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Six New Judges Elected to International Criminal Court Bench *Landmark Gender Balance Struck as ICC Bench Becomes 10 Men and 8 Women*

(New York, 27 January 2006) – Yesterday afternoon at the resumed meeting of the Fourth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the International Criminal Court, six new judges were elected to the bench of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by ICC Member States. Of these six, five had already served three years as ICC judges, with just one new appointee elected from Eastern Europe. The election of these new judges, who will each serve for a term of nine years, represents a notable new benchmark in gender balance at the international justice tribunals. With the election of three women yesterday – Professor Ekaterina Trendafilova (Bulgaria) who is a former Fulbright Scholar with a Ph.D in Criminal Justice from Sofia University, Professor Akua Kuenyehia (Ghana) who studied law at the University of Ghana and Oxford, and Professor Anita Ušacka (Latvia) who earned her Ph.D in Law at Moscow State University – the ICC bench now comprises eight women and ten men.

Of the ten candidates running for the new positions, five of the new appointees are currently sitting judges at the Court: Hans-Peter Kaul (**Germany**); Erkki Kourula (**Finland**); Akua Kuenyehia (**Ghana**); Sang-hyun Song (**Republic of Korea**); and Anita Ušacka (**Latvia**). The new appointee who has not yet served on the ICC bench is Ekaterina Trendafilova (**Bulgaria**).

According to Assembly procedures for this election, the ICC States Parties had to vote for at least one female, one African, one Asian and two Eastern European candidates. All of these minimum criteria were met – and in the case of gender, exceeded – in the first and only round of ballots. In comparison with the previous bench, the election resulted in the addition of one more female and Eastern European judge (Professor Trendafilova from Bulgaria), and one less judge from Asia (Judge Slade from Samoa). The new ICC judges will be sworn in on 11 March 2006 in The Hague.

William Pace, Convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, said, “Many NGOs attending the Assembly of ICC States Parties yesterday noted the many important contributions made by Judge Slade to the Court over the past three years. Many CICC members were pleased with the qualifications of Judge Trendafilova who will be replacing Judge Slade.”

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Notes for Editors:

1. Although the ICC is an independent body and *not* an organ of the United Nations, the resumed session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC is taking place at UN Headquarters in New York from 26-27 January 2006. The earlier meeting of the ASP, which took place from 28 November-3 December 2005, was convened in The Hague, The Netherlands where the Court is situated.
2. The International Criminal Court is the world’s first permanent global criminal court. It was established in The Hague, the Netherlands on 1 July 2002 when the ICC treaty came into force. The ICC does not have jurisdiction over crimes prior to that date.
2. The Court is currently investigating cases in Darfur, Sudan; the Democratic Republic of Congo; and Uganda. The ICC Prosecutor’s office is also analyzing eight situations on four continents including the Central African Republic and Cote d’Ivoire. The ICC unsealed its first arrest warrants for five top leaders of the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) on 13 October 2005.
3. The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) is *not* an organ of the ICC but rather an independent NGO network made up of more than 2,000 civil society organizations working to promote a fair, effective and independent ICC. The CICC as a whole does not take a position on the election of ICC judges or any other officials and staff of the Court. However, individual member organizations of the CICC may do so, following their own mandates.