



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**New York Working Group of the Assembly of States Parties,**

**Remarks**

**by**

**Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares**

Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and  
United Nations Legal Counsel,

**18 January 2022, 10:30 am (New York time)**

Your Excellency, Ambassador Rae,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you today during the first meeting of the New York Working Group of the Assembly of States Parties in 2022.

This year is an important year for the Court. It marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute. It therefore seems fitting today to recall the long history of the close relationship between the United Nations and the Court. As you all know, the United Nations played a significant role in assisting States to establish the ICC. Some attribute the creation of the Court to the 1989 resolution of the General Assembly on transnational crimes and the establishment



of an international criminal court with jurisdiction over such crimes, which revived a negotiation process that had been stalled for decades.

It was again a resolution of the General Assembly which convened the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, which ultimately adopted the Rome Statute in 1998.

The Secretary-General continues to play a role by acting as depositary of the Court's founding instrument, a function that is carried out by my Office. The Office of Legal Affairs also acts as the focal point within the Organization for cooperation with the Court.

Since the ICC's establishment, the United Nations and the Court have enjoyed a strong and steadfast relationship, which stems in many ways from our common goals and visions. The Preamble to the Charter proclaims the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to establish conditions under which justice can be maintained. The establishment of the Court was an inherent part of these aspirations. The ICC is one of the fundamental pillars of international criminal justice and plays a key role in ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern, whilst bringing justice to the victims of those crimes.





In 2004, our institutions concluded a Relationship Agreement based on a shared belief that justice is a goal in its own right and essential for achieving peace, security and human rights. The Relationship Agreement has proven to be a solid foundation for our cooperation. Over the years, the United Nations has supported the Court's work by providing both substantive and logistical assistance. This assistance has included the provision of administrative and logistical support to the ICC for its meetings and field missions; facilitating interviews and testimonies of UN personnel in proceedings before the Court; and providing documents and information relevant to the Court's activities.

This cooperation, as you will readily appreciate, takes place in a confidential and discreet but efficient manner and mostly outside of the public limelight.

As the Court has steadily increased its workload, so has the cooperation between our institutions. Indeed, my Office has seen a clear increase in cooperation requests over the years, from all organs of the Court. In order to ensure that our cooperation remained strong and efficient, our institutions have engaged in continuous dialogue, stocktaking and lessons learnt. I look forward to continuing these constructive discussions with the Court's new principals, Judge Hofmański and Prosecutor Khan, as well as with the Presidency of the Assembly of States Parties.





Twenty years after the entry into force of the Rome Statute, the ICC, as any solid long-term project, remains a “work in progress”. Its work, and in particular the judicial decisions, are the focus of the attention of the international community. The enduring value of the Court will be assessed in light of its capacity to react and to adjust itself to the many challenges that it faces. In this regard, the strength of the Court also depends on the support it gets from you, the States Parties.

The abiding challenge for the Court remains to realize its full potential in its fight to end impunity and build a just and more peaceful world. In this regard, the United Nations is committed to continue to support the work of the Court and looks forward to witnessing its growth as it solidifies its position as the centerpiece of the international criminal justice system.

Thank you.

