



Diplomatic Briefing

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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

I am grateful for the opportunity to brief you today on the work of the Registry of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (Mechanism).

Sitting in this lobby many of you know well, welcomed by familiar faces, and hearing the names of cases you recognise, some of you may wonder if the Mechanism is nothing more than a duplicate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) - and a duplication of resources. It is not. At the end of our first mandate, we are the agile institution you demand us to be.

Let me start from the beginning. Where were we four years ago?

When I was appointed as Registrar of the Mechanism in January 2012, these were the instructions: start-up a new institution, make it “small and efficient”, operate out of two continents; and, enable it to take over essential functions of the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) – the two pioneering pillars of modern international criminal justice. Not short of challenges, I was also tasked to build a new home for the Mechanism in Arusha, Tanzania.

To start, I had less than six months, no staff and no handbook. And, as many of you know, I am a lawyer and a manager, but not an engineer.

I still remember sitting at my desk in Arusha, adding to my to-do list for the imminent start of the Mechanism’s first branch, as the words of Security Council members upon adopting the Mechanism’s founding resolution echoed in my mind. The Mechanism was “extremely important” with a “lofty mission” the Japanese representative said; a “very important step in the field of international criminal justice”, to quote the Austrian representative.

Four years later, I am grateful for these challenges. With the appointment of President Theodor Meron, Prosecutor Hassan B. Jallow, whose commitment I admire, and subsequently Prosecutor Serge Brammertz, whom I welcome, these challenges have become our strengths.

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Where do we stand today?

I will offer a status update of the Mechanism through the activities and achievements of its biggest organ: the Registry, which provides legal, diplomatic and administrative support to the institution.

We rose to the challenge of recruiting an entire new organisation. And we did so as the ICTR and the ICTY were closing down. But while the Tribunals were downsizing hundreds of staff, the Mechanism was only recruiting dozens.

Our fair, open and transparent hiring processes did not prompt a single challenge before the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. Instead, it brought us qualified individuals from 64 countries - impressive diversity for such a small institution. Nearly 60% of my professional-level colleagues are women. We consistently exceeded the Secretary-General's gender goals - an achievement of which I am proud.

Today the Mechanism is fully staffed. Yet it has remained small. Its total personnel represent less than 10% of the ICTY and ICTR at their peak. Once the ongoing cases are completed, each branch will have less than 100 staff, excluding security.

Not only is the Mechanism small, it is also efficient. At the Registry, we saved Member States millions of dollars through the deliberately phased transition of administrative support services from the Tribunals to the Mechanism. Instead of duplicating human resources, IT services or procurement, we relied on the existing ICTY structures, and previously also those of the ICTR. Sharing a Registrar has enabled the seamless sharing of resources, allowing the ICTY and the Mechanism to be "as unified as possible, as separate as necessary". For these efficiencies, I must recognise and thank the ICTY Registry staff.

But efficiency has not just meant savings. Savings have gone side by side with the fulfilment of our goals.

At the Registry, we seamlessly performed our mandated functions from day one, with no gap in services for our clients. On Monday 2 July 2012, we assisted 22 witnesses in Kigali, and in Arusha we processed the Mechanism's first judicial filing. Being operational on our first day foreshadowed the achievements that would follow.

For instance, since the opening of the Hague branch, ten ICTY convicted persons have been transferred to enforcing States. They are now serving their time in Estonia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Finland, whose cooperation I salute. I commend Mali for being the first country to sign a new enforcement agreement for the sentences of the Mechanism and the ICTR. Currently 16 States have or are housing convicts of the Tribunals. I am mindful that enforcing these sentences is a big ask, and for all your support I thank you.

Additionally, we have been responsible for nearly 10,000 witnesses across the globe - many of them victims of unspeakable atrocities. Their contribution, their courage, was crucial to the delivery of justice. We operate to ensure that their testifying does not translate into further harm, and is as positive as possible. With particular thanks for the financial contribution of Norway, a fascinating, and encouraging academic study offers today greater insight on the experiences of ICTY witnesses. This study will be available to the public in two weeks.

The Registry's court management, legal aid system and language services enabled the expeditious handling of the Mechanism's first appeal in the *Ngirabatware* case. With this first test behind us, we are now supporting the re-trial of *Stanišić & Simatović*, and the *Karadžić* and *Šešelj* appeals. We stand ready for the trials of the top three remaining ICTR fugitives – an inescapable imperative for the Mechanism and the international community as a whole.

But we not only support our Judges, Prosecutor and defence counsel, we also support yours. Several domestic courts around the world are trying individuals accused of atrocity crimes in the Balkans and Rwanda. Your efforts towards ending impunity are laudable and we are here to assist wherever possible.

Every day, the immortal legacy of the ICTY and ICTR becomes more and more accessible to the world. We have already brought to your fingertips 26,000 documents in our new fully-searchable judicial database – and this number grows constantly.

Finally, the new building in Arusha already stands tall on the fortuitously named hills of Lakilaki. As the fit-outs are being completed and equipment installed, staff are preparing to move into the new premises. You can follow our progress online. This project remains within budget, with savings from the use of local products, and the re-use of existing assets. The United Nations auditors gave their seal of approval to our management of the construction. I thank the Tanzanian Government for its steadfast support. Similarly, I am grateful to the Dutch Government for assisting us with the future home for the Hague branch.

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Looking back at the last four years, I can only agree with the representative of Guatemala who regarded the transition to the Mechanism as a success for the entire international community - words of appreciation echoed by others at the last General Assembly meeting on the Mechanism in October 2015.

Through the collective efforts of these four years, today the Mechanism rests on solid foundations as an institution fully equipped to meet its challenges.

Looking ahead to our second mandate, I have no doubt that the Mechanism will complete expeditiously its judicial docket in Arusha and The Hague. I have no doubt that it will continue to serve its clients: be it a witness in Rwanda or the Balkans, a national court, a convict in a domestic prison, or an accused before our Judges. And I have no doubt that the Mechanism will continue to live up to your expectations as a model of international criminal justice.

The vision of the Security Council for a small and efficient institution is now a proven reality. And for this, I thank the prescience of the Member States that created it, supported it, financed it and continue to value it.

Thank you.