Commemorative Messages

on the occasion of the

Tenth Anniversary of the

NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court

- 10 February 1995 to 10 February 2005 -
The eleven messages in this document are dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the international NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). These messages are testimonials to one of the most important and successful civil society human security campaigns in history. Many of the writers are individuals who themselves have made significant contributions to the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the establishment of the new world court.

Kofi Annan, Adriaan Bos, Bernard Bot, Shirin Ebadi, Benjamin B. Ferencz, Philippe Kirsch, Roy S. Lee, Luis Moreno Ocampo, Arthur N.R. Robinson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Jody Williams tell us how they have experienced the birth of a revolutionary system of international justice that has the potential to save millions of people, today and in the future, from the world’s most heinous crimes, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since its inception in 1995, the CICC has worked laboriously around the globe to promote a fair, effective and independent ICC. From its initial 25 member organizations, the Coalition has now grown to a truly global network combining invaluable skills, knowledge and dedication.

On behalf of the Coalition, I wish to thank the contributors for their messages and for their efforts to promote peace and justice on our troubled planet. The CICC enters its second decade even more committed to the vision of a world, in which rule of law will help end impunity for the worst crimes against humanity. Civilization and war cannot for much longer co-exist; the ICC can be an important step towards a more just and safer world.

William R. Pace
Convenor of the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court
I congratulate the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court on its tenth anniversary. In 1995, when it began its efforts, thirty NGOs made up the Coalition, and such a Court seemed a distant dream to many. Ten years later, the Court exists, and our world has taken a major step forward in the quest to end impunity.

The Coalition, which now comprises two thousand NGOs, drawn from all continents and representing many different cultures and legal traditions, played a critical role in that historic achievement. Often working with Governments, it helped to mobilize civil society support for the negotiation of the Rome Statute, for its early entry into force, for the establishment of the Court, and for the start of its work. In short, the Coalition has proved itself a true global partnership for justice.

While the founding of the Court is a great achievement, it is even more important that the machinery now in place be put to use, so that those responsible for crimes which shock the conscience of mankind are held to account before the whole global community. In striving for that goal, and the goal of universal adherence to the Rome Statute, the Coalition has an important role to play in the future. I wish it a second decade no less successful than its first.
Tenth Anniversary
of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court

- Commemorative Message -

I take great pleasure in congratulating the CICC with its tenth birthday.

Feeling closely connected with its aims, I witnessed its activities since its establishment 15 February 1995 and I carefully followed its growth. The CICC started out with 25 organizations and it represents now a total of 2,000 organizations.

I wonder whether there is any other NGO-undertaking that has been so successful in realizing its aims, namely to advocate for the creation of an effective, just and independent international criminal court and to be a conduit of information between NGOs, state representatives, and the general public, and a resource for coordination between NGOs.

In the past decade, not only the Statute establishing the Court was adopted but it already entered into force and at the moment it has 97 Contracting Parties. I do remember that in the course of the preparatory negotiations in New York we were discussing how many states should be needed for the entry into force of the Statute. Sixty, the number provided for in article 126, was at that time in the opinion of many delegates considered much too high to expect a rapid establishment of the Court.

Now we have a Court in operation.

Point of discussion is no longer whether individuals can be tried by an international criminal court but rather what kind of international criminal court is most appropriate for dealing with international crimes.

Undoubtedly, the convergence of different tendencies in the international community at the beginning of the last decade of the last century was an important condition for this success. In general, states were more willing to limit their sovereignty for the benefit of a regime under which the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole were to be punished.

In the international community, states are no longer the sole actors. The ongoing globalisation is fundamentally changing the international community. “We the peoples of the United Nations” in the Charter of the UN got a new interpretation by the development of the global civil society and the CICC forms part of it. The NGOs have acquired a legitimate and meaningful place as actors as well.

