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INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

GENERAL DEBATE

Statement by

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THE HAGUE, NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> 2008

Mr President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour that we address the Seventh Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute.

Portugal would like to begin by commending you, Mr. President, the Bureau of the Assembly and its Secretariat, the Court, the Committee on Budget and Finance, the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims and the Working Groups in the Hague and in New York for preparing a set of high-quality documents that will enable this Assembly to engage in rich discussions and take informed decisions.

Portugal welcomes the States that in the last year became party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court and for the first time participate in this Assembly.

We would like as well to pay tribute to the continued and valuable contribution of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court and its members for advancing the objectives of the Court.

Mr. President,

Portugal fully shares the views already express in this General Debate by France as Presidency of the European Union.

We acknowledge with great satisfaction that, during these ten years of work, the ICC accomplished the objectives initial set fort as part of a multilateral system that aims to end impunity, establish the rule of law, promote and encourage respect for human rights and achieve sustainable peace, in accordance with

international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

This institution has introduced a major change in the architecture of the international legal order.

However we recognize that in order to consolidate in the future the position of the Court, it will be essential:

- The full engagement of all States Parties, as well of the States not Parties in the promotion of the Universality and Integrity of the Rome Statute, in view to achieve its universal ratification.

- The reinforcement of the cooperation between the International Criminal Court and the States Parties as well as with the States not parties, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations with regard to arrest and surrender, the provision of evidence, the protection and relocation of victims and witness and the enforcement of sentences.

- The success of the Review Conference of the Statute, in 2010, to which we attach most importance, not only concerning the definition of the crime of aggression that will contribute for enhancing the net of the international criminal jurisdiction, a keystone to a more peaceful and fair world where the promotion for the respect of international humanitarian law, human rights and the rule of law have their proper place, but also regarding other issues that have to be addressed.

In concluding,

I would like to assure you, Mr. President, that Portugal will maintain its public, diplomatic and legal support to the Court and uphold its commitment in the fight against impunity for the most heinous crimes under international law.

Thank you, Mr. President.