its formative stage and now is fully operative, and its operations are impressive. The OTP has received and analysed information from different sources and from all parts of the world, situations have been referred by States Parties, non-States Parties and even by the UN Security Council. In two situations the arrest warrants have been issued, and the first trial has started.

Three years before the Review Conference, the Netherlands would like to indicate three main challenges: first, universal support for the Court's mandate is essential, all regions of the world should be well represented, we shall support non-States Parties in ratifying the Rome Statute, for example by offering these States the benefit of their expertise and best practices. The Netherlands will continue its efforts to raise the political profile of the Court, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Second, many States have not implemented the ICC Statute into their domestic legislation, and it makes it impossible to co-operate fully with the Court, States whose legislation complies with the Rome Statute should support other States. The Netherlands will support its bilateral programme of assistance in this area, and we welcome the co-operation of other States in it.

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Third, the Netherlands has noticed the appeal by the Court that in order to act it needs more support and co-operation from States Parties, and non-States Parties and international organisations. It is time for creative thinking to respond to this request.

On behalf of the Host State we would like to welcome the progress in the issue of Permanent Premises. The draft Headquarters Agreement is the result of constructive agreement between the Court and the Host State, and we recommend that this Assembly grants it approval to it.

In the first years of its existence the Court has made an impressive work, but more work to fight impunity is ahead. Thank you very much.

President: I thank the Host State. Now I welcome the distinguished representative of Denmark.

Denmark: Starting of Lubanga proceedings means a historic step, especially taking into account the victims' involvement. There are substantial challenges which the Court faces in its work.

To achieve the aim of international justice the co-operation of States with the Court is essential, States Parties shall promote the interests of the Court. As EU Presidency pointed out in its statement, we promote the Court and engage in universalising the Rome Statute. But more shall be done.

For many reasons, relations between ICC and the Security Council are not simple but important ones. We will deal with the inter-play between the Court and Council, in issues like the fight against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The co-operation is necessary in this respect. Denmark's elected membership in the Security Council will come to an end at the end of this year. During the thematic debate of the Danish Presidency this year, the Council indicated that future atrocities should be prevented and the impunity of perpetrators which have been experienced in the past would be stopped.

We share the common aim: we all strive for the efficient and strong Court. We shall listen to the different points of view and learn from them, and make this session a success. After this Assembly we shall support the dialogue both in The Hague and in New York. We should develop the sustained dialogue between the States Parties and the Court, as President of the Court has mentioned today.

As for Review Conference, we should have realistic expectations. It is crucial that the Review Conference should be a uniting and consolidating event, and organised in transparent and orderly manner. One of the options is to create a special WG, another – to establish an open-ended mechanism of the Bureau. We look forward to

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this discussion in the future.

President: Thank you. I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Germany.

Germany: Thank you, Mr. President and their speaker who are at the podium now for their reports. Foundations for international criminal justice have been laid down in my home town of Nuremberg. I want to use this opportunity to confirm Germany's support for the ICC and the Rome Statute, we support the EU Action Plan on this matter and we fully associate with the statement made by the Finnish Presidency this morning. The agenda of this session reflects many responsibilities of the States Parties.

We welcome the Court for the exercise of self-examination, such as Strategic Plan, the Court Capacity Model and the Outreach Strategy. We share the CBF's views and would like their views fully taken into consideration, but the decision shall be made by the Assembly. We are for more active outreach, we are ready to support Court in this matter, but States Parties and NGOs can play an important role in it.

We need to take decision on permanent premises without undue delay, let's move to Alexanderkazerne quickly.

The number of ratifications is still falling behind our expectations. Germany is ready to give assistance, its law on implementation is available in all official languages of the Court, so help yourself. We look forward to the accession of Japan and we're ready to support it.

We shall explore the ways of enhancing the ways of co-operation with the Court. The Court can't render its judgments without cases before it. Although the States' co-operation is important, the OTP also should work.

We have contributed 300,000 euros to the Fund's 2006 budget.

We note with great interest the paper on Review Conference by our colleague Mr. Fife from Norway and we are looking forward to an open debate on how to proceed.

