

Welcoming Ceremony for Seychelles as the 112th State Party to the Rome Statute

1 November 2010

**Remarks of Judge Sang-Hyun Song, President of the International Criminal Court to
H.E. Ms. Vivianne Fock Tave, Ambassador of the Republic of Seychelles**

Excellency,

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to open this ceremony on the occasion of the Republic of Seychelles officially becoming the 112th State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

I wish to extend to you a very warm welcome on behalf of the Presidency and Judges as well as the entire Court. I am glad that the First Vice-President, Judge Fatoumata Diarra, and the Second Vice-President, Judge Hans-Peter Kaul, have joined us on this occasion, as have my other brothers and sisters from the judiciary, insofar as their other commitment did not prevent them from being here today.

With us are also the ICC's Prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the Registrar, Madame Silvana Arbia, and the Vice-President of the Assembly of State Parties, His Excellency Ambassador Jorge Lomonaco.

Excellency,

By ratifying the Rome Statute, Seychelles has entered the growing majority of the world's nations that have combined their efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to humanity.

Every ratification is important, even if there is no reason for a country to expect that it would ever need to have actual involvement with genocide, crimes against humanity or the other horrendous crimes that are listed in the Statute.

Each State that joins the ICC sends out a signal that it does not tolerate impunity and will not provide refuge to those suspected of atrocities. Ratification of the Rome Statute is also a deterrent measure that contributes to the prevention of any future crimes.

The unanimous vote that the Parliament of Seychelles took to join the ICC was a forceful expression of your country's commitment to justice, peace and the rule of law. I see it as a natural progression, considering that Seychelles is party to the Genocide Convention as well as the four Geneva Conventions and the first and second additional protocols.

It was also the first ratification by any State following the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in Kampala, Uganda, earlier this year. In this way, Seychelles marked the beginning of a new chapter in the development of the ICC and the Rome Statute system.

The initial period of institution-building is behind us and we now look forward to strengthening not only the work of the ICC but also the wider system around it. To that end, we must all increase our efforts on the key issues of universality, co-operation and complementarity identified in Kampala.

On that note, it was very encouraging to notice the statement released by the Foreign Ministry of Seychelles on the occasion of depositing the instrument of ratification which explicitly recognised the need to put in place national legislation to comply with the Rome Statute.

I was very delighted to learn from the statement that Seychelles is prepared to make the necessary amendments with the support of its international partners.

Indeed, knitting a tight web of international justice is a collaborative effort in which many actors beside States play an important role, notably including regional and intergovernmental as well as the civil society which has been instrumental in the establishment of the ICC from the very beginning.

Your Excellency,

I congratulate the nation of Seychelles on its decision to join the Rome Statute and I wholeheartedly welcome your country to the International Criminal Court.

I fully agree with the assessment of your country's Foreign Minister that "[t]his ratification marks an important step for Seychelles as a responsible member of the international community".

Welcome – bienvenue!

PRESENTING THE ROME STATUTE

In the presence of the Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties, I am pleased to present to you, Ambassador Fock Tave, this special limited edition of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

It symbolizes our joint commitment to the rule of law and the commitment of all States Parties to this Statute to honour it.