



**Coalition  
for the  
International  
Criminal Court**

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### **Global Coalition Urges Remaining CARICOM Countries to Join ICC as Soon as Possible**

*Seven Member States Left to Solidify Caribbean Community Commitment to International Justice*

**(New York, 1 June 2006)** – As part of a region-wide effort, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) today called on seven CARICOM countries – Bahamas, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname – to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as soon as possible in order to consolidate the Caribbean’s commitment to international justice and the global fight against impunity. In a letter sent to each of the seven governments, the CICC – an international network of more than 2,000 non-governmental and civil society organizations – has asked these remaining CARICOM member states not only to join the ICC but to also include specific ICC-supportive language in the CARICOM’s Annual Conference of Heads of Government Resolution which will be adopted in the first week of July 2006.

The CICC’s letter to the seven governments also highlighted the critical role that the Caribbean states have played in the creation of the ICC. In 1989, Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of CARICOM, called on the United Nation’s 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to consider the creation of an international criminal court and, by the end of that year, all of the CARICOM member states helped to champion a final UN resolution which called for an ICC. Within the following decade, the Rome Statute was formally adopted in 1998 and came into force just four years later in July 2002. To date, 100 countries, including CARICOM member states Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as fellow Caribbean nation, Dominican Republic, have all joined the ICC.

In the letter to governments, the CICC also acknowledged a number of recent ICC-related developments in the Caribbean that have helped re-invigorate regional support for the Court. In late 2005, both Belize and Guyana took important strides by ratifying the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC which provides Court officials and staff with privileges and immunities similar to those given to UN bodies’ and other international organizations’ staff. In December 2005, President Venetiaan of Suriname declared to the Surinamese Congress that his government would accede to the ICC treaty, an advance welcomed by the international community. Following this, in February 2006, Trinidad and Tobago became the first country in the region to enact legislation implementing not only its obligations to cooperate with the ICC but also implementing all of the crimes under the Rome Statute into domestic law. In May 2006, former Trinidad and Tobago President Arthur N.R. Robinson was elected to represent the Latin American and Caribbean countries as a Board Member of the ICC Trust Fund for Victims, joining fellow internationally-renowned board members Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan, Madam Minister Simone Veil of France, and His Excellency Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki of Poland.

Commenting on hopes that CARICOM will consolidate as a region completely committed to the ICC, CICC Convenor William Pace said, “The historic commitment of CARICOM member states to the idea of an international criminal court helped to pave the way for the creation and development of the ICC that we have before us today. Given the important work the Court is now doing in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, it is vital that the ICC continue to receive support from the international community. The full endorsement of those remaining CARICOM Member States to the ICC would show, once again, the Caribbean region’s strong support to the fight against impunity.”

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#### **Notes for Editors:**

1. The International Criminal Court is the world’s first permanent global criminal court. It is *not* an organ of the UN but rather an independent body 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. Of the 18 ICC Judges, one judge – The Honorable Karl T. Hudson Phillips – is from Trinidad and Tobago. He was appointed to a nine-year term in 2002.
3. The Court is currently investigating cases in Darfur, Sudan; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and Uganda. The ICC unsealed its first arrest warrants for five top leaders of the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) on 13 October 2005. On 17 March 2006, the ICC unsealed its arrest warrant for Thomas Lubanga Dyila, leader of the political and military movement, the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) and also announced that Mr. Lubanga had been arrested and transferred to The Hague. Mr. Lubanga is alleged to have been involved in forcefully enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities in the DRC.
4. The ICC’s geographic jurisdiction extends over the territories and nationals of the 100 countries that have ratified or acceded to its treaty. The Court may also have jurisdiction in situations referred by the UN Security Council. In accordance with the court’s “complementarity” principle, however, the ICC will only act when national courts have been unable or unwilling to do so.
5. The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) is *not* an organ of the Court but rather an independent NGO network of more than 2,000 civil society organizations working to promote a fair, effective and independent ICC. The CICC was established in February 1995 and has offices in New York City and The Hague as well as seven regional offices around the world. For more information: [www.iccnw.org](http://www.iccnw.org)