It has been a long journey from Nuremberg to The Hague indeed. Both peace and justice are fundamental prerequisites for any sustainable post-conflict nation-building. It's my pleasure to announce an international conference "Building a Future on Peace and Justice to be held in Nuremberg from 25 to 27 June 2007, to be organised by Germany in co-operation with Finland, Jordan and NGOs. Invitations will be sent to the governments and I am looking forward to meeting you in my home town of Nuremberg.

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President: Thank you, I now give a floor to the distinguished delegate of Uganda.

Uganda: I would like to comment on what the President of the Court and the Prosecutor have stated in their reports emphasizing the need for a closer and more intensified state co-operation.

The LRA has terrorized people of northern Uganda, southern Sudan and eastern DRC for decades. In December 2003 the Government of Uganda has decided to refer the case not because the Government was unable or unwilling to try LRA itself, but because the ICC was established specifically to deal with crimes of this magnitude, and the Government was unable to apprehend the LRA operating outside Uganda's territory. However, even though the general whereabouts of the LRA commanders are known, their apprehension and release of abducted children and women is still a main challenge.

I will explain why Uganda had to start peace talks. The warrants of arrest were issued a year ago, but in spite of significant efforts they were not executed. The LRA had to relocate to Garamba National Park, DRC, due to military pressure of the UPDF and the SPLA, as well as the ICC presence. LRA relocated to three States Parties where there are five military forces that may be able to assist in the arrest. But the military forces, including MONUC, UNMIS, and Ugandan, Sudanese and Congolese national armies, failed to arrest the five LRA leaders. The LRA had become a regional security threat and was threatening to the implementation of agreement between Sudanese Government and Government of Southern Sudan, therefore President Museveni offered the LRA a "soft landing".

Peace talks mediated by Vice-President Machar resulted in the signing of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement this summer. The people of northern Uganda want to go home. Security has returned to northern Uganda and people have started returning to their homes, with assistance of the Government and partners.

Uganda is continuously in touch with OTP to keep them abreast of the developments in the peace process. If it was not for the arrest warrants, the LRA would never have been involved in the negotiation process. The warrants remain a constant pressure on LRA leaders to stay in the peace process. Uganda tried to execute the arrest warrants. The UPDF engaged with an LRA unit allegedly lead by Raska Lukwiya, as a result he is dead, and it this was confirmed with assistance from the ICC.

Uganda is committed to conclude the peace talks successfully. Recently, the LRA met in Garamba, DRC, with a team of lawyers, to explain to them the provisions of the Rome Statute. The talks are continuing, and it is speculative to determine the possible outcome.

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Uganda will not condone impunity.

The UN Security Council has recognised the LRA as a regional threat. States Parties should understand that executing arrest warrants is a collective responsibility. Working Groups should not be just theoretical, not just drafting recommendations, they should be capable of rendering a practical support on any of the aspects of state co-operation, including sentence reinforcement, and witness relocation, and execution of arrest warrants.

The ICC's involvement in Uganda has had an enormous impact leading to many positive developments in the region.

President: Thank you, I give a floor to the distinguished delegate of Ecuador

Ecuador: Ecuador recognises the importance of the ICC and we welcome 4 States which have joined the Rome Statute recently.

Republic of Ecuador supports the Strategic Plan of the International Criminal Court.

We insist on the establishment of the focal point of the ASP to prepare for the Review Conference.

States shall comply with their financial obligations vis-à-vis the Court.

The Ecuadorian delegation has carefully researched the reports of the Court and documents prepared by CICC and Human Rights Watch.

We advocate for the universality of the Rome Statute and the Court to have adequate tools to implement justice and fight the impunity.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished Argentine Republic.

Argentina: The Argentine Republic recognizes the work carried out by the President of the Court, Prosecutor and Registrar, and President of the Assembly.

It's worth mentioning that our country has participated in the work of the Court from the very beginning. Argentina values the work of VTF Board and SWGCA. It also recognises the challenges confronting the ICC.

Advances are also the result of the States Parties' daily commitment to trying to respond the needs arising from this international judicial exercise. The ICC can count on the Argentine commitment. In intensifying its judicial co-operation with the Court, the international community will contribute to strengthening the ICC's

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dissuasive capabilities. The co-operation with other international tribunals shall be promoted.

