

**MICT**

UNITED NATIONS

**Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals**

*The Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals ("MICT" or "Mechanism") was established on 22 December 2010 by the United Nations Security Council to continue the jurisdiction, rights, obligations and essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ("ICTR") and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ("ICTY") after the completion of their respective mandates. The MICT has two branches, one in Arusha, Tanzania, and one in The Hague, Netherlands.*

# STATEMENT

**PRESIDENT**

*(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)*

Arusha, 25 November 2016

## Remarks of Judge Theodor Meron President of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals

### *Opening Ceremony of the New Premises of the Arusha Branch 25 November 2016*

Distinguished Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan,  
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Mr. Miguel de Serpa  
Soares,

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, His  
Excellency Augustine Mahiga,

The Chief Justice of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Honourable Mohamed Chande Othman,  
Honourable Judges of the Mechanism,

Excellencies,

Ambassadors,

Prosecutor Brammertz,

Registrar Hocking,

The Arusha Regional Commissioner, Mr. Mrisho Gambo,

Distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends,

It is with great pleasure and deep honour that I welcome all of you here to today's ceremony formally opening the new premises of the Arusha Branch of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals.

Just a short time ago, the hilltop where we find ourselves today was but a patch of bare earth and scrub. It was thanks to the vision of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania that the true potential of this site was first recognized, and thanks to the Government's generosity that this potential has now been realized. I therefore wish to acknowledge the indispensable role of the Tanzanian Government in making our new premises a reality, and to express my sincere appreciation to Vice President Hassan for her participation in today's ceremony.

If these new premises reflect the Government of Tanzania's extraordinary generosity, they also represent the investment of the United Nations in this region and the commitment of both the Government of Tanzania and the United Nations to supporting the essential work entrusted to the Mechanism. Indeed, these modern new facilities before us stand as a concrete affirmation that the Tanzanian Government and the United Nations—already partners for more than twenty years over the lifetime of the ICTR—have entered into a new phase of cooperation. The presence with us today of both the Vice President of the Host State and, for the United Nations Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Mr. Serpa Soares, is a powerful expression of that abiding cooperation.

This collaboration between Tanzania and the United Nations is evident in the design of these remarkable new premises. Minimalist in nature and devised to maximize flexibility when *ad hoc* work so requires, these facilities embody the United Nations Security Council's vision that the Mechanism be lean and efficient, open and transparent, and—in all that it does—a reflection of best practices.

At the same time, with its impressive view of Mount Meru—and on a clear day, the roof of Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro—this special site has an indubitably Tanzanian sense of place. Built with local materials, by dedicated Tanzanian labourers and artisans, our new facility also reflects the shape of traditional structures in the form of the courtroom opposite us. And it is very much by design that, at the centre of our premises, we have placed an iconic tree, an emblem throughout many parts of Africa of wisdom and of justice.

Indeed, with the Mechanism rooted firmly here, in mandate, culture, and context, it is not too much to say that this is an African court, and that in carrying out the vital mandate that it has been given, the Mechanism will serve, first and foremost, the people of this region of the world.

But if, in the days and years to come, the Mechanism will be very much a part of—and open to—the communities that surround this very hill and the peoples across East Africa, it will also serve communities across the world. For the Mechanism is a reflection of a purpose that we all share—to provide support to vulnerable victims and witnesses of some of the worst atrocities the world has ever seen, to preserve and make accessible a vital record of our collective history, to meet the demands of justice and the rule of law, and to ensure accountability for the crimes committed during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, crimes that devastated hundreds of thousands of families—crimes that strike at us all.

It is in furtherance of these noble, shared aims that we gather here today, and I particularly acknowledge in that regard the honour of the presence of the delegation of Rwanda and so many other representatives of the international community. And it will therefore be with great awareness of our profound responsibility that I, along with my fellow Judges, will sit in this new courtroom and seek to build upon the ground-breaking work already achieved by the ICTR.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I would like to pay particular tribute to the Mechanism's Registrar, Mr. John Hocking, who—together with his tireless team—has led this project from its inception and overseen the process of construction and realization of these premises. Without his commitment and neverending focus on this project, it would not have been completed by now, nor would it have come in within budget. Our new facility here on this hilltop will serve the Mechanism and all those who come to visit it well for many years to come, a legacy of which our Registrar can and should be rightfully proud.

Likewise, I acknowledge most sincerely the support provided by regional and local Government authorities here in Arusha, alongside that of the central Government in Dar es Salaam, as well as the

support and advice of our colleagues from Offices of the United Nations at Headquarters in New York. It is thanks to the sum of these contributions that the vision for this site has reached the achievement that we celebrate today.

Once again, I would like to express my appreciation to each of you for joining us today on this most auspicious occasion. And it is with great honour that I now invite my colleague and friend, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, to deliver a written message from the United Nations Secretary-General and in turn to address us in his own capacity.

Thank you.