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**GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION WELCOMES IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD BY INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT CONCERNING DARFUR, SUDAN**

**JAPANESE GOVERNMENT MOVES ICC ACCESSION BILL TO PARLIAMENT**

*New York-The Hague, February 27, 2006* – Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) welcomes today two important developments for the effectiveness and universality of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In The Hague, Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo submitted evidence to the Pre-Trial Chamber on atrocities allegedly committed by the former Deputy Minister for the Interior of Sudan and a Chief of the Militia/Janjaweed “in relation to 51 counts of alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes, including persecution, torture, murder and rape committed in Darfur in 2003 and 2004”.

In Tokyo, in another important development and milestone in connection with the ICC, the Government of Japan tabled its Bill for the Accession to the Rome Statute of the ICC to the National Diet of Japan (Parliament).

Sen. Tadashi Inuzuka, Deputy Convenor of the PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme who visited Darfur in August 2006, stressed the importance of the Prosecutor’s submission to the Pre-Trial Chamber “at a time in which the Government of Japan decided to fulfill its promise to join the Rome Statute of the ICC by submitting the relevant Bill for Accession to the Legislation Committee of the National Diet of Japan. Members of the international community have a collective responsibility to protect the undefended populations of Darfur and must now support the judicial action of the Court”, Sen. Inuzuka stated.

In the same vein, Dr. Ra’ed Qaqish MP, Jordan, launched an appeal to “all parties in the Darfur conflict to take stock of the powerful message sent by the ICC and stop any attack against the civilian population, whose rights are protected not only by the Rome Statute of the ICC and UN Security Council resolutions, but also by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 to which Sudan is a Party since 1957, the Genocide Convention of 1948 that Sudan ratified in 2003 and the Convention on the rights of refugees of 1951, acceded by Sudan in 1974.”

Sudan is not *yet* a party of the Rome Statute of the ICC, although it signed it on 8 September 2000, and therefore is bound by the principle of refraining from any action that might defeat the object and purpose of the treaty, as envisaged in the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties of 1968, most of the provisions of which are also now widely recognized as reflecting customary international law.

Strengthening the rule of law to enhance human rights’ protection is the primary goal of the *PGA ICC Campaign*, which assists Legislators world-wide in their mandate to implement the provisions of the Rome Statute into their respective national legal orders. “Parliamentarians, in drafting legislation and overseeing its implementation, are vital engines and catalysts in ensuring that rule of law is maintained and consolidated” affirmed Sen. Raynell Andreychuk of Canada, Convenor of PGA’s International Law and Human Rights programme. “As a necessary corollary, therefore, it is Parliamentarians who must continue to be at the forefront of all national, regional and global efforts to stamp out impunity, the antithesis of a properly functioning rule of law, wherever it may exist. I therefore call upon all Legislators to advocate for their Governments to continue to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court”, Sen. Andreychuk said.

The PGA network has followed closely the efforts of the UN Security Council to halt the violence and fight impunity in Darfur. Over the past four years, PGA President Sen. Alain Destexhe of Belgium advocated for robust multilateral intervention to protect civilians. “Nearly two years have now elapsed since the UN Security Council referred this matter to the ICC: The developments of today are therefore to be strongly commended and endorsed”, Sen. Destexhe said, “and, as it did at the time of its adoption, PGA renews its call and urges all States to comply with the requirements contained in UN Security Council resolution 1593 (2005) and bring to justice the perpetrators of Darfur’s atrocities.”

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**About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action is a network of more than 1300 parliamentarians from 114 countries worldwide that in the past seventeen years has promoted a permanent, effective and universal ICC. PGA members have lead, launched and/or authored ratification and implementation initiatives of the Rome Statute in 59 out of the 104 State Parties of the ICC, including some of the more recent States that have joined the ICC - Kenya, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico in 2005, and The Comoros in 2006. PGA held its “*IV Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law*” in Tokyo, Japan, on 4-5 December 2006; on that occasion, the Government of Japan announced to the 165 MPs from all regions of the world attending the *Assembly* its decision to accede to the ICC Statute by 2007 (<http://www.pgaction.org/about.asp?id=231>).

PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. PGA receives the support of the European Commission (EU) and of the Governments of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, as well as core support from Denmark and Sweden.

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