Argentina thinks that Strategic Plan is an important contribution to the Court's objectives and goals.

I should like to congratulate the new Member States, and call upon the States that have not signed or ratified the Rome Statute to do it as soon as possible.

President: I give the floor to Colombia.

Colombia: Despite difficulties in setting up the Court, it is truly a universal body. The establishment of the ICC is one of the most important achievements. The first confirmation hearing is a clear indication of the progress made.

We are committed to the principles of international law. We have signed APIC and pay contributions in time; we participate in The Hague working group and Friends of the Court group. Colombia has strengthened and enforced its own legal system. A Justice and Peace Law has been enacted by the parliament in Colombia and modified by the Constitutional Court. It is a transitional law which is fully in line with international standards. All has been done transparently and with the support of the international community.

We hope to continue our constructive dialogue with the Court in the future. We should particularly have in mind the discussion on Permanent Premises.

The Strategic Plan opens the way to constructive exchange of ideas. We should emphasize the attempt of the Court to draft the budget in accordance with strategic priorities, but we hope to reduce the budget increases every year without restricting the operations of the Court. The budget increases shall be limited to the absolutely necessary things.

We encourage the Outreach Strategy and improvement of the outreach activities of the Court to inform people involved.

I pay special tribute to the efforts which have been done during the year by the President of the Assembly.

We would like to mention the work of CICC and NGOs which provided good food for thought of States.

President: Thanks, I give the floor to Poland.

Poland: I would like to start with thanking the Finnish EU Presidency for their statement this morning and it reflects Poland's position.

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Financial contributions are necessary, including those beyond annual financial obligations, but States have concerns regarding additional financial contributions, apart from the regular budget, and contribute to the Court in logistical manner. Those States which have not concluded agreements on co-operation with the Court on different issues may consider contributing financially in these programs. States should be aware of their forthcoming financial contribution not only for the given financial years but also for next years.

Support to the Court should be implemented into the national laws of Member States.

The adoption last year by the Assembly of the VTF Regulations has made it possible for the VTF Board to accelerate its work on projects, and we welcome the recent appointment of Director of its Secretariat. We welcome the contributions to the Board and we have made voluntary contribution to the Fund for the second time (10,000 Euros). We think that current members of the Board should be given the opportunity to serve in the Board for the next three years and continue their efforts.

The Court has a chance to open a new stage in international relations and justice; no State shall be afraid of its jurisdiction because of complementarity.

President: Thank you, I invite the representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago: Trinidad and Tobago would like to extend our compliments to the Host State – The Netherlands.

We think that the Court is the credible international penal judicial institution. We are happy to have a judge from Trinidad and Tobago on the Court's bench. Trinidad and Tobago applauds the efforts of the Court to address the atrocities committed in Uganda, DRC and Sudan. Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the rule of law both on national and international levels. We welcome the cooperation agreements concluded by the Court with EU, Austria and ICRC. Trinidad and Tobago implemented into its domestic legal system its international obligations under Rome Statute in 2005. Trinidad and Tobago has also ratified APIC.

We pay the tribute to Liechtenstein for sponsoring the inter-sessional meeting of SWGCA. We hope that the adoption of the definition of the crime of aggression will help to have more States join the Rome Statute and will be concluded successfully before 2009.

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We are happy to have our former President in the VTF Board and we have made a voluntary contribution to the Fund.

It is imperative that the Court continues to receive co-operation from the all States.

The ICC represents a hope for the whole of humanity. Under no circumstances can peace trump justice. Court must become a global instrument, and we welcome new States Parties.

President: I give the floor to go Hungary.

Hungary: We fully endorse the statement made on behalf of the EU. Hungary welcomes the Bureau's decision to devote two days to the general debate.

Hungary has enacted legislation to implement the Rome Statute. The Parliament has recently adopted an act aiming at the adjustment of national legislation on immunity of certain state officials to the Rome Statute. Hungary has become a party to APIC which entered into force for Hungary on 21 April 2006.