Neither in the preparatory phase nor in the diplomatic conference in Rome or in the period thereafter did the representation of the NGOs give rise to insurmountable problems. On the contrary, generally both sides, governments and NGOs, showed a willingness to find reasonable and constructive solutions for the participation of the NGOs in the negotiations and both sides were receptive to each other’s concerns.
The CICC was very effective in lobbying states and intergovernmental representatives; by submitting written reports and articles; by providing assistance, financially and otherwise, to smaller and poorer government delegations; by organizing regional or international conferences to discuss matters dealt with by the negotiations.

The impact of the CICC on the text of the Statute is substantial, as for example can be seen in the articles concerning the powers of the Prosecutor, in the gender-related crimes and in the articles dealing with the victims.

The CICC continued its efforts after the adoption of the Statute at the Rome Conference to secure worldwide ratification of the Statute. It has successfully promoted democratic and progressive procedures and criteria with regard to the election of judges and in many other ways has been of assistance in elaborating the structure and operations of the Court.

The worldwide respect for the CICC and its work becomes clear since it is three times nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Assembly of States Parties to the Statute adopted in its second session, held in September 2003, a resolution recognizing the contributions of the CICC to the establishment of the Court.

After counting the blessings, it is also realistic to face the incompleteness. There is still no universally accepted court. On the contrary the Court is still more or less vigorously opposed by a number of important states. By its deeds the Court may persuade those states to become parties. The role of the CICC remains however of equal importance.

I hope therefore that Bill Pace and his co-workers as well as all the organizations represented in his coalition will continue their efforts in the coming years to achieve that the International Criminal Court will be a genuine universal Court.

Adriaan Bos
Formerly, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the ICC

Voorburg, the Netherlands
9 February 2005
Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken

Mr. William R. Pace
Convener of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court
NEW YORK

The Hague
24 November 2005

I should like to warmly congratulate the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) on its tenth anniversary.

With the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 17 July 1998 and the actual entry into force of this Statute on 1 July 2002, a historic step was taken towards ending the impunity of those who are responsible for atrocities and towards providing their victims, or the surviving relatives of victims, with the hope of a better future. The Netherlands is proud to be the seat of this unique organisation.

The CICC played a crucial role in promoting and establishing the first permanent international criminal court, to bring to trial those who stand accused of the most serious crimes against mankind. The establishment of the Court is a superb example of cooperation between states and non-governmental organisations, standing shoulder to shoulder, with a common goal.
The CICC still plays a key role in encouraging and supporting states in the activities they undertake to become States Parties to the Rome Statute and subsequently to amend their legislation in line with its principles. The Coalition has shown itself to have considerable legal and political resources. It is also an important sparring partner for the International Criminal Court. It helps ensure that the Court can benefit from the knowledge and experience of hundreds of non-governmental organizations in virtually all its areas of activity. The States Parties to the Rome Statute see the CICC as a professional and valuable partner. As the Court’s host country, the Netherlands has on several occasions experienced the Coalition’s dynamism at first hand! The Netherlands is grateful to the Coalition for the support it provides, behind the scenes as well as in the foreground, on which it has always been confident it could rely.

I hope and trust that non-governmental organizations in general, and in particular the CICC, will continue for many years to play a major role in the fight against injustice and impunity. I wish the Coalition every success with its important work.

With best regards,

[Signature]

Bernard Bot
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
With the approval of the ICC statute, one of humanity’s major dreams has come true. Prior to this, international human rights instruments and numerous conventions had no effective guarantees. In most cases, human rights violations were publicly condemned only when the violations were intense and continuous. Even then punishments against such violations have not only been directed against the interests of the people but have also doubly oppressed them. For instance, Iraq was subjected to economic sanctions for ten years because of Saddam Hussein. The sanctions did not end up abolishing Saddam’s regime, on the contrary, Saddam and his supporters continued to commit drastic financial misuses. It was the people of Iraq who were compelled to suffer both from the sanctions and Saddam’s cruelty.

