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17 luglio 2011 - Celebrazione della Giornata della Giustizia Penale Internazionale  
15/07/2011

**Message of the Italian Government on the occasion of the  
Day of International Criminal Justice  
17 July 2011**

Today we are celebrating a date, July 17, that was recently proclaimed, "The Day of International Criminal Justice," to recall a fundamental moment in the development of laws to safeguard human rights and punish crimes that offend the moral conscience of humankind. On July 17, 1998, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was adopted: an event whose institutional importance many compared to the approval of the United Nations Charter. Subsequently the Court has performed its high legal functions for many years now with commitment and effectiveness in order to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of atrocities such as acts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

After the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials and the Cold War years, which prevented the establishment of international bodies to adjudicate the most serious violations of humanitarian law and human rights, the turning point came at the beginning of the final decade of the last century, with the affirmation of the principle of individual criminal responsibility for so-called "international crimes." Events that occurred in the war in former Yugoslavia and that led to the genocide in Rwanda convinced States - and through them the United Nations Security Council - to establish two ad hoc Tribunals that are still operating today to prosecute the crimes committed during those conflicts. At the same time, there was a growing call from international public opinion to realize the project of creating a permanent International Criminal Court, established to exert a preventive influence and to adjudicate the most serious crimes, wherever and by whomever they are committed.

Today the Court, born in Rome thirteen years ago in July, has seen a constant growth of its authority and credibility, and with it the number of Countries that have ratified the Statute, which

has now reached 116. The fact that the Security Council has referred to the Court situations such as Sudan-Darfur and Libya has strengthened its role as the essential institution to guarantee not only legality and respect for fundamental rights in conflict situations, but also international peace and security. Italy has always been in the forefront of the affirmation of the principles of law and the rejection of impunity for international crimes. In this we are inspired by our tradition and our legal heritage, and also by the firm conviction that only respect for a code that is broadly accepted and trusted in its application by an independent and impartial judicial body can meet the deeply-felt need for retributive justice, and prevent future atrocities.

We will thus continue to assure the International Criminal Tribunals, and in particular the Court born from the Rome Statute, our full support and cooperation so that the July 17th anniversary may continue to mark ongoing progress in the affirmation of rule of law and the rights of the individual. We also know that our conviction and determination to support international criminal justice without reservation are shared by growing sectors of the community of States and civil society. And this is the best and most auspicious reason for celebrating today's date. In this spirit, I have given instructions for the flag of the International Criminal Court to be flown at the Farnesina Palace today alongside the flags of Italy and the European Union.

Franco Frattini  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Discorso del del Presidente della Corte Penale Internazionale](#)