



Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn,
bij de opening van de 11th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the ICC and the
Rule of Law

datum 19 november 2020

President Cederfelt,
Senator Boris Dittrich,
Judge O-Gon Kwon,
Representatives of Parliamentarians for Global Action,
Friends and colleagues from Parliaments, Civil Society and Governments from all over the
world:

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you to the **11th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the ICC and the Rule of Law**, an event co-organized by the global PGA network and the PGA Dutch National Group.

If we would have not had this global Pandemic, it would have been wonderful to meet you today in person here in The Hague, where the Kingdom of The Netherlands is a proud host of the International Criminal Court, the first international Tribunal in the history of humankind with a **permanent** structure aimed at bringing to justice perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely, genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Established by the Rome Statute of 1998, the ICC was set up in The Hague between 2002 and 2003 as a consequence of the entry into force of the Rome Statute. Its permanent premises are hosted by The Netherlands in fulfilment of Article 90 of our Constitution, which stipulates that

"The Government shall promote the development of the international legal order."

Inspired by the vision of our Constitution, the Dutch Parliament duly authorised the ratification of the Rome Statute and its Amendments, and The Netherlands is now one of the 123 Member States of the ICC system.

The Netherlands is therefore playing a double role in the Rome Statute system against impunity: One as host State, the other as State Party.

The presence of the ICC in The Netherlands consolidated the position of The Hague (*Den Haag*) as the international City of Peace and Justice.

The policy of The Netherlands has its solid and ancient roots in the teachings of our masters, starting with Hugo Grotius, who is widely recognised as the founding father of contemporary International Law thanks to his seminal studies in the 1600s.

Fast forward 400 years: As His Majesty the King of the Netherlands said one year ago (in September 2019) in his speech at the 74th United National General Assembly, and I quote:

*"The Kingdom of the Netherlands is determined to combat impunity.
It is unacceptable for individuals responsible for international crimes to escape their just punishment."*

I therefore welcome very much the holding of this 11th session of the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the ICC and the Rule of Law by PGA and the PGA Netherlands National Group, even if this event occurs at a time in which we cannot meet all together in the same venue.

It is important that Parliamentarians from all over the world are involved in the work of the ICC and have the opportunity to discuss related issues.



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I really hope that this Assembly can create new opportunities for cooperation, coordination and, above, **parliamentary action** to work together in stamping out impunity for the most serious international crimes from planet earth.

Thank you.