Thank you, Mr President.

International relations are maturing from one that is power-based, to one that should be rules-based. The backbone for that change is the rule of law. One of its cornerstones is the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Global peace is possible if it is also anchored on the principles of international criminal justice.

The long campaign to create a permanent international criminal court dates from the Nuremberg Trials. Under the Nuremberg Principles, "crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced."

The campaign culminated in in 2002, with the required ratification of 60 States Parties to the Rome Statute. In February 2003, the Assembly of States Parties elected the first bench of 18 judges, which included President Song Sang-hyun.

We thank President Song and his team at The Hague for tirelessly promoting international criminal justice and the central role of the Court.

Mr President, our goal is universality. We join the call for many more countries to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute, particularly from our Asia-Pacific region. The Rome Statute now has 122 States Parties, including all of South America, nearly all of Europe, most of Oceania and about half of Africa.

In 2009, the Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act No. 9851, also known as the Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes Against Humanity. This paved the way for our ratification of the Rome Statute.

Consistent with the principle of complementarity, the Philippines strives to ensure that its criminal justice systems is transparent, fair, effective and relatively speedy, allowing for the prosecution of the crimes contemplated by the Rome Statute.
The Philippines affirms the Declaration of the 2012 High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Level, paragraph 23 of which recognizes the role of the Court in a multilateral system that aims to end impunity and establish the rule of law.

The work of justice is never easy. But the reality is that justice can be particularly complicated and difficult in countries affected if not devastated by violence and conflict, whether sectarian or otherwise. Like all States Parties and the larger international community, the Philippines is very concerned about the developments in the Court. We pay close attention to the on-going judicial proceedings, investigations, and preliminary examinations of the Court.

Mr President, our concerned friends in Africa need our understanding first, and not our judgment. Despite their own individual developmental challenges, which the Philippines identifies with as a developing country, African States Parties have decided to cast their lot with the Court. They have demonstrated their firm commitment to – and thirst for – international criminal justice.

We must respect the lessons of recent history if we are to ensure that international criminal justice fully contributes to successfully promoting reconciliation.

We have no other option but to help each other to protect human rights and build domestic capacities, including through human resource development-related assistance like the training of judges, prosecutors, the police and the military.

We must use the principle of universal jurisdiction to serve the ends of justice and reconciliation.

The Philippines continues to work constructively with all States Parties in contributing to the resolution of the situation and address similar situations in the future.

The Philippines is hopeful and confident that we can surmount whatever challenges, if the Court, the UN, and the international community will join hands to genuinely understand and help developing country States Parties, particularly in Africa.

Mr President, the UN development agenda is now transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals we agreed upon in 2000, to the post-2015 development agenda that will define the future global development framework. As a member of the Group of Friends on the Rule of Law at the UN, the Philippines advocates for the rule of law and human rights to be strongly reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

Together, we will ensure that the perpetrators account for their crimes. By so doing, the international community will affirm that, in the post-2015 development agenda, there will be no peace without justice, not just for our generation, but also for generations yet to come.

Thank you, Mr. President.