



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

NGOs

Statement by the Coalition for the International Criminal Court

**The Review Conference of the Rome Statute
1 June 2010 - Kampala, Uganda**

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Mr President, Your Excellencies, Fellow NGO representatives,

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is honoured to address this historic first Review Conference of the Rome Statute.

This is likely the largest gathering ever of international justice experts from more than 100 governments, all of the current international ad hoc and special tribunals, media, academia, and more than 500 representatives of the CICC and civil society accredited to the Conference, and hundreds more gathered in the people's space. We would like to express our gratitude to the Ugandan Government, the ASP and its Secretariat, and President Wenaweser for their support before and during the early stages of the conference. We would also like to thank UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and His Excellency Kofi Annan for their commitment to this Conference and their encouraging and supportive words to civil society.

We are genuinely proud of the efforts of more than 1000 NGOs who show their commitment by using their limited resources and by making huge personal and professional sacrifices to attend this event. This is a true testimony of appreciation to those who drafted, ratified and implemented the Rome Statute and we hope that you as States recognise their participation as a success in itself. Even more NGOs would have been here, had they been able to. Regrettably some NGOs from Sudan were prevented by their government to travel to Kampala to participate.

As the CICC has stated many times, the Rome Statute is one of the greatest advances ever in international law, and the Rome Conference in 1998 provided a unique outcome that for many reasons would not have been reached at another time or in another place. Since 1998, the Statute and the Court have withstood grave threats by opponents and we congratulate the State Parties, ICC officials and others in the international community for their committed efforts to defend the Rome Statute.

In terms of stocktaking, the Coalition believes that this conference will show that what was agreed to in Rome is the right and just way forward and that significant progress has been made. The Conference will also demonstrate that further progress will not be automatic and that all stake holders - individual states and their legal systems, the ASP, NGOs, the UN and other international and regional bodies - need to step up their investments in justice to reach the final goal of ending impunity.

The system has reached 111 member states, but has yet to be truly universal; the Court has come far in investigating and prosecuting, but needs to be strengthened and reinforced; some states have enacted implementation legislation, but the majority have not; some perpetrators are tried before national courts, but most are not; the voice of victims are sometimes heard, but often silenced. We recognise strong and even brave political statements of support for justice, but we also see governments and others too willing to compromise principles for political expediency.

We urge states at this meeting to express their commitment through action and by continuing to make pledges beyond the Review Conference on how you intend to meet all the expectations that you have set out through the Rome Statute, including reaching universality, and reinforcing your support to the Court as a complementary part of your own legal system.

On the three amendments under consideration, our hopes are that the debates will take place on the basis of the highest standards, and on the basis of what is best for the victims and the Rome Statute - not for national political considerations. The CICC respects the differing opinions of our membership, and those of States Parties, particularly with respect to the crime of aggression, and our goal is to help ensure that the debates remain constructive and build on the years of preparatory work. The principles of independence of the Court, fair trials and due process, as well as our commitment to protect the integrity of the Rome Statute will continue to guide us throughout the deliberations.

We wish to remind governments that the spirit of like-mindedness and constructive cooperation has made the Rome Statute system unique and we hope this spirit will prevail in what will be a challenging negotiation.

I am proud to be followed by some of the most active and longest serving members of the Coalition, as well as some members more directly affected by the work of the Court. Some NGOs, including the International Criminal Bar and the International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association respectively have provided written statements and many other NGOs will participate in our various side events that will take place throughout the conference.

This great Treaty, the Court and the Assembly represent humanity's determined search for peace and justice, not only here in Africa but throughout the world.

Thank you.