



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

By

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Permanent Representative**

**International Court of Justice Briefing (Private Meeting):
*The role of the President of the International Court of Justice***

United Nations Security Council

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Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President.

I welcome and congratulate you President Donoghue on your re-election as President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and I thank you for your briefing this afternoon. We also express condolences on the passing of Judge James Crawford earlier this year.

Mr. President,

In this new era of international disputes, that now encompass multifaceted contemporary issues such as terrorism and climate change, the ICJ as the guardian of the international rule of law remains an integral component of maintaining international peace and security.

The Court's well-established jurisprudence, grounded in its robust decisions and advisory opinions, ought to encourage Member States to fully utilize the principal judicial organ in the pursuit of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Further, the composition of its Bench is of note. The selection of well-qualified and well-respected legal practitioners from all five regional groups brings together an invaluable wealth of experience and knowledge in diverse legal traditions, which helps to ensure the quality of the Court's decisions.

The effective leadership of the Court, as with any organization, is directly linked to its success as a well-functioning body and it allows the international community to have complete confidence in its judicial activities and overall administration. As such, the President must always strive to fulfill the solemn declaration to remain impartial and act conscientiously to uphold the tenets of justice and guide the institution in defending the rule of law, in accordance with the statute of the Court. This duty has undoubtedly become an even greater one in consideration of the rapidly evolving global political and security landscapes that will certainly demand increasing attention to protect the rights of states.

Just as the President bears a tremendous responsibility to the Court and to safeguard the enduring principles of international law, the international community equally has an obligation to engage constructively to support the Court and its functionaries and ensure that its decisions are fully

respected and enforced. Failure to do so serves to undermine the multilateral system and deters efforts aimed at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

We are indeed pleased to see a woman leading the Court, but we cannot ignore the disappointing reality that there have only been four women judges in the Court's seventy-five-year history. The enormous disparity in leadership roles between men and women and the general underrepresentation of women is made apparent in the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Gender equality is crucial for a sustainable future and it is past time for us to address the gender gap within the Court, in line with the efforts of the United Nations.

The Court undoubtedly contributes to peace and security, through the ongoing development of the norms of international law. Further, it reinforces the principle of sovereign equality. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore continues to steadfastly support its role and we look forward to the election of judges to the Court in the coming days.

I thank you.