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

**Day of International Criminal Justice
17 July 2011**

Mr. President,
Madame Registrar,
The Representative of the Office of the Prosecutor,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On 1 June 2010, at the Fourth plenary meeting of the Review Conference of the Rome Statute in Kampala, States Parties adopted by consensus the Kampala Declaration in which they reaffirmed their commitment to the Rome Statute and its full implementation. Guided by a renewed spirit of cooperation States Parties decided, among many other things, to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice.

The date commemorates the night of 17 July 1998, when the international community reached a historic milestone by adopting the Rome Statute. As we all know, the adoption of the Statute was a momentous step towards ending impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern – genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression – which threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world.

2011 is the first occasion for marking such a momentous occasion, the Day of International Criminal Justice. The main objective for the celebration this year is to position 17 July among the general public and global audiences through activities organized by the Court at The Hague and its field offices.

Although the Court, as the initiator of the Day of International Criminal Justice, will lead the commemorations, we expect that other actors, such as the United Nations and the ad hoc tribunals, will also take part in this initiative. The committed engagement of State Parties, through high-level statements, pledges and symbolic events such as seminars and conferences, is absolutely essential. Equally important is for the ICC to target legal and academic communities, as well as NGOs and civil society. These actors remain crucial not only in the dissemination of information about the Court and its activities, but also in acting as “our conscience” and will therefore play a decisive part in raising awareness about this special day.

Since the Review Conference in 2010, five States have become Parties to the Rome Statute: Grenada, Moldova, Saint Lucia, Seychelles and Tunisia. The year that has passed has therefore marked another successful period for the Court and for international justice. This does not only demonstrate the commitment of a growing number of countries to the Rome Statute system, but it also conveys a strong message to the international community to further strengthen its efforts to ensure that the most heinous crimes are investigated and justice dispensed.

Celebrations are sometimes fitting opportunities for reflection. As a clear sign of maturity of the ICC system, the Court and States Parties decided to join forces and participate together in a process of review of its governance, with full respect of the Court’s judicial independence. The Study Group on Governance has become an extraordinary platform of dialogue between the Court and State Parties, where concerns and expectations can be discussed in a sensible, constructive way, as we deepen the institution-building process to rely less on strong personalities and more on stronger institutions. The exercise has brought about a better understanding not only of the challenges to improve the operation of the whole system but also of its several strengths, and has therefore managed to convert even those who were initially skeptical of the exercise. In this context, I can only pay tribute to President Song’s vision.

As we launch the Day of International Criminal Justice this morning we also begin the process leading to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the ICC in 2012. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all stakeholders, the ICC community in general, to become actively involved in the preparations for the celebration of such a special occasion.

The Day of International Criminal Justice is a perfect occasion to celebrate the growing ICC family and to demonstrate that the commitment to the fight against impunity is stronger than ever. It is therefore my privilege and honor to open this special ceremony today to launch the celebration of the first Day of International Criminal Justice on 17 July 2011.

The Hague, 7 July 2011
