



Cour
Pénale
Internationale

International
Criminal
Court

Le Greffe

The Registry



Statement by Herman von Hebel

Registrar of the International Criminal Court

Ceremony for the Solemn Undertaking of the Registrar

The Hague, 18 April 2013

Mr President, Vice-Presidents,

Your Honors,

Madame Prosecutor,

Madame President of the Assembly of States Parties,

Mr Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear former and future colleagues, friends and family members

1. Thank you all for your presence at this event; I am genuinely humbled by the fact that so many of you have taken the time and effort to come to the premises of the International Criminal Court and participate in this Inauguration Ceremony.

2. I would like to start by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Honorable President, Vice-Presidents and Judges for the decision taken on 8 March 2013 to elect me as the next Registrar of the International Criminal Court for the coming five years. I hereby pledge to do everything in my capacity to honor the trust that you have placed in me and to provide you with all the services required to assist you in the exercise of your judicial responsibilities.

3. Today is a very important day for me. I had the privilege to be a member of the Dutch delegation to the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998. The ICC has in the meantime been in existence for over ten years. I feel honored and privileged again to be allowed now to further contribute to the implementation of the important mandate of the ICC; bringing justice and fighting impunity for the most horrendous crimes imaginable to humankind.

4. Having worked over the past 12 years in three other international tribunals and courts, I hope I can bring the right lessons learned and the right experience to assist the ICC in its crucial work over the coming five years.

5. I strongly believe that the Registry is a neutral organ and a provider of services. Services to the Judges and their staff, to the Prosecutor and her Office and to the counsel who represent the suspects, accused persons and victims participating in the proceedings. I am very much aware that the quality of these services impact considerably on the ability of the Judges and parties to ensure fair trials for all persons appearing before this Court.

6. The Court will be confronted with many challenges in the coming years. Challenges in the area of investigations, prosecutions and judicial activities. Challenges also in the area of organisation, budget and efficiency. I strongly believe that only with effective cooperation between the President, the Prosecutor and the Registrar, can these challenges be effectively met. I fully commit myself 100% to such cooperation.

7. I would like to thank the outgoing Registrar for her contribution to the organisation of the Registry to where it stands today. This constitutes a solid basis on which I can now continue to build in order to further develop, further strengthen and fine-tune the services of the Registry in the coming five years.

8. At the moment, I still feel a relative outsider to the work of the Court and feel that I have a lot to learn in the coming period. That being said, I can already identify now a number of topics that may require priority attention, but am aware that there will be others. I feel that my attention should go, amongst others, to (i) issues of protection and support of witnesses, (ii) issues of cooperation between the Court and all states parties, including the states in which the Court undertakes investigative, prosecutorial, judicial, defence and other activities, (iii) issues of budget, governance, transparency and efficiency and (iv) issues relating to relocation of witnesses and enforcement of sentences.

9. This all may sound very ambitious. And frankly speaking, I think it is. I am very much aware that such an ambitious agenda can only be implemented if supported by each and every staff member of the Registry. I strongly believe in team work. I am therefore very much looking forward to starting work with my future colleagues from the Immediate Office of the Registrar, and with the chiefs and staff of all sections within the Registry. I cannot wait to get to know everyone in the Registry and to rely on their expertise so that we can develop and implement a common vision on how best to service the overall interests of the Court.

11. I am also looking forward to cooperating with the Assembly of States Parties, both here in The Hague and in New York; with the President and Vice-President of the ASP and with the different coordinators and focal points on the many issues that require the common attention of the ICC and the States Parties. I am also looking forward to constructive cooperation with the various representatives of the Host State on the many issues that will be on our agenda in the coming years. And last but not least, I am looking forward to the cooperation with the Coalition for the ICC and the many organisations working within that framework.

12. In Rome in 1998, a common vision prevailed that led to the adoption of the ICC Statute. Too many people in the world have suffered and continue to suffer from the commission of horrendous crimes. Impunity for the perpetrators is not an option. But the fight against impunity continues. It is this underlying goal that will drive me in the coming years to work closely together with everyone involved in the work of the ICC.