

ICTY Diplomatic Seminar
Presentation by Mr. John Hocking, Registrar
The Hague, 28 May 2009

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I have the special honour of addressing you for the first time as the Registrar of this great institution. After over 12 years working with the ICTY, I'm taking office at a crucial moment in its history. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has entrusted me with important responsibilities.

Following on from the presentations of the President and the Prosecutor, I want to briefly share with you my vision as Registrar. How will the Registry contribute to the successful and timely completion of the Tribunal's mandate, and what will be our greatest challenges along this path. As Registrar, I'll have a hands-on approach and will directly lead the Registry operations in these critical areas.

The Tribunal is entering a new phase of its life. After nearly 16 years, we are coming to the end of our work. The emphasis of our judicial activity has shifted away from pre-trial to trial and soon will move from trials to appeals, and enforcement of sentences. The Registry will continue to support the judicial activities and ensure the maximum utilisation of its three courtrooms, working double shifts everyday, to support our seven active trials. And the Registry will adapt its operations to match these changing needs of the court.

At the same time, the Tribunal is entering a downsizing mode. I'm currently finalising our budget for the next two years which sees the start of the Tribunal's downsizing in just over six (6) months. The Security Council is in the process of considering the nature of our residual mechanism, and the reality is that the ICTY as we know it, will soon no longer exist. We, the Principals of the Tribunal, must oversee the reduction in our staff numbers from the current 1,111 persons to zero in just a few short years. Some of our staff have been with us for the entire 16 years of the Tribunal's life.

But the timely and successful completion of the Tribunal's mandate is dependent upon staff retention. Without our staff we will not be able to fulfil the expectations that you, the international community, have of us. As Registrar, I intend to further focus our efforts on staff retention and on actively searching for new career opportunities for departing staff. We've already started to create a

work environment that will enhance professional development. We provide cross-training opportunities and support temporary missions to other international agencies to broaden staff experience. We actively try to fill vacancies internally wherever possible. Many of our staff wish to remain in The Netherlands after the closure of the Tribunal, and the Registry has been working closely with the Host State to provide information on residency, local taxation and social security issues. I want to thank the Dutch Authorities for their continued support of the Tribunal. Without the support of the Host State we could not do our job.

But we must find solutions to these critical staffing issues. Our staff possess a wealth of very marketable skills, experience and talent. I ask you to work with us to create retention incentives for staff and future career opportunities.

As we move towards closure, the Tribunal must secure its legacy for the future. In cooperation with the President and the Prosecutor, the Registry will continue its efforts to transfer our institutional knowledge to relevant actors in the Region and reinforce their capacity.

In December, the Tribunal launched its new updated website and recently we added the ICTY Court Records Database. This online database provides access to all public court records of the ICTY from the first filing back in 1994 through to today. It includes more than 150,000 documents and contains a full-text search tool. The Database will further increase access to the Tribunal's work and is already proving to be a useful tool all over the world.

However, we must continue to enhance our Outreach and communication efforts to promote the Tribunal's work and legacy, both amongst members of the international community and in the states of the former Yugoslavia. By engaging with local authorities and civil society in the Region, and supporting local professionals handling war crimes cases, the Tribunal can further promote the Rule of Law, and bring its work closer to the people of the Former Yugoslavia. I once again seek your support for this important task during the final years of the Tribunal's existence.

Traditionally the issues of enforcement of sentences and relocation of witnesses are high on the Registrar's agenda. But the urgency with which I raise them today is unprecedented. To date, the Tribunal has entered into enforcement agreements with 17 States¹ to whom I express my sincerest gratitude. However, there are currently four (4) convicted persons awaiting transfer. And with 27

¹ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Slovakia, Poland, Albania and Germany have entered into enforcement agreements with the Tribunal.

Accused at trial or pre-trial, and 12 on appeal, there is still a need for further enforcement of sentence agreements. Without these, the Tribunal will not be able to complete its mandate.

Similarly, State cooperation is crucial for securing the relocation of witnesses. We would not have trials if it were not for our witnesses, many of whom show great courage in testifying before the Tribunal. To date, over 5,500 witnesses have walked through our doors to tell their story, many of them victims. The vast majority of our witnesses testify without any form of protection. But in extreme cases, less than 1% of all witnesses, they cannot return home after testifying, because of the potential danger to their lives and safety. We at the Tribunal are totally dependent on you to protect and relocate these witnesses. I again sincerely thank those States which have assisted us to protect our most vulnerable witnesses and I kindly urge other States to follow.

The Tribunal's primary concern is the expeditious completion of its trials and appeals. The Registry will continue to provide the highest quality support to the judicial process to achieve this. However, it's also critically important that we prepare for life-after-the-Tribunal: the legacy we will leave behind. As Registrar, I want to ensure that the ICTY is remembered, remembered by the people of the former Yugoslavia, by the international community, and by our Judges and staff, for the truly remarkable contribution we will have made to international justice.

Thank you for your continued support of our work. I've already had the pleasure to meet a number of you and I look forward to furthering these personal contacts over the coming weeks. Thank you again.