



WELCOMING CEREMONY: CZECH REPUBLIC

**Statement, H.E. Mr. Jorge Lomónaco (Mexico)
Vice - President of the Assembly of States Parties**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ambassador Petr Mareš,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here today to celebrate, congratulate and offer a warm welcome to the Czech Republic as the youngest member of the ICC family.

On July 21st 2009, the Czech Republic took the decision to contribute to global peace and international justice by joining other 109 States in the efforts to end impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. With this significant and historical step, the Czech Republic becomes the 110th State Party to

the Rome Statute. But perhaps as significantly, with this ratification all 27 member states of the European Union are now States Parties to the Statute and can offer unanimous support to the Court. This shall be seen as a major leap towards universality of the Rome Statute, which is crucial for successfully attaining the objectives of the International Criminal Court.

Your Excellency, please allow me to take the liberty to echo the words of President Václav Klaus in his statement delivered at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly last week, wherein he recalls this year's commemoration of twenty years after your country's very successful political transition. The Czech Republic has undergone a very dynamic transformation since that has not gone unnoticed. It joined the European Union in 2004 and successfully held the EU Presidency in the first half of this year. The main motto of the Czech Presidency was "Europe without Barriers". Today, when we celebrate the Czech Republic embracing the principles of international criminal justice by joining the expanding ICC family, we can proudly say that we are another step closer to "justice without barriers".

The Czech Republic is also the 17th State from Eastern Europe that has ratified the Rome Statute, setting an example for other States in the region that have yet to join the International Criminal Court. Its ratification to the Statute should also be seen as

a call to those States to work for a united regional voice that speaks against impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Once again, I wish to congratulate the Czech Republic for its significant achievement and to extend, on behalf of the Assembly of States Parties, a warm welcome.
