



## PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION (PGA)

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### **DOMINICAN CONGRESS HOSTS GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW**

**CZECH REPUBLIC PARLIAMENT APPROVES THE RATIFICATION OF THE ROME STATUTE OF THE ICC**

*Santo Domingo, 29 October 2008* – Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and the National Congress of the Dominican Republic are co-organizing the largest political gathering on international justice of 2008, the 5<sup>th</sup> Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rule of Law, in Santo Domingo on 30 and 31 October 2008. This event has been preceded by the adoption, today, of the ICC Statute by the Czech Republic Chamber of Deputies, which will bring to 109 the number of States that form part of the new system of international criminal justice based on the Rome Statute. In the similar vein, on October 24, the Dominican Congress adopted the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court, a treaty that facilitates the work of the ICC with States Parties.

Diputada Minou Tavarez Mirabal, International Councillor of PGA, heralded this global gathering as *“the culmination of a long journey of many years in which we progressively created awareness among our colleagues and our electorate on the importance of international justice and the ICC, and we brought a message of hope to our citizens and around the world that a peace-loving nation like the Dominican Republic should not miss this important opportunity to promote the fight against impunity and respect for human rights”*. As Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee and a protagonist in achieving the Dominican ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC in 2005, Dip. Tavarez Mirabal stressed that *“the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law may facilitate new ratifications of the Rome Statute, as did the previous sessions in Ottawa, New York, Tokyo and Wellington”*. PGA Members have been active in the ratification process of 63 out of the current 108 States Parties.

More than 150 Legislators drawn from all regions of the world will attend and participate in the Santo Domingo event, which will include a session with ICC Prosecutor Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo.

The President of the Dominican Republic PGA Group, Senate Deputy-Speaker Cristina Lizardo, welcomed the participation of several delegations from States that are not parties to the Rome Statute: *“We deeply appreciate the presence of high level colleagues from countries such as Bahrain, Chile, Indonesia, Nepal, Nicaragua and Turkey, where Parliamentarians can make a difference in promoting the ratification and national implementation of the Rome Statute”*, said the Senator, who will open tomorrow’s Forum, in the presence of the Speakers of both Houses of the Dominican Congress.

The French Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Mr. Roland Dubertrand, will present the EU Common Position on the ICC, which includes support for projects aimed at promoting the universality and effectiveness of the ICC, including the PGA ICC Campaign ([www.pgaction.org](http://www.pgaction.org)).

Senator Bassey Ewa-Henshaw of Nigeria, President of PGA, will call his peers *“to develop and strengthen political support for democratic institutions and international justice in all regions of the world”*, while the Convenor of the PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme, Sen. Marita Perceval of Argentina will urge participants to *“unite efforts in the fight against impunity and activate the process of enforcing pending arrest warrants, which requires the urgent intervention of law enforcement agencies of States”*. Senator Ewa-Henshaw and Senator Perceval expressed heartfelt congratulations to parliamentary colleagues in the Czech Republic, who voted in favour of the ratification of the ICC Statute today with a majority of 140 in favour and only 6 against. In a joint statement, the two Senators reaffirmed the vision of PGA, *“to contribute to the creation of a Rules-Based International Order for a more equitable, safe and democratic world.”*

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#### **About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action is a network of more than 1200 parliamentarians from 125 Parliaments worldwide that in the past 19 years has promoted a permanent, effective and universal ICC. PGA members have led, launched and/or authored ratification and implementation initiatives of the Rome Statute in 63 out of the 108 State Parties of the ICC, including some of the more recent States that have joined the ICC - Japan in 2007 (few months after the *“4th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law”*, Tokyo, 4-5 December 2006), and Madagascar, Suriname and The Cook Islands in 2008.

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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