

**Welcoming ceremony**  
**The Republic of the Philippines**  
**Statement by H.E. Mr. Jorge Lomónaco**  
**Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties**

Mr. President,  
Madame Registrar,  
Excellencies,  
Ambassador Lourdes Gutierrez Morales,

On 30 August 2011, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines confirmed its strong commitment to international criminal justice and the protection of human rights, as well as its unreserved support for the pursuit of international peace and security and an effective international criminal justice system, when it deposited its instrument of accession to the Rome Statute.

The Philippines has a rich and complex history. It is the 12th most populous country in the world, with 94 million people who are now protected against impunity by the Rome Statute system. The Philippines' strong support for the protection and promotion of human rights and its dedication to the international peace and security was clearly demonstrated with its active participation at the Rome Conference in 1998 and, in December 2000, when it signed the Rome Statute. Such a commitment with international justice was emphasized by H.E. Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan, Permanent

Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, in this year's United Nations General Assembly's general debate. Ambassador Cabactulan stated that depositing the instrument of accession of the Rome Statute was a historic moment for the Philippines and its people. He also referred to the fact that the Philippines has stood up against the impunity of colonial rule and of a dictatorship, adding that "*This time, we stand together with the rest of the world in saying "never again", to impunity, in any corner of our world.*"

The Rome Statute entered into force for the Philippines on 1 November 2011, becoming the 16th State Party belonging to the Group of Asia-Pacific and bringing the total number of States Parties to the Rome Statute to 117. These are all extremely encouraging news, as has been the recent wave of ratifications from the region. But the fact of the matter is that, in spite of all the progress made, Asia-Pacific still remains the most underrepresented region in the Rome Statute system, with just 17 States Parties to date. Only a growing number of States Parties from the region will send a strong enough signal to the international community that impunity for the most heinous crimes is no longer acceptable in Asia/Pacific. We can only urge the Philippines' neighbours to follow its example.

It is therefore a true privilege for me, on behalf of the Assembly of States Parties, to congratulate the Philippines once again and to extend to it a warm welcome to the growing ICC family.

The Hague, 8 November 2011