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New York, 30 April 2010 - Secretary-General's remarks at panel discussion on the International Criminal Court

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Amb. Milos Koterec of Slovakia, Your Excellency, Mr. Lajcak, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Ambassador Wenaweser, President of the Association of States Parties to the ICC, Judge Song, President of the ICC, Mr. Reyes, Vice-President of the Parliament of El Salvador, Mr. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Government of Slovakia for its active engagement with the International Criminal Court and for its efforts, through its Permanent Mission in New York, to ensure that next month's Review Conference in Kampala is a success.

The ICC is the centrepiece of our system of international criminal justice. I attach great importance to its work and to our common drive to ensure that the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide do not go unpunished.

To be successful, this system requires full support from the international community. Only once every State has ratified the Rome Statute, and taken the necessary steps to make it enforceable at the national level, will there truly be no safe haven for those responsible for the most egregious crimes that can be committed against the core values of humankind.

Universal ratification of the Rome Statute is, then, one of the main challenges faced by the Court.

In this connection, I commend Slovakia on the role it is playing as facilitator for the plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute.

At Kampala, I will echo the General Assembly of the United Nations in calling on every nation to become a Party to the Rome Statute.

I also commend the President of the International Criminal Court, Judge Song Sang-Hyun, for his outreach campaign. With last month's ratification of the Rome Statute by Bangladesh, this effort is now bearing fruit.

The Review Conference will be an opportunity to take stock of the Court's achievements and to reflect on its future.

I also encourage States to make concrete pledges in support of the Court, in order to strengthen both the spirit and the objectives of the Rome Statute. President Song will elaborate on this important matter. I fully support him in this endeavour.

Let us also remember that while the Conference is for States, many others have a stake in this process, including international and non-governmental organizations. Their voices must be heard as well.

For my part, I will do everything in my power to help the Review Conference produce a meaningful outcome. The United Nations' efforts to promote peace, development and human rights are closely linked to the work of the ICC. We need and want the Court to succeed. Our partnership is expanding, for example in the pursuit of justice in post-conflict societies. I am determined to push forward further still in our common fight to end impunity and strengthen accountability.

I thank all involved for their support, and I look forward to seeing you in Kampala.

Thank you very much.