



**Message from the Coalition for the International Criminal
Court (CICC)**

on the occasion of the CICC's 10th Anniversary

February 10, 2005

Dear CICC Friends and Colleagues,

Exactly ten years ago today, a small group of non-governmental organizations met across from the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and launched an idealistic campaign dedicated to a single cause; to support the establishment of a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court. No one predicted then how extraordinarily successful this global campaign would become. The support of all of you – NGOs, governments, international organizations, journalists, and individuals alike – have turned a distant dream into a vital reality. Ten years later, our Coalition and campaign remain strong and our membership has grown into the thousands.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court would like to invite you to celebrate our tenth anniversary with us throughout this year, and encourages you to organize special events, activities and publications to raise awareness of and support for the ICC, and to look ahead to the next ten years to help ensure the success of this new international organization – that is, the end of impunity for all who commit crimes against humanity.

In an extraordinary decade, the Coalition has grown to become a truly global and diverse network of more than 2,000 organizations that work together with like-minded

governments from the north and south to realize this new system of international justice. Three years after the Coalition started advocating for an ICC, hundreds of NGOs actively participated in the historic 1998 Rome Diplomatic Conference. Following the conference, the Coalition and its members launched a campaign to achieve the 60 ratifications needed for the Statute's entry into force. Thanks to all of you, we – the ICC community – achieved this goal within four years, when many thought it would take decades. Since the establishment of the Court in 2002, the CICC and its worldwide membership have actively continued to push for universal ratification and implementation of the ICC treaty. The ICC now has 97 States Parties, more than half of the world's countries.

In the last 10 years, we have gained an institution that can hold accountable those responsible for committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Court is conducting investigations in two situations and expects to start its first trials later this year. NGOs in the field have reported that the presence and the influence of the Court are already deterring perpetrators from committing such crimes.

However, recent headlines have shown that our tenth anniversary not only provides an occasion to reflect on what has been achieved but also, more importantly, provides an opportunity for us to look ahead at what remains to be done to strengthen the effectiveness of the Court. In the face of powerful opponents who continue to threaten the Court, the future success of the ICC depends on the continuing support of the entire ICC community; civil society, governments, international organizations, academia and the media.

We have shown that we can work together constructively to promote a world based on justice and the rule of law. Let us make the achievements of the past decade a prelude for the one ahead. Let us continue our unique partnership in campaigning for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court. Let us show that we are entering a new era with less – instead of ever more – violent conflict and suffering. We look forward to working with all of you in this important endeavor. We hope you will join in celebrating this milestone and the ICC as a victory for peace and justice in our troubled world.

In solidarity,

William R. Pace

Convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court