The Court can function effectively only with the assistance of the States Parties; it does not possess any enforcement bodies. With more States Parties, more assistance can be provided. We need to make sure that measures provided for by Part IX of the Rome Statute are implemented with diligence and speed. Hungary has been approached by the Court to help identify information sources; the request was duly noted. Hungary is examining the possibilities to conclude agreements on the relocation of witnesses and the execution of sentences.

The number of States Parties makes us carefully optimistic, but it is unbalanced process and certain regions are still unrepresented. We welcome the news that Japan will accede to the ICC Treaty. This news is very encouraging; hopefully, it will encourage other Asian countries to consider joining.

Hungary shares the views that during its development, it is inevitable that the budget of the Court increases. The ASP should make sure that funding is provided only to those activities which are strictly necessary.

The question of permanent premises is an example of the issue when the decision should be taken in the period between the two sessions of the ASP.

Drafting provisions on the crime of aggression is an intellectually difficult and time-consuming exercise.

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The Review Conference is approaching, so we can't overemphasize the upcoming fifth resumed session of ASP.

President: I give the floor to the representative of Benin.

Benin: Benin is honoured to take part in this session of the ASP and in this general debate, enabling members of the organization to express their views. Benin supports the vision and action of the Court. War crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide can no longer go without impunity in the new millennium.

Under the Constitution of Benin, the human being is sacred. We ratified the Rome Statute in 2002 and APIC in 2006.

A conference on co-operation with the Court will be organized in Cotonou, which will be a good opportunity for magistrates, lawyers, government officials, NGOs, journalists to understand better the Court. This conference, we hope, will be held in the second part of 2007, but we don't have enough resources for this conference, I raise an appeal for potential sponsors to help this event, and to strengthen the Court's outreach in the Western-African region.

President: Thank you, I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Italy.

Italy: We support the statement delivered this morning by Finland on behalf of the EU. Challenges for the Court ahead are numerous. International and national actors shall support the activities of the ICC; we should keep up the momentum. Some regions of the world are largely underrepresented at this Assembly.

Implementation of the Rome Statute is priority for the Italian Government and it is carefully considered.

We welcome Japan's intention to join ICC Statute.

We consider that arrears may affect the results of the Court. We appreciate the improvements in the preparation of 2007 ICC budget, sound structure of the budget is necessary for the Court. The budget and contributions shall be transparent. We expect the increases of the budget to reflect the current level of judicial activity.

We express our appreciation that the debates at the ASP have lead to the strategic documents of the ICC. The Rome Statute is a keystone in the development of the international legal order based on the principles of accountability. I assure Italy's continuous support to ICC.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Peru.

Peru: The entry of the Rome Statute into force is a milestone in

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history. I welcome the statements of the President of the Court and Prosecutor made this morning. The progress made is due very much to effective assistance and co-operation provided by the States. We still need more co-operation in certain areas. We need a support of States to the OTP.

Peru is pleased to work now as a President of the Security Council, and we helped in the process of detainment of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo.

The Court should have adequate outreach.

Although the Court is not yet universal, and it means that many human beings are not protected by the Rome Statute, and further ratifications are necessary.

The Court should not become a heavy bureaucratic model. We are convinced that the ASP, although it has a lot of purely administrative issues before it, should become a forum to discuss the Rome Statute and its implementation.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone: We look forward to another fruitful session of this Assembly and to the discussions on critical issues for the effective functioning of the ICC. We are very pleased that this general debate has been included to the agenda.

In the last year, the ICC has undertaken a tremendous amount of work, including the first confirmation hearing. We have a tremendous responsibility, to make sure that the Court is able to bring an end to impunity across the world for this and future generations. The Assembly is fortunate: we have experiences also of other international courts and tribunals to avoid mistakes.

One of the important lessons from previous tribunals is the necessity of outreach, and we welcome the Court for strengthening its outreach activities and providing the Outreach Strategy. At present, the ICC outreach program is in danger of being compromised through under-investment. The ASP shall provide support for the efforts of the Court to intensify the outreach activities. The website of the ICC is a useful tool. We need the Court's outreach staff on the ground; the Court needs a public face, an outreach department, to talk on local radio, to deliver lectures. It's not a luxury, it's a necessity for the ICC.

