

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO OPENING OF 11TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES
PARTIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT”
The Hague, 14 November 2012**

*Delivered by UN Legal Counsel Patricia O'Brien
(As delivered)*

Mr. President,
President Song,
President Intelmann,
Madam Prosecutor,
Madam Registrar,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delivering these remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Ten years ago, the world reached a defining moment in international law with the entry-into-force of the Rome Statute. This was an extraordinary and momentous accomplishment earned through relentless effort - one that even some of the most fervent supporters of the cause of international criminal justice had barely dared to hope to witness in their lifetime.

Today, the International Criminal Court is more than up and running; it is a fully functioning international judicial body, and a fact of international life.

When the Court this year issued its first verdict -- another landmark -- in the trial of Thomas Lubanga, we witnessed the exclusive focus, for the first time in the history of international criminal justice, on the war crimes of conscripting, enlisting and using child soldiers. I wholeheartedly welcome this attention to the plight of children in situations of armed conflict and I am confident that you will continue to set other legal precedents and ensure that victims are at the heart of your work.

I am proud to support the Court's officials and staff, including the Prosecutor, Registrar and all other individuals who bring its work to life. The United Nations will respond quickly and positively, wherever and whenever we can, to your requests for cooperation. We will also continue lending logistical and administrative assistance to the Court's operations in the field.

As we celebrate the Court's significant accomplishments, we must also acknowledge that there are still many forces that seek to undermine the edifice which we have all striven so hard to create and to maintain. In addition, the ICC confronts a task more challenging than any faced by other previous international criminal tribunals: that of contending with situations of active conflict. This is why it is important to ensure that governments are committed to doing what it takes to enable the Court to carry out its work – from capturing and transferring to the Court those who are the subject of arrest warrants, to supporting the Court's proceedings by making information and evidence available to the Prosecutor, to the Defence and to the legal representatives of victims.

I stand firm in support of the Court and of its efforts to end impunity, to bring justice and to build an age of accountability. Only when perpetrators of grave crimes are prosecuted and held to account can there be any hope that future crimes will be prevented and peace preserved. The International Criminal Court is central to making sure that this happens.

With our Relationship Agreement as our solid foundation, the International Criminal Court can count on the support of the United Nations now and into the future.