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## Press Release

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#### **ROME STATUTE OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT TO COME INTO FORCE; TREATY EVENT TO BE HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS ON 11 APRIL**

NEW YORK, 1 April (Office of Legal Affairs) -- The historic occasion of the deposit of sixty ratifications relating to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) will be marked by a treaty event at the United Nations Headquarters on 11 April. The event will be undertaken in a solemn setting, and arrangements are being made for delegations, the media and others to witness the occasion. At least four countries have expressed the willingness to ratify or accede to the Statute.

The treaty will enter into force, according to the Rome Statute, on the first day of the month after the sixtieth day following the date of the deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification. Accordingly, the Statute will enter into force on 1 July 2002. The first meeting of the parties to the Statute will take place in September 2002. The Court is expected to be established in 2003.

The International Criminal Court will possess the jurisdiction to deal with crimes such as genocide, war crimes, the crime of aggression and crimes against humanity. It is hoped that the Court will help to end the impunity with which individuals violate the established norms against these crimes, to remedy the deficiencies of ad hoc tribunals, and to provide the legal forum when national criminal justice institutions are unwilling or unable to act.

At present, 56 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification of this treaty and 139 have signed it.

Located in The Hague, Netherlands, the Court will consist of 18 internationally respected judges elected for a nine-year term, and a team of prosecutors and investigators. It will not be part of the United Nations, and will be accountable to the countries that ratify the Statute. Countries that ratify the Statute agree to prosecute individuals accused of such crimes under their own laws, or to surrender them to the Court for trial.

The Statute of the Court, drafted by a committee established by the General Assembly with more than 100 countries participating, was adopted by 120 countries at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, held in Rome from 15 June to

17 July 1998.

The establishment of such a court had been on the United Nations agenda since 1948, but the appalling massacres in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda made the need for it even more urgent.

The text and status of the Statute can be obtained at the United Nations Treaty Collection Web site (<http://untreaty.un.org>).

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