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## Parliamentarians for Global Action

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### **Cape Verde joins the International Criminal Court: Parliamentarians consider the 119th ratification as a sign of African solidarity with the victims of the most serious international crimes in Africa and elsewhere**

*NEW YORK/THE HAGUE, October 18, 2011 –*

On 10 October 2011, Cape Verde deposited at the United Nations its instrument of ratification to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, becoming the 119th State Party to the Rome Statute. This deposit concludes a long process that started with the signature of the Rome Statute in December 2000. Cape Verde is the 33rd African Nation that joins the ICC system.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENTS:**

- From **Suriname**: The President of PGA, **Dr. Ruth WIJDENBOSCH, MP, Deputy Speaker** congratulated PGA members for this success, and re-affirmed "the continued commitment of parliamentarians from all over the world to see the Rome Statute achieve full universality, an important goal for the preservation of the principle of equality of individuals before the law."
- From **Belgium**: **Alain DESTEXHE, MP**, Convenor of PGA's ICC Campaign stated that: "The consolidation of the rule of law at the domestic level is undoubtedly an important condition for the promotion of development and the fight against poverty. We at PGA welcome this important step taken by Cape Verde, which will complete a dimension for further partnership".
- From the **Dominican Republic**, the Deputy Convenor of the International Law and Human Rights Programme, **Dip. Minou TAVAREZ MIRABAL**: "As a member of the Cotonou Agreement between the ACP and European Union, Cape Verde has recognized the importance of the ICC as a mechanism for peace and international justice. Cape Verde's decision to join the Rome Statute is a concrete step to fight impunity for international crimes."
- From **Sierra Leone**, **Ms. Bernardette LAHAI, MP** Deputy Convenor of PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme celebrated this ratification: "It signals the continued support for the fight against impunity and the prevention of the most serious crimes in the continent and elsewhere".
- From the **European Parliament**: Ms. **Barbara LOCHBIHLER**, Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament, Founder of EP's group "Friends of the ICC" and Member of PGA: "The 119th ratification by Cape Verde ensures an increase in African Union (AU) support for the task of holding the world's worst offenders to account. African States had a major role in creating the ICC and I consider their support as indispensable for the Court's effective functioning and independence. I hope that this ratification sends a positive signal also to North African and Middle Eastern countries."

- From **Malaysia: Mr. Kula SEGARAN, MP** “I welcome Cape Verde ratification of the Rome statute. This act is another bold and right step towards abiding by the rules of human rights and dignity. Its hoped all nations on our mother earth will ratify the Rome statute soon. Malaysia announced it will become a member of ICC in March and we are awaiting the depositing of formal instruments of accession to the UN soon.”
- From **New Zealand: Mr. Ross ROBERTSON, MP** Assistant Speaker: “It is good to see the 119th ratification of the Rome Statute with Cape Verde signing up. Congratulations and well done - keep up the good work. It is this type of win that will add to the impetus of the ratification of the ICC”.
- From **Central Africa Republic, Former MP Maurice BANGAYASS, Envoi to Addis**: “Cape Verde has done a praiseworthy step in adhering to the Rome Statute. With this historic act, the country makes clear to the leaders and citizens of other countries who hold the power and who still believe they can torment their people with impunity, that in one way or another, our international justice, namely the International Criminal Court, will eventually caught up with them. I congratulate the people and the Government of Cape Verde for its courage and I hope other countries will follow them.”

For more information see [www.pgaction.org/ICC\\_CapeVerde.html](http://www.pgaction.org/ICC_CapeVerde.html)

### **About the ICC Process in Cape Verde**

- The ratification of the Rome Statute was subject to the completion of the revision of the constitution. This revision was undertaken through a committee established on 4 February 2009, chaired by **José Manuel Andrade, MP** from the governmental party and **Joana Rosa, MP** from the opposition and composed by 13 MPs. This process of revision led to the adoption of two ICC clauses contained in the Constitution of Cape Verde as published in the 3 May 2010 Constitutional Law No. 1/VII/2010. **After this amendment, the National Assembly of Cape Verde approved unanimously the ratification bill of the Rome Statute on 1 of July 2011.**

### **About PGA's Contribution to the 119th Ratification of the Rome Statute**

- The ratification process of Cape Verde benefited from considerable parliamentary bi-partisan support. **PGA Member Dr. Aristides Lima** (Socialist), then Speaker of Parliament and other parliamentarians from Cape Verde have joined PGA efforts since February 2001 at the celebration of the Lisbon Lusophone Conference that PGA organised in the Assembleia da Republica of Portugal. In 2003, **Mr. Joao Batista Pereira, MP**, Deputy Chair of the Legal & Constitutional Affairs participated in the II session of PGA’s Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the ICC and the Rule of Law held in New York. In March 2004, a delegation of parliamentarians from Cape Verde attended PGA’s II Iberoamerican and Lusophone Parliamentary Conference that took place in Brasilia, and he committed to support the ICC through the Brasilia Parliamentary Declaration on the ICC.
- Between 2009 and early 2010, PGA international and national members contributed to the bipartisan agreement within the committee for the revision of the constitution of Cape Verde and the plenary of Parliament. In particular, **Dep. Alessandro Forlani, MP (Italy)** and **Dep. Pierferdinando Casini, MP (Italy)** in their capacity as Co-Presidents of the Centrist Democrat International, sent a letter appealing to the Cape Verde’s leader of the centrist opposition to join a constitutional consensus pro-ICC.

PGA remains committed to work on the ratification of the APIC and the Kampala Amendments on the crime of aggression and special weapons, on the adoption of legislation to ensure cooperation with the ICC and on abilitating the domestic order of Cape Verde to prevent and redress the occurrence of the most serious international crimes.