



## Parliamentarians for Global Action

### For Immediate Release:

#### CONTACTS:

Dr. David Donat Cattin  
Director  
International Law & Human Rights Programme, PGA  
The Hague, Netherlands  
Email: [donat@pgaction.org](mailto:donat@pgaction.org)  
Tel. +39.333.166.0309; +31.6.2331.

Mr. Peter Barcroft  
Senior Programme Officer  
International Law & Human Rights Programme, PGA  
New York, USA  
Email: [peter.barcroft@pgaction.org](mailto:peter.barcroft@pgaction.org)  
Tel. +1.212.687.7755

### **Commonwealth Law Ministers adopt revised Model Law to Implement the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in the 54 Member Countries of the Commonwealth**

#### **Adoption follows several years of expert discussion and deliberation**

*July 14, 2011 The Hague/New York* - PGA welcomes the adoption today by Law Ministers of the Commonwealth meeting in Sydney, Australia of a revised Model Law to Implement the Rome Statute in Commonwealth countries around the world.

The Model Law of 2011 replaces the prior version of 2005. In November 2009, at the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and Amnesty International encouraged the Commonwealth Secretariat to review the text of the 2005 Model Law in light of best practices of States in incorporating the Rome Statute as well as a result of some inadequacies in certain provisions contained in that Model Law. In October 2010, a high-level meeting of Commonwealth experts decided to convene a group of legal drafters to revise the Model Law on an article-by-article basis. This Group subsequently met at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London February 2011, and the text adopted today by the Law Ministers is the culmination of these deliberations, to which the PGA ICC team was honoured to contribute with a number of proposals.

PGA also wishes to take this opportunity to welcome the recent conclusion of a *Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation between the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and the President of the International Criminal Court* during the course of these aforementioned meetings of Law Ministers of the Commonwealth in Australia.

In light of both of these highly positive developments, PGA urges those Commonwealth Member States that have not yet become party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, to now give renewed and serious consideration to joining the 116 State parties which have done so to date. As of July 2011, 35 of the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth have become parties to the Rome Statute, including, most recently, Grenada in May 2011.

At the Commonwealth Law Ministers' Meeting, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, the President of the Court, observed that "*National jurisdictions are the first line of defence against impunity for mass atrocities. The ICC is a safety net, a court of last resort. For justice to prevail, we need to develop the national and international elements in parallel. The Commonwealth is uniquely placed to facilitate that process*", President Song declared.

PGA Members from Malaysia and The Maldives, two Commonwealth countries, have helped to steer the political process that will shortly lead both nations to become States Parties to the Rome Statute. In a joint statement, opposition MPs Mr. Kula Segaran (Malaysia) and Mr. Ahmed Malhoof (The Maldives), underscored that "*our Parliaments are now ready to make the best possible use of this Model Law, to adapt it to our own legal orders and ensure that our national implementing legislation will make us suitable partners of the ICC in the fight against impunity*". The two Lawmakers added, from their offices in Kuala Lumpur and Male respectively, that "*the support for the ICC is a matter of national unity: We, therefore, applaud our respective Governments for their useful decisions at the Commonwealth Law Ministers' Meeting*".

African legislator, Stephen Tashobya, MP (Uganda), in his capacity as Chair of the PGA Group in Uganda, recalled that *“all States must fully cooperate with the Court, especially in the execution of Arrest Warrants, regardless of the position of authority of the person sought by the ICC. The Commonwealth Model Law is a powerful tool to ensure that National legal orders fully comply with this principle of effective cooperation: We, as Members of Parliament, cannot accept the efforts of any Government or regional organization attempting to politicize international justice, which must be enforced without conditions”*, thereby indicating a clear departure from recent decisions of the African Union pertaining to the ICC.

The Convenor of PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme, Dep. Alain Destexhe of Belgium, used this opportunity to restate the position of the organisation: *"PGA will continue to work with national legislators of States from all regions of the world to ensure that all the principles of the Rome Statute are used to strengthen domestic legal orders, as reaffirmed by the preamble of the Commonwealth Model Law."*

#### **International Law and Human Rights Programme / PGA ICC Campaign**

Dr. David Donat-Cattin (Italy), Director (The Hague) - [donat@pgaction.org](mailto:donat@pgaction.org)  
Mr. Peter Barcroft (Ireland), Senior Programme Officer (New York) - [peter.barcroft@pgaction.org](mailto:peter.barcroft@pgaction.org)  
Ms. Deborah Ruiz Verduzco (Mexico), Senior Programme Officer (The Hague) - [deborah.ruiz@pgaction.org](mailto:deborah.ruiz@pgaction.org)  
Ms. Stefanie Kueng (Switzerland), Programme Officer (The Hague) – [Stefanie@pgaction.org](mailto:Stefanie@pgaction.org)  
Ms. Leyla Nikjou (Austria), Programme Associate (New York) – [leyla.nikjou@pgaction.org](mailto:leyla.nikjou@pgaction.org)  
Mr. Eloi Urwodhi Wabiyik (DR Congo), Consultant (Kinshasa) – [cloipga@gmail.com](mailto:cloipga@gmail.com)  
Dr. Boris Modeste Yakoubou (Central African Rep.), Consultant (Bangui) - [yacboris@yahoo.fr](mailto:yacboris@yahoo.fr)