Regarding the budget, the work of the CBF is instrumental and we recognize its members' commitment. But every State Party shall be involved in this process. The budget of the Court is after all approved by the Assembly. The Assembly shall avoid micro-management,

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but to take policy decisions, let's discuss the CBF report now;
let's look at the recommendations of the CBF at this session of ASP.

Thank you for those who contributed to the Fund which has helped my delegation to attend the ASP. We 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.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Republic of Korea.

Republic of Korea: Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. We should continue efforts towards the universal ratification of the Rome Statute. It is important that the Court has its first suspect in custody.

The Court can make changes in the awareness of the people who suffered from crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court.

It is a necessary development that the Court has concluded several co-operation agreements.

APIC is now in force for the Republic of Korea. Implementing legislation will be submitted to the national assembly. I re-confirm my country's strong support to the ICC in achieving its noble aim.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Barbados.

Barbados: Barbados, as every small developing country, is very pleased to be part of international justice.

We were penalized for not signing a bilateral agreement on non-surrender of individuals to the ICC. We believe that the ICC is multilateral, not simply a bilateral institution.

The ICC shall pursue its mandate, and we welcome the issuance of arrest warrants in respect of certain individuals on the African continent, and we'll also like to see some trials coming to an end. Trials shall be done with the proper speed. We think that the ICC shall mean value for money.

Justice shall also not be done but also be seen.

I welcome the establishing the premises of the Court.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Belgium.

Belgium: We support the Court and Finland's statement made on behalf of the EU.

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It is essential that States develop mechanisms for effective co-operation with the Court. All States Parties should conclude specific bilateral agreements with the Court, to cover all the aspects relating to the implementation of the Court's legal mandate.

The principle of complementarity is essential and shall be carefully observed. Belgium welcomes the international efforts for advanced criminal justice.

And we support the establishment of VTF, it's important that it now has experienced staff, we urge the States to make voluntary contributions to the Fund. In the draft budget, which is now under consideration in the Belgian parliament, 75,000 Euros are planned for contribution to the VTF for next year.

Decision-making must be more effective.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Mexico.

Mexico: We'd like to thank the President of the Court for his report which provided us with excellent food for thought. We'd also like to acknowledge the work of the President of the Board of VTF.

Implementation and complementarity are two sides of the same coin. The Court must become an effective instrument to fight impunity.

We join the statement of Australia (also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand) on necessary support to ensure the accession of Japan.

Mexico made an amendment to its constitution to make it possible to recognize the jurisdiction of ICC and after doing so, it acceded to the Rome Statute in 2005. APIC has been sent to the Mexican senate for its approval. The legislation on co-operation with the Court is now under preparation, and President Fox has signed a bill on co-operation with the Court, and it is under discussion by the relevant departments of the federal Mexican government.

We urge other States to ratify the Rome Statute.

The challenges we face are still massive. We still have to be critical. We need to comply fully with the obligations embodied in the Statute, and all Member States shall co-operate fully with the Court in administrative and other matters. The dialogue between the Court and ASP should be closer and more detailed. We welcome the opening of the Court's liaison office at the UN headquarters in New York. This office needs to have necessary tools and resources to liaise properly with the UN.

My delegation has noted the strategic plan, capacity model and outreach plan. We should analyze fundamental issues, such as public

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awareness. We should think about how to apply Article 53 of the Rome Statute.

The existence of the Court and its full operationality are crucial for immediate action. Mexico appreciates the extraordinary nature of the Court.

On the dilemma of peace and justice: justice can not in any way be subject of political consideration, no denial of justice is possible, politicians deal with politics, and lawyers should deal with judicial activity of the Court.

We want to reiterate our commitment to fulfill our obligations under Rome Statute.

President: I thank the Mexican ambassador for her co-ordination of the Hague Working Group. I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Paraguay.

Paraguay: Paraguay has recently signed up to the Rome Statute and it will be included into Paraguayan legislation. It corresponds with the national constitution of 1992. We also have a truth and justice commission to investigate the serious crimes against human rights. The office of this commission has been extended.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Japan.

