

Welcoming ceremony for a new State Party
State of Palestine
Speech by H. E. Minister Sidiki Kaba
President of the Assembly of States Parties

Mr. Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine, H.E. Mr. Riyad AL-MALIKI,
Madam Acting President of the Court,
Judges of the International Criminal Court,
Mr. Deputy Prosecutor,
Mr. Registrar,
Mr. Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This ceremony which brings us together this morning, on 1 April 2015, marks the entry into force of the Rome Statute for the State of Palestine, which deposited its instrument of accession on 2 January 2015, thereby becoming the 123rd State Party. This highly symbolic commitment once again confirms that the peoples of the world, wherever they may be, embrace the noble ideals of the ICC; a world where there is Peace and Justice for all.

The accession of Palestine as the 19th State Party from the Asia-Pacific region and the second from the Middle-East, is a new stage in the quest for universality for the Statute. We hope that it will pave the way for other countries in the Middle-East who, by adopting the Rome Statute, will strengthen the International Criminal Court in its fight against impunity for mass crimes.

I believe this is possible, because the Middle-East is a region of great civilisations which have always placed a high value on human dignity. Lying at the cross-roads between Eurasia and Africa, the region has also played a crucial role in global affairs at a strategic, economic, political, cultural and religious level. Unfortunately, as is the case in many other regions, it is marred at present by a number of

conflicts which have caused grave suffering. The voices of the victims in this part of the world are crying out for justice and peace.

Palestine has set a real example by signing the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court. In terms of cooperation, that agreement is of critical importance for the effectiveness of the ICC. We congratulate Palestine on that, and we now invite it to incorporate the crimes cited in the Rome Statute into its national legislation, which represents a measure of the effectiveness of its accession.

In the hope that Palestine will become an active partner in the pursuit of universality and cooperation, I would like, once again, on behalf of the Assembly of States Parties, to congratulate the State of Palestine and warmly welcome it to the ever-growing ICC family.

The Hague, 1 April 2015