

**Launch of Commemorative Stamps to mark  
Inauguration of the International Criminal Court**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2003**

**Crowne Plaza, Port of Spain**

**Remarks by**

**Resident Representative, UNDP/ Resident Coordinator UN System**

**Dr. Inyang Ebong-Harstrup**

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**Mr. Master of Ceremonies**

**His Excellency, President Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson**

**The Honourable Senator Rennie Dumas, Minister of Public Utilities and  
The Environment**

**Mr. Karl Hudson Phillips, QC, International Criminal Court Judge**

**Brother Noble Khan, President of the Inter-Religious Organization**

**Other Members of the Head Table**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Members of the Media**

Ladies and Gentlemen, a pleasant morning.

On this really remarkable occasion, I join with you to pay Tribute to an outstanding Son of the Soil, one of the most experienced Statesmen in Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and the Commonwealth, His Excellency President Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson, T.C. (Holder of many national and international awards, not the least of which is his country's highest national award, the Trinity Cross and the United Nations 'Defender of Democracy' Award). With over 45 years in Public Life, he is the only national to have held all three of the highest Public Offices in Trinidad as well as Tobago – Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and now President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Within the UN System, His Excellency President Robinson will always be recognized as the acknowledged visionary in his relentless endeavor and championing role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Our Secretary General, Kofi Anan had said, and I quote

“In the prospect of an international criminal court lays the promise of universal justice. That is the simple soaring hope of this vision...to ensure that no ruler, no State, no junta and no army anywhere can abuse human rights with impunity. Only then will the innocents of distant wars and conflicts know that they too, may sleep under the cover of justice; that they too, have rights, and that those who violate those rights will be punished.”

Perhaps because of President Robinson's collective history in the Caribbean borne out of slavery, injustice and denial of human rights that he was able to see clearly the need to fight the long hard fight for the establishment of the International Criminal Court – now established in The Hague (The Netherlands). On behalf of the UN system and the many who are unable to say thanks for this major achievement for present and future generations, I say "Thank You, Your Excellency!"

It is with great pride that we see before us a man from a relatively small island who has walked like Colossus across the stage, and put in place a mechanism which will hold all world Leaders accountable for their deeds. Here is a man whose brilliance is interwoven throughout the various facets of his life from Barrister at Law to astute Politician to President; whose hand has written large on the international agenda; and who has stood up for the rights of ordinary people!

In my readings, I understood that President Robinson has had quite a few valleys in his life even as he soared higher with each rising, so much so that he was called the 'Comeback Kid from Castara' in an article published in one of the daily newspapers.

It was for me a great honour as a historian to meet someone of his stature, who influenced and built upon the faltering steps of Nuremberg to lay in place mechanisms that will define and hold us all accountable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond; and in my enthusiastic way to discuss with him his place in history and to reinforce the contributions of West Indians to global direction setting.

As a daughter of Africa and of the Caribbean, I am very proud that one of our own has made such an outstanding contribution to world governance, world order and world civilization which no doubt would contribute in due course to World Peace.

It would be remiss of me not to recognize Mr. Karl Hudson-Phillips, Q.C. who has been elected a Judge of the newly established International Criminal Court! Indeed Sir, our sincere congratulations and continued offer of support

In closing, my Secretary General was clear that for nearly half a century – almost as long as the UN had been in existence, the General Assembly had recognized the need to establish an International Criminal Court to prosecute and punish persons responsible for crimes such as genocide. (In fact an individual stands a better chance of being tried and judged for killing one human being than for killing 100,000). Many thought that the horrors of the Second World War, the camps, the cruelty, the exterminations the Holocaust, could never happen again. And yet they have. In Cambodia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Rwanda. In our time, this decade even... Genocide is now a word of our time, a heinous reality that calls for a historic response.

Your Excellency, you have initiated that historic response for us!

There is an adage in the Creed of Junior Chamber International, which says “that Government should be of Laws rather than of Men, and that Service to Humanity is the best work of life”. You are certainly an exemplar of this!

And this morning, as these Commemorative Stamps are launched to mark the Inauguration of the International Criminal Court, President Arthur, Napoleon, Raymond Robinson, you have certainly made YOUR MARK in History!

I thank you.