THE HAGUE, 4 September 2019. H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the United Nations General Assembly, yesterday paid a visit to the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, at its seat at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Ms Espinosa Garcés was received by H.E. Judge Abdulqawi A. Yusuf, President of the Court, H.E. Judge Xue Hanqin, Vice-President of the Court, and H.E. Mr. Philippe Gautier, the Court’s Registrar. Views were exchanged on a number of subjects, including international justice, the work of the Court, its current caseload, its relationship with the United Nations General Assembly and other matters of mutual interest.

President Yusuf emphasized that State confidence and trust in the Court had been rising steadily over the last 20 years. He drew attention to the Court’s productivity despite the limited resources at its disposal, noting that the Court had dealt with more cases since the early 1990s than it had during the first 45 years of its existence.

President Espinosa Garcés conveyed the General Assembly’s appreciation for the “outstanding work” of the Court and stressed the need to increase support for the Court further. “I truly believe you play a decisive role in strengthening the rule of law, which is a guarantee of equality between States”, she observed.

At the end of the meeting, the President of the United Nations General Assembly was invited to sign the Court’s Visitors’ Book.

Photographs of the visit are available on the website of the Court (www.icj-cij.org) in the “Multimedia” section (under “Events-related videos, photos and audio files”).

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 seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York. 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. 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. Independent of the United Nations Secretariat, it is assisted by a Registry, its own international secretariat, whose activities are both judicial and diplomatic, as well as administrative. The official languages of the Court are French and English. Also known as the “World Court”, it is the only court of a universal character with general jurisdiction.

The ICJ, a court open only to States for contentious proceedings, and to certain organs and institutions of the United Nations system for advisory proceedings, should not be confused with the other — mostly criminal — judicial institutions based in The Hague and adjacent areas, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC, the only permanent international criminal court, which was established by treaty and does not belong to the United Nations system), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL, an international judicial body with an independent legal personality, established by the United Nations Security Council upon the request of the Lebanese Government and composed of Lebanese and international judges), the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT, mandated to take over residual functions from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor’s Office (an ad hoc judicial institution which has its seat in The Hague), or the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA, an independent institution which assists in the establishment of arbitral tribunals and facilitates their work, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1899.

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