



23 August 2011 17.00

As delivered

**Welcoming ceremony
Grenada
Statement by H.E. Mr. Jorge Lomónaco
Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties**

Mr. President,
Mr. Prosecutor,
Madame Registrar,
Excellencies,
Ambassador Stephen Fletcher,

On 19 May 2011, the government of Grenada demonstrated its strong commitment to international criminal justice as well as its unreserved support for the pursuit of international peace and security, the rule of law, and the promotion of human rights when it deposited its instrument of accession to the Rome Statute.

The Statute entered into force for Grenada on 1 August 2011, bringing the total number of States Parties to the Rome Statute to 115. The Assembly of States Parties welcomes Grenada and applauds its decision to join the international community in its efforts to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes that threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world.

After 300 years as a colony, an overthrow of the government, an invasion in the mid-eighties and a full restoration of democracy to follow, Grenada has come out as a strong and independent state of the Caribbean Community. Grenada has stated unequivocally on a number of occasions – inter alia during its many statements at the general debate of the UN General Assembly – its ever lasting devotion to its participation in the international community. Grenada has in particular stated that peace and stability remain crucial on the international agenda. With the accession to the Rome Statute, Grenada materializes this commitment and enters actively into the “age of accountability” as referred to by the United Nations Secretary-General at the Review Conference in Kampala last year.

With the accession of Grenada, 26 of the 115 States Parties of the ICC are from Latin America and the Caribbean 12 (out of 15) are from CARICOM. This impressive number of States that have acceded to the Rome Statute within one regional

group reaffirms the region's commitment to international criminal justice in general and to the ICC in particular.

The commitment of the Caribbean Community in combating impunity and bringing justice to victims has been expressed on many occasions. It is worth noticing that, although the idea of an international criminal court was raised from as far back as the period after World War II, it was a Caribbean Community proposal, under the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago, which led to the creation of the ICC. The support of CARICOM members before and during the negotiations of the Rome Statute was decisive in the establishment of the ICC.

The region's strong commitment to the Court has most recently been demonstrated by the regional meeting on the ICC convened by CARICOM in May 2011. The meeting had a specific focus on the importance of the universalization of the Rome Statute, the outcome of the Review Conference, as well as for CARICOM's proposal to include the crime of international drug trafficking within the Court's jurisdiction.

I am confident that the accession of Grenada will encourage the three remaining CARICOM members that have yet to become State Parties to consider joining the ICC in the very near future. The commitment of an entire region to the ICC will send a strong signal to the international community that impunity for the most heinous crimes is no longer acceptable. In this context, allow me to recall the words of the man behind the submission of the 1989 General Assembly motion, former Prime Minister [of Trinidad and Tobago], H.E. Mr. Arthur Robinson: "What we are involved in here, is an important development in human civilisation. For there cannot be civilisation without law [...] The future of mankind rests with the continued survival of the International Criminal Court."

It is therefore a true privilege for me, on behalf of the Assembly of States Parties, to congratulate Grenada once again and to extend to it a warm welcome to the growing ICC family. The Assembly looks forward to having all members of CARICOM as a member of the International criminal Court.

The Hague, 23 August 2011
