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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GLOBAL COALITION CALLS ON THAILAND TO JOIN THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

*Civil Society Says New Government's Priorities Should Include
Accession to Rome Statute*

New York, USA / Bangkok, Thailand—The Coalition for the International Criminal Court today called on Thailand to demonstrate its commitment to the global fight against impunity by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world's first and only permanent international court able to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Thailand is the focus of the Coalition's Universal Ratification Campaign (URC) for October 2011, a campaign launched to call upon a different country each month to join the Rome Statute—the ICC's founding

treaty.

In a letter dated 3 October 2011 to Thai Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, the Coalition—a global network of more than 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent ICC—urged the government of Thailand to move forward with the accession process of the Rome Statute.

To date, 118 states worldwide have joined the Rome Statute, Maldives being the most recent one. While the past two years have been witness to increased participation from Asian states within the Court – Bangladesh ratified in March 2010, the Philippines in August 2011 and Maldives in September 2011—the Asian region still remains underrepresented at the ICC, with only 9 states parties to the Rome Statute.

Thailand's accession to the Rome Statute would provide an important example to other ASEAN member states. "Thailand, as a leading country in the ASEAN, has been in the forefront of promoting human rights in the region," noted Evelyn Balais-Serrano, the Coalition's regional coordinator for Asia-Pacific. "With a new government, it is time to consider ratification of the Rome treaty in its efforts to forge unity among its people and its neighbouring countries. Its commitment to ending impunity and pursuing justice for victims of past conflicts are in line with the goals and spirit of the Rome Statute and the ICC," she stated.

The Coalition also recalled Thailand's participation in the Rome Conference and its subsequent steps toward accession. In recognition of some legal challenges that have surfaced with regards to compatibility between the Rome Statute and Thai domestic legislation, the Coalition called on Thailand to draw examples from states parties that have successfully addressed similar compatibility issues. By addressing these issues, the new government would demonstrate its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

"As it undergoes major reforms, the new administration would benefit from accession to the Rome Statute, as it would show the Thai people's concern for and solidarity with the sufferings of victims of conflicts in Asia and around the world," stated Dr. Taejing Siripanich, commissioner of the Thai Human Rights Commission and head of the ICC Working Group in Thailand.

After accession, Thailand would be able to participate in the annual Assembly of States Parties of the ICC as a state party, during which important decisions are made in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges, the chief prosecutor, and other Court officials.

Background: *The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. There are currently seven active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda; Kenya; and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 18 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has*

also made public that it is examining eight other situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria and Palestine.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org

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