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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Global Coalition Urges Togo to Join International Criminal Court Civil Society Says Treaty Accession should be a Priority to End Impunity**

**New York, USA** – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations—called on Togo to strengthen its demonstrated commitment to international justice and the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Coalition has chosen Togo as the focus for its February 2011 Universal Ratification Campaign (URC), a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The Coalition’s call for Togo’s accession follows the conclusion of an advocacy mission conducted by its Africa Coordinator Francis Dako from 26-30 December 2010, where various stakeholders, including government officials, expressed their desire and commitment for Togo’s prompt accession to the Rome Statute.

In a letter dated 1 February 2011 to Togolese President H.E. Mr. Faure Gnassingbé, the Coalition urged the Togolese government to prioritize its accession of the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The Republic of Seychelles’ recent ratification in August 2010 reaffirms Africa’s impetus to end impunity through the Rome Statute system. 114 states have now acceded to or ratified the Rome Statute and 139 are signatories.

“The Coalition is campaigning for governments in every region to accede to the ICC treaty. It is very telling that not only is Africa the continent with the second-most states parties to the Rome Statute, but Africa is home to 800 of the Coalition’s 2500 members,” expressed William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition. “The link between peace, democracy and ending impunity for the worst

crimes in international law cannot be denied. The Coalition hopes Togo will join those nations committed to the inextricable link between peace and justice by acceding to the Rome Statute,” he further added.

The Coalition further encouraged President Gnassingbé to seize Togo’s democratic momentum to increase efforts to accede to the Rome Statute. Furthermore, it recognized and appreciated the recent pledges by Togolese officials to ratify the national ICC bill during the aforementioned advocacy mission carried out in December 2010.

Moreover, Togolese officials have participated in several sessions of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC – the Court’s governing body - and attended and contributed to debates at the first Review Conference of the Rome Statute, held in Kampala, Uganda, from 31 May to 11 June 2010, thereby demonstrating a positive engagement with the ICC.

“The pursuit of reconciliation in Togo will remain incomplete if we do not have a solid foundation for the future; therefore, it is time for our country to accede to the Statute establishing the International Criminal Court,” said Komi Hotowossi, Chair of the Togolese National Coalition for the ICC. “It is unacceptable for our country, Togo, to be the only country in the sub-region that has neither signed nor ratified the Rome Statute,” he added.

As a state party, Togo would be able to actively participate in a more significant manner in the Assembly of States Parties. In addition, by acceding to the Treaty, Togo would be able to actively participate in the decision-making processes with regard to the ASP Bureau, the Committee on Budget and Finance, the Assembly of States Parties, as well as in the election of 6 judges and the new Chief Prosecutor in 2011.

**Background:** *The ICC is the world’s first, permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 114 ICC States Parties. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. There are currently five active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda, and Kenya. The ICC has publicly issued 12 arrest warrants and three summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least ten situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, South Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine.*

*The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court and improved access to justice for victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. For more information, visit: [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)*

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