

WELCOME REMARKS

SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT, HONOURABLE ESMON SAIMON

DATE: 31st MAY 2019

VENUE: The Melanesian Hotel Port Vila

**Pacific Islands Roundtable on the Implementation of the Rome Statute
of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

Excellences,

Representatives of the International Criminal Court,

Representatives of the Republic of Korea,

Representatives of the European External Action Service,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies & gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to our beautiful shores and especially to the Pacific Island Roundtable discussion on the implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As you know, in 2011 Vanuatu acceded to the treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC), bringing to 120 the number of countries that are parties to the statute and thereafter Vanuatu is encouraging some big countries to ratify.

With this act, Vanuatu strengthens its contribution to the international legal order and acquires additional protection for its territory and population against the gravest crimes known to humanity. We hope Vanuatu's example will encourage other members of the Pacific Island Forum – many of which still remain outside the Rome Statute system.

In 2011, the President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, Christian WENAWESER, said that this accession shows the Pacific region's commitment to international criminal justice. It is also an important milestone for the Assembly, as the number of States Parties has now reached the number of States that voted in favour of the Rome Statute in 1998.

Next Vanuatu attended the Assembly of States Parties for the first time in 2016, our Minister of Justice and Community Services, Honourable Ronald K WARSAL delivered a statement in which he expressed the support for the ICC and encouraged extension of the ICC's outreach to the Asia-Pacific Islands, in particular to those that are not yet State parties to the Rome Statute.

As identified in the other Pacific Islands States, the fundamental impediment towards full implementation of the Rome Statute or ratification of the Kampala Amendments might be a lack of capacity to draft the legislation. We continue to

stress our eagerness to further the process of implementation of the Rome Statute. However, Vanuatu needs assistance for the drafting process.

Last but not least, I wish to express my compliments to the organizers of this very timely and useful Pacific Islands Roundtable and thank for providing me this precious opportunity to meet you all.

I wish you all a successful discussion today.

Thank yu tumas