



## Parliamentarians for Global Action

### For Immediate Release:

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### TUNISIA ACCEDES TO THE ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC) – PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION (PGA) HAILS HISTORIC STEP

NEW YORK/THE HAGUE, June 24, 2011 – PGA warmly congratulates the Transitional Government of Tunisia for today's completion of the process to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), thereby becoming the first State Party from the North Africa region as well as the 116<sup>th</sup> State Party in the ICC system. PGA is particularly pleased with the circumstances and factors that have led to this historic decision by Tunisia.

The Chairperson of the PGA Group in the European Parliament, **Marietje Schaake, MEP**, noted that *"this is undoubtedly the best way for the Tunisian Transitional authorities to solidify and guarantee the achievements of the 'Arab spring'. Acceding to the Rome Statute means that the people of Tunisia are protected by an independent Court, which may intervene if serious violations of human rights and international law rising to the level of the Rome Statute crimes are committed against the Tunisian people, in the event the Tunisian authorities would be unable or unwilling to genuinely investigate and prosecute any such crimes"*, the Dutch European legislator stated from Brussels.

Her remarks were echoed by those of PGA Board Member **Ms. Marie Nordén, MP** (Sweden), who recalled *"that no revolutionary or reformist advancement can be taken for granted: There are many challenges ahead for Tunisian society and it is a great achievement for the Transitional administration to ensure that justice and accountability are not forgotten, but prioritized in the process of change and transformation to a fully-fledged democracy"*, Ms. Nordén said.

**Mr. Ghassan Moukheiber, MP**, General Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Parliament of Lebanon, welcomed the decision of Tunisia and underscored the difficulties that many Arab States and their Parliamentarians have been facing to promote ICC accession. As a founding member of the PGA Working Group for the universality of the Rome Statute in the Middle East and South Mediterranean, Mr. Moukheiber stressed how *"things have changed now that the Rule of Law is progressively becoming a building-block for human rights protection in several States of our region"*, thus reaffirming the call for justice that he delivered, on behalf of PGA, at the recent ICC Conference of the League of Arab States in Doha, Qatar at the end of May 2011.

The Deputy-Convenor of PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme, **Dip. Minou Tavaréz-Mirabal** (Dominican Republic), recalled *"the vision of Parliamentarians for Global Action: To contribute to the creation of a Rules-Based International Order in which the force of law should replace the law of force. Therefore, we are proud to welcome Tunisia into the new system of international criminal justice centered around the ICC in The Hague."* Ms. Tavaréz-Mirabal reiterated that *"with our global membership and in-house experts, PGA looks forward to working with the new Parliament of Tunisia, a Constituent Assembly that will have an equal gender representation, to promote any useful legislative reform that could embed and sustain the fight against impunity at the domestic level in Tunisia and in all other countries in the region and the world that wish to unite their efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes that shock the conscience of humanity"*, the PGA Board Member concluded.

The Accession was decided through a Presidential Decree dated February 19, 2011. The deposit of the instrument of accession was delayed to ensure that Tunisia would have advanced its process of ratification of the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC) and of the amendments to the Rome Statute adopted in June 2010 by the Kampala Review Conference concerning the crime of aggression and the use of some prohibited weapons as a war crime. These additional steps are forthcoming.

About PGA:

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is a network of members of parliament from all regions of the world who, in their individual capacity, have pledged to mobilize political will in favour of the establishment and the effective operations of an independent ICC. Members of PGA have contributed to 70 of the 116 ratifications of, or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. The *PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system* receives support from the Commission of the European Union and the Governments of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Switzerland.