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Delegates to the African Union Extraordinary Summit
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
P.O. Box 3243 Roosevelt Street

Honorable Delegates of the African Union Extraordinary Summit,

I write out of deep concern at the efforts by Kenya and **Sudan to urge our continent's** leaders to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC). I urge my fellow Africans to resist this cynical and destructive effort.

The ICC has been a powerful force for justice, peace and accountability not just in Africa, but around the world. Far from targeting Africa, it has served and protected Africa. Eight times, Africans turned to the ICC and asked for its help in investigating and prosecuting horrible crimes against our peoples. The ICC responded to pursue justice for Africans. There was no witch-hunt as the ICC's detractors would have you believe – the ICC was invited here, to serve our people.

The notion that when the ICC acts in Africa it is carrying out some foreign agenda is equally ludicrous. More than twenty African countries helped to found the ICC. Of 108 nations that initially **joined the ICC, thirty are in Africa. Five of the court's eighteen judges are African, as is the Vice President of the court.** The chief prosecutor of the court, who has huge power over which cases are brought forward, is from Africa. The ICC is, **quite literally, Africa's court.**

Those today who are accused of crimes, who are now resorting to smearing the Court and its work and demanding a continental withdrawal, are engaged in the same dishonest and self-serving propaganda as Hermann Göring and his Nazi comrades did when they vilified the Nuremberg Court that tried them following World War II.

A withdrawal would be terrible for Africa. First, it would signal to those currently perpetrating crimes against humanity that they may continue with impunity, and it would remove a strong deterrent

against those who would consider such horrible acts in the future. Second, it would make it harder for those countries that do experience such horrors to transition into peace. The process of truth and accountability that the Court provides helps societies to heal and turn the page on dark times. And third, it would undermine **Africa's moral voice in world affairs at** precisely the moment when our place on the world stage is rising.

The question for the leaders gathered in Addis Ababa this week is simple: Will you stand with those accused of crimes before the Court or will you stand with the African people – and the people of the world – whom the Court is empowered to protect?

In urging the leaders gathered in Addis Ababa to stand with our people in supporting the ICC, I am joined by citizens from around the world who have joined a campaign organized by Avaaz, the **world's largest online campaigning** community, to urge support for the ICC. They represent our global commitment to working together to make the future brighter and safer for the next generations.

I urge you to stand with them, with justice and with a brighter future.

In hope and determination.

God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Desmond Tutu', followed by several horizontal strokes that suggest a flourish or the end of a signature.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (Cape Town – South Africa)