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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

OUTGOING FACSIMILE

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SUBJECT Message to the Fifth Session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Hague, 23 November	
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Excellency,

Further to the letter of Ms. Alicia Bárcena, Chef de Cabinet of 8 November, I am pleased to send you the Secretary-General's message to the Fifth Session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, along with our best wishes for a successful event.

Yours sincerely,

Ali Ansari FOR EM

cc: Mr. William R. Pace
Convenor
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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**MESSAGE TO THE FIFTH SESSION
OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATE PARTIES TO THE ROME STATUTE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
The Hague, 23 November 2006**

I send my warm greetings to all the participants in this Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The International Criminal Court has come far in a short time. At the Rome Diplomatic Conference in 1998, few could have expected that by 2006, a fully operational entity would have initiated its first trials, an Office of the Prosecutor would be prosecuting or investigating multiple situations, there would be a Security Council referral, and the Court would have issued its first warrants of arrest.

The Court has established itself as the centrepiece of a truly international system of criminal justice. And it has become both the embodiment of, and the driving force behind, a profound evolution of international norms and law.

This substantial progress has been made possible by the strong commitment and unwavering support of each and every one of you. With 104 ratifications, a clear majority of UN Member States are now State Parties to the Rome Statute, and the Court is moving closer to its ultimate goal of universal jurisdiction.

UN-ICC cooperation has also expanded greatly. Our Relationship Agreement is being implemented through numerous supplementary arrangements. And the United Nations continues to support the Prosecutor in numerous instances, including in all three situations currently being formally investigated or prosecuted.

The fact that the first ever witness before the Chambers of the Court in pre-trial proceedings is a United Nations official again reflects our strong commitment to ending impunity and aiding the ICC's work.

Cooperation and assistance from the United Nations can, however, only be a secondary resort. The most important and primary support must come from you, the States Parties to the Rome Statute. It is your continued assistance and involvement that will determine the Court's lasting success.

I therefore wish you fruitful discussions, constructive proceedings and a successful outcome to your Fifth Session, which will resume at United Nations Headquarters in New York early next year.