

**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

REGISTRAR

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

Arusha, The Hague, 8 March 2018

Message from Registrar Olufemi Elias in Commemoration of International Women's Day 2018

It is my honour today to commemorate International Women's Day 2018 along with the Staff members of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (Mechanism) both in Arusha and The Hague as well as the rest of the international community. Together we celebrate the achievements of women all over the world, and proclaim the need for further advancements towards gender equality.

Since the first International Women's Day more than a century ago, women all over the world have achieved landmark successes in science, politics, commerce, diplomacy, academia, sports and the arts. In Africa, Wangari Maathai became the first African woman to win a Nobel Prize in 2004; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the continent's first female elected head of state in 2006. In Pakistan, Malala Yousafazi became the youngest Nobel Prize laureate after she survived a Taliban assassination attempt in 2012 aged just 15. In New Zealand, Jacinda Arden became the world's youngest female head of government when she became Prime Minister last year at the age of 37. Internationally, the past year has seen an unprecedented surge of support for women's rights in the form of marches and campaigns such as #MeToo and #TimesUp.

But profound progress must be made if we are to redress power imbalances that have been fortified by dogma, law and ideology for generations. Globally, women make up just 23.3% of parliamentarians. The global gender pay gap is 23%, rising to 40% in rural areas, and in addition women are more likely than men to undertake unpaid work. Less than 20% of landowners worldwide are women. These problems underpin the International Women's Day theme for 2018, "Press for Progress". At the Mechanism, we aim today to reflect on this theme and to consider our part in the push for change. The Mechanism strives to achieve the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, Goal 5 of which states that "gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world".

As the Registrar of the Mechanism, it is my duty to safeguard the legacy of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR), which played a pioneering role in prosecuting and ending impunity for crimes related to violence against women and girls in situations of conflict. The Tribunals, through their ground-breaking work on the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of crimes of gender-based violence in armed conflict contributed tremendously to the progress that has been made in the strive for gender equality and ending violence against women and children. These contributions include a number of landmark rulings - such as those recognising that the crime of rape may constitute a form of torture and that sexual enslavement may constitute a crime against humanity. Without the bravery of women survivors of the Rwanda and Yugoslavia conflicts, many who gave testimony at the Tribunals, and the dedication and expertise of our talented female staff, this would not have been possible.

I ask therefore that we join the rest of the world in acknowledging the contributions of these heroic and capable women, as well as celebrating women in our communities, in our families and in the public eye for their ongoing efforts, past successes, and achievements still to come.
