



Parliamentarians for Global Action

For Immediate Release:

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Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) applauds the decision of the President of the Philippines to refer the Rome Statute of the ICC for the approval of the Senate of the Philippines

Philippines would become 115th State Party of the Rome Statute of the ICC

Manila/The Hague/New York - March 7th, 2011: Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) welcomes the decision by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, H.E. Benigno Aquino III to refer the Rome Statute of the ICC to the Senate of the Philippines for its advice and consent.

This announcement occurred on the occasion of today's visit to the Philippines' Senate by the President of the International Court, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, and on the eve of PGA's *Asia-Pacific Consultation on the Universality of the Rome Statute of the ICC* in the Parliament of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, which will run from March 9-10, 2011 and see the participation of the President of the ICC, the Attorney General and the Minister for Laws and Parliamentary Affairs (in the Prime Minister's Office) of Malaysia. This decision of President Aquino, a former member of PGA, is not only a highly positive development for the Philippines, but also for the entire Asian region and the universality of support and membership in the ICC system.

PGA Member Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a long time champion of the ICC and tireless advocate of the Philippines ratifying the Rome Statute, warmly welcomed this step with the following statement: *"I will deliver the sponsorship speech at the Senate plenary session, as soon as President Aquino officially transmits to the Senate his ratification of the Rome Statute. It is a foregone conclusion that the Senate, under the Philippine Constitution, will immediately concur with the ratification. This ratification caps seven years of our fight for the Philippines to join the International Criminal Court. We Filipinos are proud that now we finally enlist among the ranks of those who fight against the culture of impunity in the commission of crimes against international humanitarian law"*, Sen. Defensor-Santiago concluded.

The Constitution of the Philippines requires that the vote of two-thirds of the Senate is necessary for treaties' ratification. Current and former members of PGA have contributed to the ICC process in Manila in a relentless effort. Sen. Loren Legarda, currently chairing the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, has been with former Representative Etta Rosales a founding member of PGA's *Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law* in 2002. Former Speaker and PGA Member Representative Jose' de Venecia hosted the first *Asian Parliamentary Consultation on the Universality of the Rome Statute of the ICC* in the Congress of the Philippines in August 2006.

The Congress of the Philippines has already domesticated in 2010 the provisions of the Rome Statute on international crimes in its National Laws, and it will simply need additional legislation to cooperate fully with the Court to finalize its ICC process after ratification. While the Philippines may soon become the 115th

Member State within the ICC system, Tunisia's recent decision to ratify the Rome Statute may soon bring about to 116 the number of States bound by the new system of international criminal justice.