

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC) ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW GROUP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT (CDD) AND BAOBAB FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS FROM 13<sup>TH</sup> – 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2002 AT HARMONIA HOTEL, ABUJA**

The International Human Rights Law Group in collaboration with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights organized a stakeholders meeting on the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Abuja from 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2002. The meeting which was declared open by the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr. Godwin Kanu Agabi, SAN was attended by the President of Nigerian Bar Association, Mr. O.C.J Okocha, SAN, Judges, Lawyers, Academicians, Civil society organizations, Women and Professional organizations.

The meeting observed that:

1. The Rome Statute or the International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty which was adopted at the United Nations Diplomatic conference of Plenipotentiaries on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, 1998 in Rome provides for the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) that will be located at the Hague, Netherlands.
2. The jurisdiction of the ICC will be limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole such as the crime of genocide; crimes against humanity (e.g. murder, enslavement, torture, rape and sexual slavery); war crimes and the crime of aggression when defined.
3. The ICC has the potential of holding individuals accountable to crimes covered by the Rome statute and bringing to end cases of impunity. Perpetrators of these crimes will have no hiding place in the world particularly as the jurisdiction of the court extends to individuals.
4. The crimes under the treaty do not expressly include corrupt practices that transfer wealth from poor countries thereby

endangering the life of the people through exposure to hunger, disease and poverty.

5. The civil society has a critical role to play in the actualization of the aspirations of the ICC.
6. Apart from the ICC, other oversight institutions such as National Human Rights Commission, Anti-Corruption and Public accountability bodies, Gender Equality Commission etc. have the potential of becoming the major pillars on which the very foundation of good democratic practices are set particularly when they are allowed to function independently of influence from state organs.

The meeting commended:

1. The work of civil society organizations towards the formation and preparation for the operation of the ICC. In particular, the meeting commended the work of the Women caucus for Gender Justice and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC).
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria for ratifying the treaty in the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001 as the 39<sup>th</sup> state party to the treaty.

The meeting called on civil society organizations in Nigeria:

1. To work with the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) to achieve the aspirations of the Court.
2. Enlighten and educate Nigerians on the provisions and importance of the statute in promoting human rights, justice and good governance
3. Form a credible and viable coalition of NGOs at the local and regional levels on the ICC.
4. Advocate for the broadening of the jurisdiction of the ICC to include economic crimes and corrupt practices that entail the pillage of the nations resources leading to the aggravation of ignorance, illiteracy, disease and poverty.
5. Advocate for the creation of regional court of the ICC.
6. Advocate for the domestication of the Rome Statute and further positive steps to make the statute relevant to our national laws.

7. Public and media campaigns in local languages for easy understanding of ICC modus operandi by Nigerians.
8. To initiate the pressure on the nomination of credible judges for the ICC.
9. To embark on research informed advocacy in collaboration with the academia

The meeting called on the National Assembly:

1. To domesticate the Rome Statute and reform all other relevant laws to make them conform to the statute. This is necessary to make the provisions of the statute concrete to the reality of Nigeria.

The meeting called on the Federal Government to:

1. Initiate an open national nomination process with the broadest possible public consultation to secure the nomination of persons of high moral character, impartiality and integrity who possess the requisite qualifications. The process should ensure that there is equal and fair representation of women.
2. Overhaul the criminal justice system in the country to accommodate international human rights norms and standards.

At the end of the meeting a coalition was formed known as Nigerian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (NCICC).

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