The establishment of the ICC has put a glimmer of light in the hearts of people around the world. Now it is possible to prosecute dictators violating human rights as well as their regimes. This may cause dictators to pause and consider their fate. However, the biggest defect of the ICC is that these crimes are not prosecutable and punishable in the countries that have not approved the ICC statute; therefore such regimes can refrain from joining the ICC and thereby protect themselves from being prosecuted.

I hope that by revising the ICC statute, the trial of all regimes violating human rights—regardless of whether or not they have joined the ICC—will be made possible. This is the only way that defending human rights can achieve its true and serious meaning and can be made executable at the international level.”

[Translated from the Farsi.]
The **Coalition for the International Criminal Court**  
*– Celebrating 10 Years*

The heart of the democratic ideal that inspired the American Revolution is that sovereignty belongs to the people. After World War II, the Nuremberg tribunals held leaders responsible for the aggressions, crimes against humanity and atrocities that shocked the world. At its first assembly in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the Nuremberg principles and resolved to create a permanent court to uphold the rule of law. Fifty years later, they were nowhere near that goal. Sovereign states were not yet ready to accept untried tribunals to protect their national interests. Innocent people everywhere have paid a bitter price for the failure of leaders to recognize that law is better than war.

Many non-governmental organizations calling for disarmament, social justice, environmental reforms and improved world governance had been in existence for many years but their rational appeals were not powerful enough to generate the political will essential to bring about significant change. It is a tribute to the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, and particularly its determined Convenor William Pace, that a very important step forward was taken by focusing on one vital segment of the vast matrix that needed improvement - the establishment of the ICC to deal with the major crimes that threatened the peace and tranquillity of humankind. As young people lined the balconies at the United Nations and bombarded delegates with petitions and recommendations, the voice of those yearning for a more humane and peaceful world was heard.

The existence of new special tribunals created by the UN Security Council showed that courts could play an important role as an expression of human outrage and a deterrent to international crimes. The Coalition brought together a vast array of interested citizens dedicated to the creation of the vital new institution through peaceful means of persuasion. Being able to inspire and keep such a diverse group working together for so long is a credit to all of its coordinators. It epitomizes the wave of the future where the voice of the people can no longer be ignored. It should not be forgotten that the ICC is a new-born babe and it must be nurtured and helped to maturity - despite opposition by short-sighted or misguided adversaries. Improved international laws, courts and enforcement are still needed. On its 10th anniversary, may the Coalition for an International Criminal Court renew its determination to support the Court and a more rational world order under law.

With every good wish,

Ben

**Benjamin B. Ferencz** was a Prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials

*www.benferencz.org*
The Hague, 14 February 2005

Dear Mr. Pace,

Congratulations on the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). The activities of the CICC over the past ten years have been instrumental in the creation and development of a strong and effective International Criminal Court.

In the mid-1990s the CICC was at the forefront of the calls for an international criminal court. Your efforts helped to build the public and governmental support which led to the Rome Conference on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The active participation of the CICC at the Rome Conference had a definite impact on the ICC Statute. The Coalition’s expertise greatly assisted the States in negotiating a complex treaty in a short time frame.

Since the Rome Conference, the CICC has contributed significantly to the ratification and implementation of the Statute. That the pace of ratifications and accessions – 97 to date – has exceeded all expectations is also a testament to the dedication and commitment of the CICC and its members.

The Coalition’s efforts have been invaluable in building and maintaining universal support for a strong, independent, and effective Court. As the Court has developed the CICC has evolved in its functions and role, but its core commitment to the values expressed in the Statute’s preamble has remained constant.

I look forward to what the next ten years will bring for the Court and the CICC.

