



PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION

Senate of the Philippines gives its concurrence to International Criminal Court Ratification Bill

Philippines soon to deposit Instrument of Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

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New York/The Hague – August 23, 2011 -The Philippine Senate's concurrence earlier today with the Rome Statute Ratification Bill, by 17 votes in favour and only 1 vote against, represents a triumph for accountability and international justice as well as another blow for the scourge of impunity worldwide. The deposit of the Philippines' Instrument of Ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC with the United Nations in New York is expected to take place shortly.

PGA wishes to warmly congratulate its Members in the Senate of the Philippines for their longstanding and unyielding efforts. **Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago** who co-chaired the Senate Subcommittee on the ICC, expended unceasing and unstinting efforts, over a period of many years, to make this day a reality. Senator Defensor Santiago's steely resolve and unwavering commitment to the Rome Statute of the ICC and the rule of law in general, sets a shining example to legislators all over the world,

PGA wishes further to strongly commend PGA Member **Senator Loren Legarda**, Chairperson of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee - also a longtime supporter of the ICC - for her skill and decisiveness in shepherding through this ICC Bill to its ultimate conclusion. Senator Legarda's important role in facilitating a Briefing by the President of the ICC, Judge Sang-Hyun Song in the Senate of the Philippines in March 2011 was also a very important step in the road to this historic accomplishment, as has been her willingness to make herself available to meet with all interested parties in this process.

The path to imminent ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC has been a long one for the Philippines. Some who were intensively involved in this process as legislators no longer hold elective office. In light of her tenacious and unrelenting efforts in support of ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC, PGA therefore wishes also to extend our deep expression of appreciation to our former Member, **Ms. Loretta Rosales**, current Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of the Philippines, for her own extraordinary contributions in bringing about this proud moment.

PGA President and Chair of International Council, **Dr. Ruth Wijdenbosch MP (Suriname)** commented that: *"The Senate of the Philippines vote of concurrence today on the ICC Ratification Bill, as signed by President Aquino III earlier this year, is to be warmly welcomed. I wish to applaud my PGA colleagues in the Senate of the Philippines, in particular Senators Miriam Defensor Santiago and Senator Loren Legarda for their extraordinary determination in bringing about this landmark day for the Philippines. This decision is of even greater importance, to the extent that the Asian sub-region continues to be under-represented within the ICC system.*

Commenting also on this development, **Dep. Alain Destexhe (Belgium)**, Convenor of the PGA International Law & Human Rights Programme stated *"From here in Rwanda, a country that has experienced among the worst atrocities known to the international community, I have just learnt that the Senate of the Philippines has given its concurrence to the ICC Ratification Bill signed by President Benigno Aquino III a few months ago. This represents a genuine moment of victory, not only for the Philippines and its people but also for the international community which has embraced the ICC as a vital international organ in combatting impunity around the globe. I salute the Senate of the Philippines in taking this important step".*

PGA wishes also to pay tribute to its friends and colleagues in the **Coalition for the ICC in Asia**, and in the Philippines in particular, for their tireless efforts and instrumental supportive role in bringing the Philippines to its rightful place when it very shortly will become a formal State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. It is civil society, often during long periods of inaction, inertia and frustration, that has always sought to kept the flame of hope alive, steadfast in the belief that one day their unswerving commitment would bear fruit.

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