

PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION (PGA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. David Donat-Cattin, Director, PGA Int. Law & Human Rights - T: +243.997.425.372 (Kinshasa)

Email: donat@pgaction.org

Global Parliamentary Network Calls for Full Support of the International Criminal Court and the Fight against Impunity in the Great Lakes and Central African regions

DRC PARLIAMENT HOSTS REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON JUSTICE AND PEACE

KINSHASA, December 10, 2009: The quest for justice and reparation of victims of armed conflicts in the Central African region will be addressed today in Kinshasa, in the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), when Judge H.-J. Song, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), will open the “*International Parliamentary Conference on Justice and Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes Region*” organised by Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA).

Members of Parliaments (MPs) from the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of the DRC, from the parliamentary assemblies of the Eastern Province (Ituri), the Kivus and Maniema, as well from Burundi, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya and Uganda, will discuss with their colleagues from Switzerland and Belgium, and with experts from international and non-governmental organisations the main challenges to advance the fight against impunity and the protection of victims’ rights as key-tools to ensure that durable peace is supported by the civilian populations, which have been directly affected by armed conflict and widespread atrocities.

The conference receives the strong support of the multi-partisan group of PGA in the DRC Congress, and it will be opened by the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and closed by the President of the Senate. The DRC Government will be represented by the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interiors and Security and the Minister of Gender and Children, thus signaling a renewed political will of the DRC to fully cooperate with the Court and improve the means and methods to fight impunity at the domestic level.

Under the agenda-item “justice for peace”, key international players such as the European Union (EU) – represented by the European Commission Delegation and the Special Representative for the Great Lakes region’s office – and the United States – represented by the Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen Rapp – will unite their voice at the conference, calling for the prompt execution of pending arrest warrants issued by the ICC and the reinforcement of National criminal justice systems.

While this event starts on International Human Rights Day, 10 December, it will continue until 12 December with a final session on the need for effective and comprehensive implementing legislation of the Rome Statute of the ICC at the National level in all countries of the region, starting with the DRC and Uganda, where draft legislation is under consideration in the relevant parliamentary Committees. Several obstacles must be overcome to ensure that this draft legislation will be in full compliance with the Rome Statute requirements and, at the same time, their adoption will occur within the shortest possible time-frame.

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will continue to work with its Members in the region and the rest of the world to give effect to the conclusions of this conference on justice and peace, in line with the objective of PGA to contribute to the universality and effectiveness of the Rome Statute system, which is aimed at fighting impunity, preventing the repetition of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression, as well as promoting the full respect of the human rights of victims and other individuals who are at risk of victimization.

About PGA

Parliamentarians for Global Action is a network of more than 1300 parliamentarians from 131 countries worldwide that in the past 20 years has promoted a permanent, effective and universal ICC. PGA members have led, launched and/or authored ratification and implementation initiatives of the Rome Statute in 65 out of the 110 State Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC, including some of the more recent States that have joined the ICC – e.g. Chile, the Cook Islands, Suriname, Japan, the Comoros, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Kenya. PGA will hold its “*VI Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law*” in Kampala, Uganda, on 27-28 May 2010.

PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. PGA receives the support of the European Commission (EU) and of the Governments of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, as well as core support from Denmark, Sweden and the Municipality of The Hague.