With best regards,

Philippe Kirsch

William R. Pace
Coalition for the International Criminal Court
Anna Paulownastraat 103
2518 BC The Hague
The Netherlands
Message on the CICC’s 10th Anniversary

From Roy S. Lee
Director, Codification Division, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations
Formerly, Executive Secretary, United Nations Conference for the Establishment of an International Criminal Court

The UN Charter opens with the words “We the peoples of the United Nations…” Working through non-governmental organizations is perhaps the closest resemblance of direct participation by the ‘peoples’ in this state-centered organization. As ‘like-minded peoples’, the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court has directly and effectively contributed to the establishment of the ICC.

As a coalition of more than two thousand NGOs that together represent millions of individuals around the world, these women and men are the main driving force in urging and helping governments to create and implement a world criminal justice system to fight human rights violations and to promote peace through the enforcement of law.

These women and men have translated their commitment into effective legal and political action through their worldwide awareness-raising, through countless direct dialogues with governments in capitals, through the preparation of numerous analyses on key issues, through the continuous production and dissemination of print and electronic information, through the formation of regional and thematic caucuses, through outreach to ministers, parliamentarians and the general public and through the sponsoring of persons from the developing countries to take part in the process.

I have the pleasure of working closely with many of the CICC members in the past ten years. They are sincere and serious about their work and believe in what they are doing. Partly because of the high quality of work ethic and commitment, there was no need to set up an intergovernmental body to supervise their participation in the Rome Conference where the ICC’s Treaty was negotiated. This is the usual practice in major UN conferences. The CICC coordinated its members’ activities, applied peer review and facilitated their close working relationship with delegations and the UN Secretariat. Without being tied down to time-consuming NGO credential matters, government representatives were able to focus mainly on the substantive issues pertaining to the creation of this new system of international justice.

Government representatives acknowledged that without the assistance of the Coalition, there would never have been an agreement on a Court, let alone a Court with the strengths of the current Treaty. These strengths, directly reflecting the Coalition’s efforts, include the independence of the Prosecutor, the inclusion of crimes committed in internal armed conflict and of sexual violence, fair trial and due process for the accused, and restorative and compensatory remedies for victims.

I am pleased to record the contribution of the CICC to this process on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.
The CICC has played a central role in helping make the International Criminal Court a reality.

In Rome, the international community took an incredible step forward when 139 States approved the idea of protecting the world’s citizens from genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and established a Court to end a culture of impunity. The Rome Treaty and later the establishment of the ICC would not have been possible without the active participation of the CICC.

The CICC was the largest delegation at the Rome Conference. It helped States find, understand and discuss information, reach agreement on and, finally, approve the Treaty. Success came also from the wisdom of organizing and allowing for the joint work of hundreds of volunteers from all over the world. The CICC was also indispensable in reaching out to a number of States and encouraging them to bring about domestic ratification and implementation.

The CICC was essential in advising the advance team that laid the ground work for the establishment of the Court. It was key in organizing the search for candidates for the most important positions, such as for the Judges. It was involved in how to set up the Office of the Prosecutor and, later, on the budget and in the functioning of the ICC. It is permanently working to establish the Rome principles throughout the world.

I am happy to celebrate this anniversary, one that is not just about the CICC. The Coalition is a model of how civil society can work together, of how thousands of NGOs with different agendas can work collectively and play an essential role in the creation and the functioning of an institution. The CICC is a leader amongst organizations advancing the path towards greater peace and justice around the world.

Luis Moreno Ocampo
Procureur
The NGO Coalition, which began as a small group of visionaries, met across the street from UN Headquarters in New York and, starting with a membership of 25 in 1995, has since grown at an extraordinary rate to a membership of more than 2,000 in 2005.

This achievement on the international scene in the short space of ten years to 2005, is itself most remarkable. The progress of the Coalition demonstrates the useful role that it has performed, as well as the organizing skills of its core members and small secretariat led by Mr. William Pace, its President.

The Coalition has been fully engaged in all the important developments that have taken place in the progress toward the establishment of the International Criminal Court. With this small secretariat, the accomplishment is all the more notable. The Coalition played a vital role at the Rome Diplomatic Conference for the ICC, held in June to July of 1998, which was a landmark success. From this Conference, the Rome Statute emerged, needing signatures and ratification by states.

