

The Hague, 14 November 2018

Excellency,

I have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Coalition) — a global network of 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 different countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression.

As you know, the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court will take place from 5 – 12 December 2018 in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Since its adoption in 1998, the Rome Statute has held out the promise of providing recourse to justice for victims and ending impunity for perpetrators of the crimes that shock the conscience of humankind. Yet as the treaty's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year draws to a close, that promise is increasingly threatened by a global climate characterized by a retreat in multilateral engagement and rising tides of hostility, discrimination, and repression around the world.

This year's ASP session thus offers a critical opportunity to reaffirm the international community's collective commitment to human rights, accountability, and the rule of law.

We therefore appeal to you and your government to express your strong and continued political commitment to the Rome Statute and ICC by participating in the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the ASP at the highest level, and to take the opportunity of the **General Debate** to reaffirm steadfast support for the ICC and the Rome Statute system in the mission to ensure accountability for the most egregious crimes known to humankind.

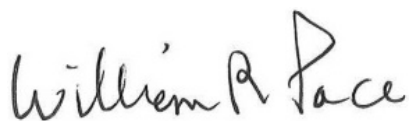
Excellency, recognizing the serious threats and challenges confronting the international justice system, we believe it is crucial that high-level officials representing all of the regions and major legal systems of the world, use the General Debate to reaffirm, inter alia:

- Unconditional **commitment** to the ICC as the cornerstone of the fight against impunity and a critical element of a rules-based international order;
- Commitment to work together as States Parties to **oppose efforts to undermine the court's work** and independence and in particular threats made against the ICC, its officials, and those cooperating with the Court;
- The need to safeguard the **integrity of the Rome Statute**, and its cornerstone principles;

- The commitment to strengthen and defend the ICC's **judicial and prosecutorial independence**, including by ensuring a proactive, fair, informed, and transparent search and selection process for the next ICC Prosecutor;
- The need for **universality of the Rome Statute**, as well as for its **full and effective implementation** into domestic jurisdictions;
- The commitment to **robust cooperation**, including through enhanced efforts to execute arrest warrants, the conclusion of **voluntary cooperation agreements** with the ICC, and ratification of the **Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC (APIC)**;
- Governments' **financial commitment** to the ICC to enable it to effectively execute the mandate they have given it, without political or arbitrary, limitations to its annual budget;
- Commitment to upholding **complementarity** obligations and to building the capacities of national legal systems;
- The **centrality of victims – including their meaningful participation** in the Rome Statute system **and the right to reparations**;
- Full support for **outreach and public information**, and their crucial importance for raising the Court's profile, creating environments conducive for the ICC's work, and managing expectations;
- The milestone reached this year with the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute** and the need to look for ways strengthen the Court's effective delivery of justice in the future; and,
- The Rome Statute system's integral role in **conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding**; in implementing SDG Goal 16; and in advancing the indispensable role of women in international peace and justice processes.

Excellency, international law and multilateralism are facing enormous challenges. The advancements in international justice over the last 20 years are truly unprecedented. However, justice will only be assured for future generations if the monumental achievements that are the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court are protected and strengthened.

Sincerely,



William Pace  
 Convenor  
 Coalition for the International Criminal Court