



HOLY SEE

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Press Release

CONTRIBUTION OF THE HOLY SEE TO

THE TRUST FUND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

On this historic day of the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which was adopted at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries held in Rome, on 17 July 1998, the Holy See has offered a symbolic contribution to the Trust Fund set up by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to support the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

On this occasion, the Holy See recalls the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul on the significance of the role of the International Criminal Court in addressing the grave crimes against humanity. He said: "A positive sign of the growing willingness of States to recognize their responsibility to protect victims of such crimes and to commit themselves to preventing them is ...the specifically approved Statute of an International Criminal Court, the task of which will be to identify guilt and to punish those responsible for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and crimes of war and aggression. This new institution, if built upon a sound legal foundation, could gradually contribute to ensuring on a world scale the effective protection of human rights" (Message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1999).

"An offense against human rights is an offense against the conscience of humanity as such, an offence against humanity itself. The duty of protecting these rights therefore extends beyond the geographical and political borders within which they are violated. Crimes against humanity cannot be considered an internal affair of a nation. Here an important step forward was taken with the establishment of an International Criminal Court to try such crimes, regardless of the place or circumstances in which they are committed ... in the conscience of peoples and nations there is a growing conviction that human rights have no borders, because they are universal and indivisible" (Message of Pope John Paul II for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2000).

New York, 1 July 2002