

For immediate release

## Joint Communiqué

### African Workshop on the Ratification and Implementation of the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)

GABORONE – On 15 and 16 April 2013, representatives of African States that have ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court came together at the invitation of the Governments of Botswana and Liechtenstein to discuss the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute, of the ICC, with a special focus on the crime of aggression. A major highlight of the workshop was the signing by **the President of the Republic of Botswana, H.E. Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama**, of an instrument ratifying the Kampala Amendments **at the opening session, demonstrating the commitment and support of Botswana to the Rome Statute.**

It was the first meeting of African States Parties to the Rome Statute on the African continent. Out of the 34 African States Parties, the largest constituency of the ICC, representatives from 26 different African States Parties came to Botswana. The event, which was supported by the Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression, forms part of the global campaign for ratification and implementation of the Kampala Amendments on the crime of aggression.

The purpose of the workshop was to recall the historic importance of the amendments to the Rome Statute adopted in Kampala in June 2010, and to assist African States in the process of ratification and implementation. Speakers included the **President of the Republic of Botswana**, as well as the **Foreign and Justice Ministers of Botswana** and the **Foreign Minister of Liechtenstein**. In addition to State representatives, several prominent academics, judges from the ICC, the African Court of Human and People's Rights and the Lebanon Tribunal spoke at the workshop. Representatives of civil society also participated. Speakers and participants discussed questions that may arise in the process of ratification and/or implementation of the amendments, exchanged experiences, and received information about further resources that can be used to this end. They also debated the ICC's engagement on the African continent and highlighted that the ICC is a landmark treaty that was strongly promoted by African States, aiming to prevent and prosecute those responsible for the most heinous crimes known to mankind: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. A number of State Party representatives expressed their continuing commitment to the Rome Statute, and shared the steps they needed to take towards ratifying the Kampala amendments in order to contribute to the activation of the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in 2017.

#### Programme

A complete programme as well as more information is available on: [www.crimeofaggression.info](http://www.crimeofaggression.info).



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### **Background information**

At the 2010 Review Conference of the International Criminal Court in Kampala, Uganda, which was presided by Liechtenstein, States Parties agreed by consensus on a definition of the crime of aggression and to empower the ICC to prosecute those responsible for this crime. Only the political and military leaders of States that manifestly violate the United Nations Charter by illegally using force against other States will be prosecuted. Aggression has been called the “supreme crime” under international law.

In order for the ICC to be able to exercise its jurisdiction, 30 ratifications by States Parties are needed and the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute must decide to activate the jurisdiction. This can take place no earlier than 2017. The ICC will then become the first international court since the post-World War II trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo with a mandate to investigate and prosecute individuals for the crime of aggression. Up until now, six countries have ratified the amendments: Liechtenstein, Botswana (*instrument of ratification still to be deposited at the United Nation’s Office of Legal Affairs*), Estonia, Trinidad & Tobago, Samoa and Luxembourg.