

Statement of the Convenor of the Coalition for the ICC, Mr. William Pace

General Debate of the 17th Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the International Criminal Court

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The World Forum, The Hague

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I am honored to address the Delegates and leaders of the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute on behalf the Coalition for the ICC. In the short period of two weeks this past September, 35 State Party Foreign Ministers endorsed a statement that began:

In July, we marked the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute – an occasion many of us used to reaffirm our commitment to the International Criminal Court. Just a few months later, it is clear that this is a crucial moment for all of us to speak up and stand up for the Court. We are witnessing an overall erosion of the rules-based international order, which we have worked so hard to establish in the past decades – in the areas of trade, disarmament, climate change and indeed the rule of law and human rights. The ICC is a central achievement of multilateral diplomacy and a true milestone in the development of international law. Due to its mandate of speaking law to power, it has been the target of political attacks for a number of years. It should thus come as no surprise that it is under increasing attack at a time of a broader assault on the rules-based order itself. We will not always agree with everything that the Court decides – but we will always respect its independence, an indispensable feature of any court of law.

The Coalition fully supports the leadership demonstrated by these ministers, and we are committed to work closely with State Parties and **all** in the international community in defending the historic achievements and progress made in advancing justice, peace and the rule of law in international affairs.

The Coalition greatly appreciates the political and financial support for civil society participation in advancing the Rome Statute System, including the exceptional consultative arrangements extended to us by this treaty body – the Assembly – and the ICC, reflecting one of the most successful informal partnerships between governments and non-governmental organizations in history.

I am very pleased that during the 20th anniversary we have been able to produce our historic Rome Report that documents this unique partnership more completely than any other source. The title is *The Rome Report of the Coalition for an International Criminal Court: The Role of the Coalition at the UN Diplomatic Conference Establishing the ICC* – with the day-by-day ‘story’ of the negotiations by the twelve CICC

teams; and by the print and online newspapers – with contributions from many leaders of the Rome negotiation.

We do not have enough copies for all of the delegates and state parties here today, but will distribute as many as we can to Rome veterans and the 'Like-Minded Governments'. We hope that all who want copies will fill out the forms we are distributing at the ASP and on our website.

Distinguished delegates and officials of the ICC, the Coalition will continue to assess ways in which we can improve our service to you and to the Rome Statute. At the same time, we will continue to strive for major improvements by the main organs of the Court, the Office of the Prosecutor, the Registry, the Judiciary and the Presidency.

But, the Coalition also believes that the ASP itself, as the governing body and as an indispensable organ of the Rome Statute System, has major improvements it must make in its working methods and mechanisms, including in the election of judges; in its role in advancing universality, complementarity, cooperation; in the relationship of the ICC with the United Nations, and with other relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations – and especially in the search and election of the next Prosecutor.

Delegates, I am committed to working for many more years for this great initiative. I have been greatly honored to serve as Convenor of the CICC for 24 years, but it is time to pass the baton -- this will be my last ASP in this role – I expect the CICC Steering Committee to appoint a new Convenor in 2019. I cannot express how humbled I am for the wonderful support I have received from so many for so long. Thank you.
