



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 May 2010

***LANDMARK ICC REVIEW CONFERENCE TO MEET IN KAMPALA
NGOs Say Meeting is an Opportunity to Reconfirm Commitment to Justice for the
Gravest Crimes***

New York/ The Hague – More than 500 NGO representatives will attend the first ever Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to be held in Kampala (Uganda) from 31 May to 11 June 2010. Kampala is an opportunity for world leaders and the global community to openly recommit to the Rome Statute’s historic initiative to end impunity for the gravest crimes, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) said today.

In 10 days, ICC states parties, observer states, international organizations, NGOs, and other participants will discuss proposed amendments to the Rome Statute - the ICC’s founding treaty - and take stock of its impact to date, making the Review Conference a critical milestone in the evolution of the new system of international justice created twelve years ago.

“Kampala is not only a conference for amendments to the treaty,” said CICC Convenor William Pace. “This historic gathering will also help identify areas in which the Court’s positive impact can be further strengthened.” Debates will focus on the impact of the Rome Statute on victims and affected communities, complementarity, cooperation, and peace and justice, issues truly central to the system’s fair, effective, and independent functioning.

One of the key issues at stake will also be the crime of aggression. Although aggression is listed in the Rome treaty as one of the four grave crimes over which the ICC has jurisdiction, agreement must still be reached on its definition, conditions for the ICC to exercise its jurisdiction, and ways to modify the treaty.

“The CICC will monitor the discussions on the crime of aggression very closely to ensure that any amendment would protect the integrity of the Rome Statute,” said CICC Convenor William Pace. “We want to make sure that the principles of fair trial, due process, and independence of the Court are safeguarded, principles which are fundamental to the legitimacy of the Court as a global judicial institution.”

For the Kampala Conference to have a greater impact, it requires attendance of the highest levels and participants to recommit to ensure justice for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, including by making a tangible pledge. “We urge states to use Kampala as an opportunity to publicly commit ratifying the Rome Statute or the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities within the shortest timeframe,” stated Brigitte Suhr, CICC’s Director of Regional Programs. “We also call on government representatives to pledge to pass necessary ICC implementing legislation following the Conference,” she added.

Parallel to official panels, the Coalition and its global membership will help create further dialogue on the Rome system and ensure that the voices of civil society are truly heard through a number of debates, roundtables, and parliamentary seminars prior to and during the Conference, both in capitals and alongside the Review Conference.

Background

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ICC is the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 111 ICC States Parties. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute. To date, the ICC has opened investigations in five situations: the Central African Republic; Darfur, Sudan; Uganda; Democratic Republic of Congo; and Kenya. It has publicly issued twelve arrest warrants and one summons to appear. Two trials are ongoing and a third is expected to open in July 2010. The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has also made public its preliminary examination of situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, and Palestine.

For more information on the Review Conference, visit:

<http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/?mod=review>

For more information on the Coalition’s work, see:

http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/documents/ID_brochure_web.pdf

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