

**His Excellency Alassane Ouattara**  
**President**  
**The Republic of Cote d'Ivoire**

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Re: *Cote d'Ivoire's Ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC*

New York, Benin – 1 March 2012

Your Excellency,

I have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in 150 countries, campaigning for a fair, effective, and independent Court and increased access to justice for victims of crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes. On this occasion, I am writing to urge you to ensure Cote d'Ivoire's ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC as soon as possible.

Over the years, Cote d'Ivoire has shown receptiveness to the new system of international criminal justice created by the Rome Statute, the cornerstone of which is the International Criminal Court (ICC). Soon after the negotiations on the Rome Statute concluded in July 1998, Cote d'Ivoire demonstrated its commitment to fighting impunity through the ICC by signing the treaty on 30 November 1998.

However, following this symbolic act, the Constitutional Court of Cote d'Ivoire ruled that the Constitution needed to be amended in order for Cote d'Ivoire to ratify the Rome Statute, which stalled progress toward ratification.

Nevertheless, in April 2003, Cote d'Ivoire accepted the jurisdiction of the ICC under the provisions of Article 12 (3) of the Rome Statute, thereby expressing its faith in the work of the ICC and its will to work to combat impunity through the Rome Statute system. As you are aware, Your Excellency, the Court is currently investigating the situation in Cote d'Ivoire and has already opened a case. In addition, last week, the Court's Pre-Trial Chamber III decided to expand the temporal jurisdiction of the situation to 2002, prompting many to believe that the Court may soon open more cases stemming from the situation.

Your Excellency, we believe the moment is opportune for your government to take concrete steps to make a formal commitment to the fight against impunity by ratifying the Rome Statute. Cote d'Ivoire's ratification would allow it to take the necessary steps to revise its national legislation to bring it fully in line with international criminal justice standards. Most importantly, it would also allow Cote d'Ivoire to complement the efforts of the Court through its own comprehensive investigations and prosecutions as enshrined in the principle of complementarity under the Rome Statute. By so doing, it would further allow your government to facilitate a healing and reconciliation process following years of civil war unrest.

Furthermore, as a state party to the Rome Statute, Cote d'Ivoire would be able to actively participate in a more significant manner in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges, prosecutors, and other Court officials. Prompt ratification would enable Cote d'Ivoire to

contribute its input, as a state party, to a number of significant changes which the Court is undergoing over the next few years.

We thus kindly appeal to Your Excellency to prioritize the ratification of the Rome Statute this year so as to facilitate the comprehensive integration of the Rome Statute into Cote d'Ivoire's domestic criminal code as soon as possible. To this end, the Coalition is able and willing to assist with the technical and legal issues surrounding ratification, as well as the development of appropriate implementing cooperation and complementarity legislation.

We hope your government will take this opportunity to formally join the Rome Statute this year and by so doing express its ongoing support for justice, human rights and the fight against impunity.

Sincerely,



Brigitte Suhr  
Director of Regional Programs  
Coalition for the International Criminal Court



Francis Dako  
Africa Regional Coordinator  
Coalition for the International Criminal Court

CC:

H.E. Mr. Guillaume Soro, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense  
H.E. Mr. Jeannot Kouadio, Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
H.E. Mr. Daniel Duncan, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
H.E. Mr. Gnénéma Coulibaly, Minister of Human Rights and Civil Liberties  
H.E. Mr. Mathieu Darret, Minister of ex-Combatants and War Victims  
H.E. Mr. Youssoufou Bamba, Permanent Representative to the United Nations