

**Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, President of the International Criminal Court**

**ICON-S Conference “Courts, Power, Public Law”**

**Copenhagen, Denmark, 5-7 July 2017**

**Plenary panel “International Courts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

**Abstract of remarks**

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries witnessed a remarkable surge of international criminal justice institutions, most notably including the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC, Court), established by the Rome Statute that entered into force in 2002. With 124 States Parties, the Court enjoys the support of almost two-thirds of sovereign States and is busy with cases at different stages of proceedings and situations under investigation stemming from referrals by States Parties and the UN Security Council as well as those opened at the Prosecutor’s own initiative. At the same time, the ICC, along with other international tribunals and courts, is facing several challenges, not least due to the fact that the enthusiasm surrounding multilateralism generally is waning.

To ensure the continued relevance of the Court in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to safeguard the progress achieved so far, and continue efforts to further improve particularly the effectiveness and efficiency of the Court and the Rome Statute system more generally. In addition to sustained support from States, legal communities and civil society at large, this requires self-scrutiny from the ICC itself with a view to expediting proceedings and ensuring that the Court can deliver high quality justice fairly and effectively while paying due regard to the interests of victims. This has been the top priority of the presidency of Judge Fernández, both with respect to judicial proceedings as well as the governance of the Court.