

Statement by Mr. Manabu Horii
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of
the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
17 July 2018, The Hague

Distinguished Chair,

Excellencies,

I am pleased to join the previous speakers in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. Japan attaches great significance to the promotion of the rule of law, and has consistently supported the ICC since its inception.

Over the past twenty years, the ICC has made steady progress in investigating and prosecuting the most serious crimes of international concern. I am proud that Japan has been supporting the activities of the Court in many ways. Besides being the largest financial contributor, we have provided judges and other highly qualified human resources to various organs of the Court and the Assembly of States Parties (ASP).

The ICC has also played an important role in reparative justice, and we commend the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) for its dedicated work. We are heartened that Japan's contributions to the TFV have helped women who suffered sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities.

Mr. Chair,

Looking ahead, I would like to emphasize three important points for strengthening the ICC regime. The first point concerns universality. To ensure that the ICC effectively promotes the rule of law globally, it must become a truly universal court and gain strong support for its work. It is unfortunate that there are still a number of States that have yet to ratify the Rome Statute. Moreover, some States Parties have considered or chosen to withdraw from the Statute. We must address these challenges. We must continue to engage with those States as well as with non-States Parties and emphasize the irreplaceable value of the Rome Statute system.

For its part, Japan has been advocating the value of the ICC in the Asia Pacific region and will continue to do so on relevant occasions, including at the annual session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) that we will host in Tokyo this October.

The second point involves strengthening the function of the Court. Since the Court does not have its own enforcement authorities, its success depends heavily on the cooperation of States. Efforts are ongoing among States Parties to foster cooperation in many areas such as financial investigation and asset recovery, which are critical to effective prosecution and reparation. Work to improve ASP procedures for non-cooperation is also underway. Japan will continue to actively participate in those efforts.

The third point concerns a consensus-based approach as the way and means to consolidate support of States Parties for the ICC. For the Court to function effectively and sustainably, it must be supported by a united ASP. That is why we have cherished the tradition of having thorough discussions and making decisions by consensus even on challenging issues, such as the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. As we mark the activation today, let us recall the importance of unity among States Parties.

In closing, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to express our continuous commitment to supporting the ICC in its fight against impunity. Although we have made tangible progress over the past twenty years, there is still a long way to go. Let us be united to achieve our common goal of realizing international justice.

Thank you.

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