Japan: It is a great privilege for me to speak at the ASP on behalf of the Japanese government which is currently preparing its accession to the Rome Statute. Japan participated in the Rome Conference and all subsequent ICC meetings, and now we're making the final effort to join the Court, to prevent the worst crimes. The Prime Minister stated that the Government will join the Statute in 2007, and we're preparing the draft legislation. Parliament will then decide whether to approve the Rome Statute at its next ordinary session.

Article 117 of the Rome Statute provides that the contributions of the States Parties shall be made on the basis of UN scale of assessments, but the UN ceiling shall be also applied to the ICC scheme, as it was mentioned by Australia in its speech on behalf of CANZ, and the relevant draft resolution which is kindly proposed by them. Japan will participate in the discussion, and I hope that at the next ASP we will be State Party.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Guatemala.

Guatemala: This year marks 10 years since the signing of the peace agreement which ended the conflict in my country. We want to join the ICC in its fight against impunity and most serious crimes, and

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prevention of new crimes and atrocities across the world. In Guatemala, the executive branch of the Government has sent the Rome Statute for the approval by the Congress of the Republic – the legislative body. After Congress's approval, the executive branch of the Government will proceed to issue an instrument of ratification. We invite Judge Kirsch, President of the Court, to visit our country in the beginning of 2007.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of ICPO.

Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization): On behalf of Secretary General of Interpol, I am happy to address the Assembly today. Article 87 of the Rome Statute is a legal foundation of co-operation between the Interpol and OTP. The relevant agreement concluded by OTP and ICPO entered into force in 2005. The OTP has now access to the global police communication system, its electronic database, to share crucial information on criminal activities between member countries.

Arrest warrants issued by the Court in Uganda situation with respect to 5 individuals have been subject to red notices. National authorities have now access to the Court's warrants. As rightly recalled by the President Kirsch this morning, the Court can't arrest the individuals.

Interpol will contribute to the achievement of international criminal justice and the work of the Court towards it.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission.
International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission: I express my gratitude. Our commission was created in accordance with Article 90 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions. It's the only permanent body of its kind, and known as the Article 90 Commission.

The underlying idea is to avoid uncertainty regarding the facts leading to mutual accusations which may block the return to peace. We focus on the implementation of international humanitarian law. We also offer our good offices to the parties of the conflict. We do not define international responsibility or accountability but define facts. Conclusions of this commission may be useful for national and international criminal proceedings.

Of course, the ICC has its own investigation bodies, but in some situations it may be appropriate to rely on the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission which is a permanent independent international institution composed of 15 members elected in their individual capacities, including doctors, diplomats, and

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others. The Commission can work only with the consent of the parties to the conflict. Many States have recognized the competence of the commission on a permanent basis.

President: Thank you, and I give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDC): UNDC is a special structure within the UN Secretariat with headquarters in Vienna and more than one hundred personnel. We promote efforts to combat drug traffic and international crimes, to strengthen capacity of national justice systems, capacity building, ratify and implement UN conventions. We assist countries to reform their legal systems. UNDC promotes development of soft law in prevention of crimes, and such areas as juvenile justice and penal reform. UNDC is a repository of expertise in criminal justice.

UNDC supported such post-conflicted countries as Afghanistan (prison reform, re-drafting criminal law), Angola, Haiti, Burundi (reform of juvenile justice system), Iraq (preparation of criminal justice strategy), and other countries. UNDC supports UN peacekeeping missions, training their police components. UNDC in co-operation with OSCE has developed criminal justice development toolkit, standardized and cross-referenced tool, to integrate UN norms on crime prevention and criminal justice.

The ICC and UNDC are the only existent UN-related institutions specializing on criminal justice. Although the ICC concentrates on specific cases, UNDC is helping to maintain national justice systems generally. The ICC and UNDC work towards the same goal: to establish rule of law where it has been violated, to assist victims. I hope that we will work together.

President: We are running out of time. Sorry to NGOs. We will proceed with the general debate tomorrow.

I wish to indicate that the Government of Albania withdrew the candidacy of Mr. Gumi to the Board of VTF. There are consultations to fill the Asian seat. I propose that we postpone agenda item 8 (election of VTF Board members).

Bolivia has made its payment and regains its right to vote.

Thank you, interpreters, for your additional time.