



**Statement of H.E. Petr Mareš, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Netherlands,
on the occasion of the welcoming ceremony for the Czech Republic**

International Criminal Court

The Hague, 1st October 2009

Mr. President, Judges, Ambassador, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to thank you for organizing this very warm and pleasant welcoming ceremony, which brings the attention to the work of the international system of justice. This ceremony has for us a symbolic value, as we are becoming the 110th State Party to the Rome Statute.

On this occasion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the first President of the International Criminal Court Mr. Philippe Kirsch and to the Prosecutor Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo for their personal, valuable support to the process of the ratification of this Treaty in my country. They both participated in a very successful seminar on the International Criminal Court, which was held in the Czech Republic exactly two years ago. Let me express our gratitude for the readiness and openness of the Court to receiving Czech parliamentarians and governmental representatives and for the assistance provided to them in searching for better understanding of the principles laid down by the Rome Statute. I would also like to express many thanks to the staff of the Court with whom we are almost in a daily contact and who have always been very open to share information about the Court activities with us. My thanks also belong to colleagues from the European Union, who were all the time close partners to us. As you probably know, support to the International Criminal Court is an important part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. Without the universal participation of the States, the Court would not be able to fulfill its role. The cooperation in the outreach activity is a very important step in the promotion of the universality of the Rome Statute.

Undoubtedly, the International Criminal Court represents an entirely new chapter in the development of human rights protection. The International Criminal Court creates the heart of the system of the international criminal justice, but it is still only one component of this system. The idea of the international criminal justice reflects much deeper understanding of the relationship between law, justice and responsibility. More than 40 years ago, Hannah Arendt, a very popular writer in my country, wrote in her book "Eichmann in Jerusalem" that Eichmann should have been tried by an international court for the crimes committed against mankind on the body of the Jewish people and not for the crimes against the Jewish people as the Jerusalem Court did. On another page of this book, Arendt wrote that the purpose of a trial is to render justice, and nothing else, even the noblest of ulterior purposes. The judicial process has a way of its own - laid down by law, a way which does not change, whatever the subject of the trial may be.

Today, the Arendt's thought still seems to be very relevant. Now, all of us - members of the international community counter a big challenge to make clear that nobody is above the law, that nobody can evade responsibility for any crimes that States agreed to identify as dangerous to international peace and security. International peace and security will never work, if we do not bear the consequences of the responsibility. Every individual is responsible for his or her crimes against humanity, war crimes or crimes of genocide. Every State is responsible for the punishment of such crimes. The International Criminal Court is here not as a substitute for the responsibility of States, but to make them bear their responsibility themselves. The principle of complementarity and promotion of the rule of law on the national level is a very important task for us (States), and the International Criminal Court itself.

The Czech Republic hopes that its ratification will serve as a stimulus for other countries to consider the accession to the International Criminal Court. On this occasion, the Czech Republic calls on States to support the International Criminal Court and to comply with the international obligations, which derive from their membership. The States' cooperation with the Court is the principal key element for the effective promotion of justice, which is our common goal.

The International Criminal Court is a relatively young institution with big ambitions, which may sometimes encounter a lot of different obstacles. The International Criminal Court does not work in vacuum, but it is a part of the international system - system which is living,

dynamic and pluralistic. Our common aim is to protect independency of judiciary and to protect justice. I began my short speech by quoting Arendt and I would like to finish using her words again. I am sure we can understand them as if they were formulated in connection with the activities of the International Criminal Court. To the question most commonly asked about the Eichmann trial: What good does it do?, there is but one possible answer. It will do justice.

Thank you.