



Parliamentarians for Global Action  
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global  
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires  
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

## Press Release - For Immediate Release

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### MPs from Asia-Pacific Region commit to Justice and Accountability for Victims of Gender-Based Crimes

*Jakarta/ New York / The Hague, 27 May 2016* - On 26 May 2016, the Committee for Inter-parliamentary Cooperation of the Indonesian House of Representatives hosted a Seminar in collaboration with Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA). Parliamentarians from Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and the Philippines took a strong stance on the principle that no one shall be denied justice based on their gender or any other categories.

Offering her welcoming remarks to the momentous Seminar, **Hon. Dr. Nurhayati Ali Assegaf, MP** (Indonesia), Chairperson of Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, Member of Commission I on Security and Defense, *Member of PGA*, set the tone by reflecting upon the need for gender mainstreaming in all aspects of justice, which has to go beyond borders and include international treaties. She promised a firm commitment of the committee on parliamentary Cooperation towards strengthening women parliamentarians and informed that international issues such as sexual and gender based violence affect also at national level. The Seminar counted on the prominent leadership by the Co-Chairs **Hon. Mr. Tantowi Yahya, MP** (Indonesia), Vice Chairperson of Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation and **Hon. M. Azis Syamsuddin, SE, SH, MAF, MH, MP** (Indonesia), Member of Commission III on Legal affairs and laws, human rights and security, *Member of PGA*.

The distinguished audience benefitted from the valuable contributions from MPs from the region including **Hon. Kula Segaran, MP** (Malaysia), Deputy Convener of the PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme, who shed some light on the difficulty for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to tackle gender-related crimes although an absolute necessity in particular within International Law:

*Many of us are uncomfortable to speak about these issues. In times of conflict, other crimes committed such as murder, torture, are being addressed. However, the fact that rape is being used as a weapon of war to eliminate societies is often being undermined. An important and timely tool to address those crimes is the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It contains various provisions designed to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based crimes. Malaysia is therefore very close to ratifying the Rome Statute of the ICC and we are looking forwards to hereby joining our colleagues from Maldives and Philippines as ICC Member States. Indonesia should join the club!"*

**Ms. Shamila Batohi, Senior Legal Advisor of the ICC-OTP** introduced the Policy Paper of the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC on Sexual and Gender-based Crimes and explained how the Rome Statute has contributed to setting the international precedent of the illegality of sexual and gender-based violence.

High-level panelists such as **Dra. Eva Kusuma Sundari, MA, MDE, MP** (Indonesia), *PGA Member*, **Ms. Roichatul Aswidah**, Commissioner and Head of Research, National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia

(KOMNAS HAM) and **Dr. Indraswari**, Commissioner of Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women) explained the importance of streamlining Gender Justice in all national instruments and highlighted the efforts Indonesia has already made in this direction, including important policies such as the National Human Rights Action Plan.

The Philippines' example is particularly fitting to illustrate the advantages of ratifying the Rome Statute to help advance gender justice. **Hon. Francisco Ashley Acedillo, MP** (Philippines), *Member of PGA*, laid an emphasis on the principle of complementarity under which the ICC can only intervene when States are unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes of international concern including those with a sexual and gender component as they are used as a tool of war:

*The ICC complements domestic tribunals that also contribute to deter and punish these crimes. In addition, the independent judicial process offered by the ICC seeks to ensure that victims are recognized and that defendants receive the highest standards of due process by the law (...). To ensure that no individual is truly above the law, the Rome Statute must be ratified universally.*

The lack of accountability in comprehensively addressing sexual and gender-based crimes, through adequate legislation and its enforcement is a significant obstacle to preventing and terminating these crimes and additionally aggravates the pervasive impunity. **Hon. Ahmed Maalouf, MP** (Maldives), Member of PGA, rightly pointed out that:

*As an insufficient response to commission of sexual and gender based violence might on many occasions derive from an inadequate treatment of these crimes under domestic legal instruments, the recognition of the sexual and gender based crimes is a key to ending impunity for these crimes. Ratifying and implementing the Rome Statute increases the level of protection as these sexual crimes these become a part of the domestic criminal legislation (...).*

## **About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is a non-governmental, non-partisan international network of approximately 1,300 legislators in 144 elected parliaments around the globe that informs and mobilizes parliamentarians to advocate for human rights and the rule of law, democracy, human security, non-discrimination and gender equality.

In the framework of its *Parliamentary Campaign for the Effectiveness and Universality of the ICC System* under the International Law & Human Rights Programme (ILHR), PGA has been working with Indonesian Members of Parliament since 2004 to promote the fight against impunity, the advancement of the Rule of Law, democracy and gender justice.

The work of the ILHR Programme and participation of parliamentarians from all over the world is central to the attainment of PGA's vision, to contribute to the creation of a *rules-based international order, for a more equitable, safe and democratic world.*