

‘NCICC STATEMENT’

A one day advocacy meeting on strengthening the understanding of the Rome Statute in Nigeria organized by the Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court (NCICC) was held at the Rockview Hotel, Abuja, on 7 September 2006. The meeting was attended by 63 participants comprising of National Assembly members, Federal and State Ministry of Justice, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Legal practitioners, Directors of Public Prosecution, Media and Civil Society representatives in Nigeria.

The objectives of the meeting among others were to popularize the International Criminal Court and to strategize on domesticating the Statute of the International Criminal Court in the Nigerian legal system. Following the intensive and rich deliberations, participants recalled and noted the following:

Recalling the signing and ratification of the Statute of the ICC by the Nigerian government on 1 June 2000 and 27 September 2001 respectively,

Further recalling the presentation of a draft bill entitled “**A Bill for an Act to enable effect to be given in the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and for purposes connected therewith**” (Rome Statute Bill) by the government through the Federal Ministry of Justice to the National Assembly for consideration;

Note that the National Assembly has passed the Rome Statute Bill with the House of Representatives on 1 June 2004 and the Senate on 19 May 2005 and the bills is presently awaiting harmonization;

Deeply Concern that of 53 African Union member countries, 28 of them have ratified the Rome Statute but only 1 country has domesticated the Statute in its local jurisdiction,

Note with concern the signing of the Bilateral Immunity Agreement (BIA) on 30 June 2003 by the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo;

Re-affirming the fundamental and innovative mandate of the International Criminal Court (ICC), established by the Rome Statute of 17 July 1998 and entered into force on 1 July 2002, which is the first permanent jurisdiction of international criminal justice aimed at:

- Putting an end to the impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern,
- Providing justice for victims of international crimes through access to justice and victim support,
- Promoting the peace, security and well being of the world as express by the United Nations Charter and stated in the Preamble of the Rome Statute;

Strongly committed to the campaign against the culture of impunity through the development of capacities and mechanisms that will create access to justice and the demand for accountability;

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Emphasizing the need to maximize the importance of domesticating the Rome Statute in Nigeria legal system which will strengthen the judicial capacity of local courts to administer justice to victims of human rights violation:

THEREFORE, WE, the participants attending the one day ‘National Dialogue on Strengthening the Rome Statute in Nigeria’ calls on the

Civil Society Organisations under the umbrella of the NCICC to make available to the State Houses of Assembly in Nigeria all relevant documents on the Rome Statute;

Civil Society Organisation to open an avenue for a more effective engagement with the leadership of appropriate committees of National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly;

URGE the media to support and accelerate awareness raising for the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Nigeria by helping to set the agenda for the National Assembly and the Federal Government;

URGE the Senate and the House of Representatives to constitute a conference committee on the Rome Statute Bill to work and harmonise the passed bills with the intent of presenting a clean copy to the Federal Government,

URGE the Federal Government of Nigeria to bring into force the Bill to domesticate Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Nigeria;

URGE leaders in Africa to demonstrate the political will to ratify and domesticate the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in their domestic jurisdictions;

CALL on participants at the National Dialogue to support the working group established for advocacy to domesticate the Rome Statute Bill in Nigeria and create steps in supporting the advocacy for the domestication not only in Nigeria but in Africa.

DONE this day, 7 September 2006