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**MESSAGE FOR THE INAUGURATION
OF THE PREMISES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDUAL MECHANISM
FOR CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS
Arusha, 25 November 2016**

*Delivered by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares,
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel*

The inauguration of the new premises of the Arusha branch of the Mechanism reflects our determination to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to establish conditions under which justice and the rule of law can be maintained. I commend all whose work over the years has led to this landmark.

The United Nations is deeply grateful for the hospitality of the people and the Government of Tanzania. The opening of these premises solidifies not only Arusha's standing as the legal capital of Africa but also the strong partnership between the United Nations and Tanzania in the fight against impunity.

The relocation of the Mechanism from the Arusha International Conference Centre – almost a year after the closure of the ICTR and a year before the closure of the ICTY – is part of a gradual transition in the system of international criminal justice.

The closure of the pioneering international criminal tribunals will not result in impunity for either the fugitives or for those persons whose cases have not reached finality. Instead, it has allowed us to think anew about how to forge ahead with accountability efforts in the face of limited financial resources and other challenges. And it has led us to create an institution that is the first of its kind and which represents a new model that aims to be efficient and expeditious in its operations.

As we embark on this new phase in our global journey for justice, we should also reflect solemnly on the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, during which Hutus and others were also killed. Our thoughts continue to be with the victims, and we remain firmly committed to doing our utmost to save succeeding generations from the scourge of mass atrocities.

The Mechanism and the inauguration of these premises reinforce our shared resolve that those whose deeds defy the conscience of humankind will not go unpunished, and that the rule of law will prevail for everyone, everywhere.