



Arnhem, 18 September 2009

## “End to Impunity”

Opening, by Clemens Cornielje,  
Queens Commissioner in the Province of Gelderland



Mrs. Lambrechtsen, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the House of the Province, the political heart of Gelderland, and welcome to the conference on the End to Impunity.

This week, we commemorate the Battle of Arnhem, which was fought in September 1944. This weekend, we will show our deepest respect for those who gave their life for our freedom. But we will also reflect and ask ourselves some questions.

Have we been respectful of the freedom? Have we succeeded in making this a better world? What advances have been achieved in the field of dignity, justice, the redistribution of property, and the fundamental rights of every person and creature? Those are also the questions we will consider this afternoon.

For me, it is clear that advances have been made. I consider for example the Treaty of Rome and the European Union as a blessing for freedom in this part of the world. But I would like to point at something else as well.

In the 1960s, the court in Jerusalem presided over the Eichmann case. According to the philosopher Hannah Arendt<sup>1</sup>, in her famous report on the banality of evil, this case dealt with a form of crime not described in any law.

The crime was eventually punished with an appeal to Hugo de Groot, the Dutchman who determined four hundred years ago, that the **dignity** and **honour** of the victim demands that no crime remains unpunished.

The International Criminal Court does not need Hugo de Groot. In the Statute of Rome, the Court's jurisdiction is clearly laid out. The Statute of Rome and the International Criminal Court is another important step forward.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil, 1963*

I see it as a great honour that the chairman of that Court came to Arnhem especially for this conference. I take this opportunity to personally welcome him and the other distinguished members of the panel.

Mr. Song, Mr. Corstens, Major-General Van Loon, Mrs. Van Lookeren Campagne, Mr. Nazarski and professor Hilhorst- thank you for joining us today here in the House of the Province.

I would also like to express my admiration for Stichting War Requiem Bridge to the Future, the organisation that has made this entire conference possible, and has succeeded in bringing together such an eminent group of speakers, and musicians.

Ladies and gentlemen, enjoy the next hours and enjoy a fascinating conference.