The campaign of the CIJC was in great part responsible for the ratification by 60 states in the year 2002, bringing into effect the Statute of the Court.

Thus, an international institution which many, perhaps most, believed could not be established within their lifetime, or at all, assisted by the strong and vigorous efforts of the Coalition, came into being. It is therefore, very fitting that the coalition of NGOs, unprecedented, both in its composition and its success, should celebrate its existence.

It is hoped that the Coalition will continue its efforts with renewed energy and support until its goal and that of many other visionaries is achieved, namely, a universal system of criminal justice that is fair, impartial and effective.

As one who initiated the process at the United Nations in December of 1989 and continuously pursued it, along with the leadership of the government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Coalition and to Mr. William Pace, its visionary and untiring leader, on their 10th anniversary.

Hon. Arthur N. R. Robinson

April 20th, 2005
The Most Reverend Desmond M Tutu, O.M.S.G. D.D. F.K.C.
Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town

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Commemorative message on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of
the Coalition for the International Criminal Court

Through all the misery that has characterized recent history – racial discrimination in
South Africa, a brutal civil war in Sierra Leone and the genocide in Rwanda – we can
discern a positive trend: apartheid has lost its battle to equality, truth and reconciliation
committees bring peace to scarred societies, and the establishment of the International
Criminal Court can bring justice to the victims of war crimes, genocide and crimes
against humanity. These developments prove that, in fact, we live in a moral universe.

The members of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court are more than
conscious of this idea. The CICC is a movement of more than 2,000 NGOs from all
walks of life, where religious and secular organizations worldwide have joined their
strengths in a single effort to push for a more just future through promoting a fair and
independent ICC.

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary, it is my privilege to congratulate the CICC on its
decade of extraordinary achievements. It is in part thanks to their efforts that now more
than half of the world’s countries have joined the Court, that NGOs around the world
can provide input to the Court’s decision-making process and that the ICC has special
protections for victims and witnesses.

These provisions make the Court a unique institution that has great potential to help
create a culture of justice and peace. As a member of the Board of the Victims Trust
Fund, I would like to call on all governments, churches, NGOs and citizens, to realize
this potential and to support the work of the Trust Fund. This will enable us to establish
a judicial system that can contribute to reparations for victims, to the reconciliation of
warring groups and to the reconstruction of societies.

I can only hope that with the help of our brothers and sisters of the CICC, we can make
these goals reality in the decade that lies ahead. Let us not forget that injustice shall never
have the last word.

God bless you

+Desmond M Tutu Archbishop Emeritus

May 2005
2 November 2005

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of The NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) – nongovernmental organizations that came together to promote the establishment of an independent International Criminal Court. Such a court -- a vision and a goal of the international community since the Nuremberg Trials after the end of the Second World War – was established through the Rome Statute in 1998. Only a few years later, despite dire predictions to the contrary, enough nations had ratified the Statute to make it international law. Throughout this process, the CICC has played a key role in assuring the success of this tremendous advance in international law. The work of the CICC, with like-minded states from around the world, is a testament to what can be accomplished when civil society and governments work in partnership to bring about dramatic change. It is a demonstration of the right and the responsibility of civil society to be an agent for positive change to help create a more just world for us all.

Jody Williams
Commemorative Messages on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the
NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court

Contributors:

• H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General

• Mr. Adriaan Bos, Formerly, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the International Criminal Court

• H.E. Mr. Bernard Bot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

• Ms. Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

• Mr. Benjamin B. Ferencz, Prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials

• H.E. Mr. Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court

• Mr. Roy S. Lee, Formerly, Executive Secretary, United Nations Conference for the Establishment of an International Criminal Court

• H.E. Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

• The Honorable Arthur N.R. Robinson, Former President of Trinidad & Tobago

• H.E. Archbishop Desmond Tutu

• Ms. Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate