

**Ceremony for the solemn undertaking of the
Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court**

Monday, 16 June 2003
The Peace Palace
The Hague, The Netherlands

**Statement made by
Judge Philippe Kirsch**

President of the International Criminal Court

On behalf of the Judges of the International Criminal Court it is with great pleasure that I welcome you, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, as the first elected Prosecutor of the Court. I would also like to convey to you our warm congratulations on your unanimous election by the States Parties.

Your election and the distinguished gathering here today demonstrate the confidence with which you are invested, the esteem in which you are held and the importance of your office. Above all, the unanimity of your election bears witness to the commitment of the States Parties to make the Court work, and to support you in your contribution to our common goal of ending impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

I should like to thank the States Parties for their support for the Court and the Prosecutor. Nothing could be a clearer demonstration of how the International Criminal Court transcends narrow sectional and political considerations. The will and ideals of those States have now been given form in a judicial body, dedicated to delivering justice when national judicial systems are unable or unwilling to do so.

Throughout history, mankind has failed to deal effectively with its worst transgressions - crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. The resulting climate of impunity has encouraged more and more brazen atrocities, with millions of victims and massive disability as a result. What a marked difference we see today.

La cérémonie de prestation de serment du Procureur qui a lieu aujourd’hui ne marque pas seulement l’entrée en fonction de Monsieur Moreno Ocampo, mais également les débuts du Bureau du Procureur en tant qu’institution. Les événements de ce jour ainsi que la prestation de serment des juges en mars dernier constituent les dernières grandes étapes de la mise en place de la Cour pénale internationale. Ce fut un long voyage qui a commencé au lendemain de la Deuxième guerre mondiale, avec les procès de Nuremberg et de Tokyo et s’est poursuivi avec les Tribunaux pénaux internationaux pour l’ex-Yugoslavie et pour le Rwanda et le Tribunal spécial pour la Sierra Léone. Aujourd’hui, la Cour pénale internationale a cessé d’être une aspiration pour devenir réalité. Nous avons une cour en état de marche avec tout ce que cela implique: le Statut de Rome et les autres documents de base, des juges, un procureur, une défense et un siège.

Cette réalité n’est pas seulement perçue par ceux qui ont œuvré à la création de la Cour, les observateurs et les praticiens de la scène internationale. Elle est également ressentie par les victimes, par ceux qui ont souffert de l’impunité de leurs bourreaux, par ceux dont la vie – ou la vie de leurs proches – a été détruite par les crimes semblables à ceux qui relèvent de la responsabilité du Procureur. Conscients de la gravité du sort des victimes, nous souhaitons la bienvenue parmi nous aujourd’hui à des personnes qui ont enduré les crimes auxquels nous voulons remettre un terme, ainsi que des représentants de la société civile qui ont contribué avec tant de détermination à la création de la Cour.

We are part of humanity's response to the countless victims and their plight.

The ICC is a humanitarian, judicial and practical imperative and as such it must succeed. It will do so. Through hard work. Through a commitment to independence, transparency and the Rule of Law. Through the efforts, support and will of States and individuals across the world. It is a goal towards which today’s proceedings draw us an important step closer.

It now falls upon us to justify that support, and the hopes invested in us, to demonstrate the principles set out in the Rome Statute – of fairness, impartiality and justice. Success in this rests, to a great extent, upon the relationship between the Judges and Prosecutor and will be first visible in the operation of the Pre-Trial Chamber. Ours must be a relationship of independence and collaboration. Independence, with each institution performing its own unique function. Collaboration, in the pursuit of our common goal of establishing the truth and justice.

Our relationship is predicated on mutual respect, a respect which has characterised our dynamic and productive initial interactions. We look forward to continuing on this basis, mindful of our common responsibilities in making this Court a success.

Thank you