

**Assembly of the States Parties to the Statute of the International Criminal Court
International Criminal Justice Day 2017**

**Striving for universality of the Rome Statute: The criminalization of aggressive war-making and
ensuring greater protection for the victims of the most serious crimes**

Monday, 17 July 2017
United Nations Headquarters

Remarks by CICC Convenor, Mr. William Pace

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and civil society colleagues,

The Coalition joins in thanking the governments of Liechtenstein, Denmark, Italy and the Gambia for organizing this commemoration today. International Justice Day (IJD) was launched in 2000 by the Coalition for the ICC. It has grown over the years and has been widely recognized by governments and international organizations. IJD continues to be an important international commemoration.

I would also like to thank the ASP Vice President Ambassador Cardi, who has provided high-level and - leadership to the ASP during three very challenging years. I wish I could say to the VP that I believed that the ICC would not continue to be confronted with enormous challenges in the coming years—but the challenges will continue to grow.

To Minister Jensen, I say yes to finance ministers being involved with the Rome Statute and ICC. Yes, also, in the context of the 2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are all directly and indirectly linked to achieving complementarity, cooperation and prevention. Goal 16 should be implemented in ways that advance justice and end impunity for the worst crimes. We hope the Minister will strongly support full funding for the ICC, and IJ funding in the European Union, and the United Nations.

The Minister also reinforced the relevance of the General Assembly and Human Rights Council to human rights, justice, and rule of law.

Universality is essential to promoting the integrity of international humanitarian law, the Rome Statute and the ICC. In the framework of IJD, CICC members have organized and participated in IJD events throughout the world. In Nepal and Brazzaville, in Zambia and Senegal, in the US, the UK, and other capitals in Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Americas, Europe, in CARICOM and in the OSCE countries.

We congratulate all who demarche for ratification, for complementarity, for cooperation within the Rome Statute system, either nationally or in their regional and other appropriate international organizations.

Excellencies, when 124 becomes 134, or 144, then the biggest governments will stay outside of the Rome Statute system at the sacrifice of their legitimacy and leadership.

In our handout on the side of this room, we list the 124 States Parties. 31 governments have signed but not ratified and about 40 governments have not signed or acceded to the Rome Statute. When we view the 60+ UN Member States that have not ratified, only a small handful are human rights-respecting democratic governments. Most are authoritarian governments. Many would not allow NGOs to support the ICC, or be part of our NGO Coalition for the ICC. Another way of saying this is that the Rome Statute system is close to including all rule **of** law governments, but many rule **by** law and worse governments need to be recruited and convinced to join.¹

In conclusion, 2018 will be the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute, and the CICC will call on all States Parties, the UN, EU and other regional and relevant international organizations to recommit to the Rome Statute, which remains one of the greatest acts of peace and rule of law consecrated by the international community.

Thank you.

¹ Pace note: Rule **of** law governments are essentially constitutional, with representative parliaments or legislative bodies, independent judiciaries, independent prosecutors, human rights respecting, no immunity or veto for any person regardless of position committing crimes against humanity level crimes. These are fundamental elements of the Rome Statute.