

**For immediate release:**

**Public statement by Members of the Informal Ministerial Network for the  
International Criminal Court on the occasion of the Opening of the Permanent  
Premises of the Court on 19 April 2016**

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“As Ministers of States Parties to the Rome Statute, we would like to use this opportunity to state: we are proud, and we are committed!

“We are proud to be supporters of the ICC, which embodies our collective commitment to fight impunity for the worst crimes under international law. It is the centerpiece of a system created to make sure that no one stands above the law. For decades, the idea of a permanent international criminal court was considered utopian. After the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, many believed that the Court would never start operating or hear a case. We have come a long way, and the idea of international criminal justice has prevailed.

“We have reason to be proud because the critics have been proven wrong – you, the staff of the ICC proved them wrong. The Court delivered its fourth judgement just weeks ago and continues to conduct investigations in nine countries and across different regions of the world. It is a fully functional and very busy institution. Potential perpetrators know that there is no impunity for the worst crimes under international law. Politicians know their obligation to provide for accountability in national courts. Most importantly, victims know that there is a judicial institution in The Hague set up to fight for their rights and for justice.

“With 124 States having joined the Rome Statute, we are progressing towards universality. We have to make it even harder for States outside of the system to justify why they choose not to join the international fight against impunity.

“And while we have reason to be proud, we must not be deaf to justified criticism: still, not all perpetrators, especially those from powerful States, end up in front of a judge. We must work to close all loopholes to prevent anyone from escaping justice. Universality of the Rome Statute

system must be the goal, but we are also challenged to be creative in ensuring accountability in situations that fall outside of the system.

“This is why we also have to pledge our commitment today: to give political support to the Court, to provide it with the means necessary to carry out its works, to cooperate fully with the Court, especially in the execution of arrest warrants. We will encourage the Court to be more efficient, make best use of its resources and dispense justice expeditiously. But we can only do so, if we also consistently give it the support required from us, the States.

“The Court’s mandate is limited to the most serious crimes under international law. The individuals who bear the highest levels of responsibility for such crimes are often very influential. More investigations will thus inevitably result in political criticism – in some way, political attacks against the Court are even a measure of its relevance. We, as Ministers of States Parties, need to protect our Court against unfounded and unconstructive denunciations.

“The opening of the permanent premises on this day is more than the inauguration of a beautiful building. It sends the unequivocal message of permanence: the ICC is here to stay – as an independent judicial institution with increasingly universal reach. It has changed the dynamics in international relations and is the most important step forward in the development of international law. It is a warning sign to those considering committing the worst international crimes and it gives hope and a voice to countless victims.

“We are proud to play a part in this endeavor and committed to doing the hard work ahead of us. We will continue to work with you, the Court, to fulfill the vision reflected in the Rome Statute in its entirety.”

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**Background:** The Informal Ministerial Network for the ICC is comprised of over 30 Ministers from all regions of the world and is coordinated by the Foreign Minister of Liechtenstein.

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**Informal Ministerial Network (IMN) for the International Criminal Court**  
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Andorra	H.E. Mr. Gilbert Saboya Sunyé, Minister of Foreign Affairs
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Australia	H.E. Ms. Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Austria	H.E. Mr. Sebastian Kurz, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Botswana	H.E. Ms. Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Costa Rica	H.E. Mr. Manuel González Sanz, Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Estonia	H.E. Ms. Marina Kaljurand, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Finland	H.E. Mr. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Timor-Leste	H.E. Mr. Hernâni Coelho, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
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**Other participant**

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