



**Coalition
for the
International
Criminal Court**

For more information, contact:
Sally Eberhardt, Media Liaison
Telephone: (+)1.212.687.2863, ext. 17
Email : eberhardt@iccnow.org

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Kenya brings ICC States Close to 100 Mark

As Conflicts Rage in Neighboring Countries, Kenya's ICC Ratification Offers Beacon of Hope

(New York, 15 March 2005) – This afternoon, Kenya, a country that continues to play a leadership role in peace-building in the most troubled areas of Africa, became the 98th State Party to the International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty when it deposited its instrument of ratification at the United Nations in New York. The total number of African States Parties to the ICC now outnumbers that of any other continent.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) – an international network of more than 2,000 non-governmental and civil society organizations – which just two months ago conducted a world-wide campaign urging Kenya to join the ICC, welcomes this major step forward for justice in the African continent. The CICC also commends Kenya for its principled resistance to pressure from the United States government to sign a Bilateral Immunity Agreement (BIA). Such an agreement would put Kenya in a position of having to provide immunity to US citizens and personnel (including foreign sub-contractors working for the United States) for alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, which are included in the ICC treaty.

At the treaty deposit this afternoon, the Kenyan Attorney General Amos Wako stated, “We have worked hard and are proud of our international reputation as a key peace-builder on the African continent. Becoming party to the ICC will help us continue to pursue this crucial role in the world.”

“Kenya’s ratification of the ICC treaty couldn’t come at a more important time. With horrific conflicts raging at the very borders of Kenya – in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Sudan, in Uganda – this ratification offers a great hope to all those desperate for peace and justice in the region.” said Benson Olugbuo, CICC Anglophone Africa Coordinator based in Nigeria.

Noting that Kenya’s ratification reflects a growing movement for international justice around the world, CICC Convenor William Pace stated, “The UN has mentioned the possibility of holding a special ceremony in 2005 to mark the symbolic 100th ratification of the ICC treaty. We hope that as many states as possible will ratify this crucial international treaty without delay so they can be part of this historic event and join the majority of the world’s countries that have invested in the ICC and the rule of law.”

###

Notes to the Editor:

The website of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court: www.iccnow.org

The website of the International Criminal Court: www.icc-cpi.int

About the Coalition for the International Criminal Court

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a network of over 2,000 civil society organizations working to promote a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court.