



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

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“Shaping our Future Together”

Event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations

THE HAGUE, 27 October 2020. On 24 October 2020, an event took place at the Peace Palace, the seat of the Court, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. The event, entitled “Shaping our Future Together”, focused on the importance of multilateralism in addressing Sustainable Development Goal 16: promoting peace, justice and strong institutions.

The President of the Court, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Stef Blok, the Mayor of The Hague, Mr. Jan van Zanen, and the Registrar of the Court, Mr. Philippe Gautier, were present in the Great Hall of Justice, the ICJ’s courtroom, alongside a number of students and young professionals; many others participated remotely by video link.

The evening opened with a pre-recorded welcome address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, followed by speeches from President Yusuf and Minister Blok.

President Yusuf spoke of the important role played by the ICJ “as a guardian of the international rule of law”. He explained that States parties to a dispute before the Court “have to be willing to accept, or must have accepted in advance, the jurisdiction of the Court to resolve their dispute peacefully”, stressing that States “must have faith in the rule of law, and in the capacity of an independent judicial body to interpret and apply it”. The President emphasized that “this faith has substantially increased in the past 25 years” and that “more trust is placed today in the work of the Court than ever before”.

The introductory statements were followed by an interactive dialogue between President Yusuf, Minister Blok and the representatives of the younger generations covering a range of subjects, including the future of the United Nations, international law and the role of the Court, the elimination of poverty, and women’s rights. At the end of the discussion, Dutch UN Youth Representative, Mr. Mert Kumru, handed a Youth Manifesto to President Yusuf, which was written in response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for young people to speak up on the subject of Sustainable Development Goal 16.

To conclude the event, following his closing remarks, the Mayor of The Hague switched on the United Nations blue lights adorning the outside of the Peace Palace as part of the “Turn Europe UN Blue” initiative.

Note: The Court’s press releases are prepared by its Registry for information purposes only and do not constitute official documents.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established by the United Nations Charter in June 1945 and began its activities in April 1946. The Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine-year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States (its judgments have binding force and are without appeal for the parties concerned); and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system.

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The President of the Court, H.E. Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, participated in the event “Shaping our Future Together” held at the Peace Palace, the seat of the Court, on 24 October 2020, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.
