

Excellencies, Esteemed Colleagues, dear Friends,

I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to address the distinguished audience at this important meeting, which has great potential to further the participation of the Asia-Pacific region in the Rome Statute system, and in particular to encourage Malaysia and Indonesia to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As a member of PGA, I would also like to thank the present EU Ambassador His Excellency Luc Vandebron for the support given to PGA by the European Union.

The Asia-Pacific region is clearly the most underrepresented region in the ICC's Assembly of States Parties. Of the 53 countries of the Asian Group of States, merely 19 are party to the Rome Statute of 17 July 1998 and only one has ratified the Kampala amendments of 11 June 2010. It is crucial that we, the elected representatives of our nations, take decisive actions to further the universality of the Rome Statute in the Asia-Pacific and by joining a global movement of 123 States Parties contribute to ensure that the worst crimes known to humanity are not tolerated and impunity is no longer awarded to the perpetrators of those crimes.

PGA has been actively working through our MPs from the Southeast Asia Region to support ratification and accession processes in number of countries. In March 2011, PGA held the II Asia-Pacific Consultations on ICC Ratification and Implementation in the Parliament of Malaysia with the participation of the then President of the ICC, Judge Song. These consultations supported the subsequent ratification processes in the Philippines, the Maldives and Vanuatu, and advanced the process in a number of Pacific Islands.

In this regard I wish to welcome in Kuala Lumpur **Honorable Ahmed Mahloof**, member of the Parliament of Maldives, and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his important leadership work leading to ratification of the Rome Statute by Maldives: 4 years ago he promised to persuade his Party Members, who at that time had the majority of seats in Parliament, to revert from their negative approach to the ICC Statute, and he did so in less than 6 months! He set a good example for all of us participating in this seminar. I also would like to welcome the Honorable Members of the Indonesian House of Representatives and the Senate. We much appreciate the time you have taken to travel to Malaysia and we are proud of the existing good relationship between our two great nations.

I would also like to welcome **Judge Raul Cano Pangalagan** from the Philippines, who has been recently elected and sworn in as a judge at the ICC and we wish him great success in his important upcoming role.

Sadly, Malaysia, just like Indonesia, still remains a non-State Party to the Rome Statute despite the accession process, which was initiated in 2010, and despite the Cabinet decision, in 2011, to ratify the Rome Statute. The formal deposit of the accession is subject to the completion of implementing legislation, the drafting of which remains in the jurisdiction of the Attorney General.

As Parliamentarians, our work is to represent the people of our nation and act in their interest.

Joining the ICC would provide protection to our nation and to the citizens of Malaysia against the gravest violations of the basic human rights known to humankind. Malaysia would benefit from the common system of international justice and would not be alone if anyone intended to commit such horrendous crimes on our territory. We would no longer stand alone in resisting such violence with the force of law.

Accession to the Rome Statute would be a clear demonstration of Malaysia's commitment to international justice and the fight against impunity and sustainable peace.

Now it is the time for our great nations, Indonesia and Malaysia, to join these efforts! These are momentous times and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region need to take decisive stand in the world fora. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. David Cameron is currently in the region on a trade-and-diplomacy mission focusing on trade deals and deeper counter-terrorism co-operation. The ICC is also perfectly placed to act as an important tool to fight religious extremism, for example Boko Haram in Nigeria, which is terrorizing populations of number of countries in the region. Everyone has a right to live in peace and it is our obligation as elected legislators, to provide peace to civilians that we are representing, not only in our own countries, but also across the borders!

The Asia-Pacific consultations in Kuala Lumpur in March 2011 resulted in the Kuala-Lumpur Action Plan to Promote the Universality of the Rome Statute of the ICC in the Asia-Pacific. It is my deepest hope that we will succeed to conclude this seminar with an Action Plan 20154, which now, 4 years later, would really lead to accession by our two great nations, Malaysia and Indonesia, to the Rome Statute.

Thank you for your attention.