Brief comments by the Secretary-General,

Tjaco T. van den Hout

I am pleased to announce that, as part of our centennial celebrations this year, the PCA has undertaken the publication of a French translation of the classic volume on the Hague Peace Conferences authored by Professor Shabtai Rosenne, entitled *Cour permanente d’arbitrage : Les Conférences de la Paix de La Haye de 1899 et 1907 et l’Arbitrage international : Rapports et Documents* [click here], that was published in English in 2001.

Mr. President, I would like to make two observations that are relevant to our gathering. The first is that, in 1999, when this institution celebrated its 100th anniversary, a Conference of Members of the Court was convened and a recommendation was made by Judge Howard Holtzmann in his keynote address that all available information on mass claims processes be collected and a comparative analysis thereof be undertaken by this institution. The recommendation led to my appointing a Steering Committee on Mass Claims Processes consisting of individuals who have been active in two or more of the mass claims processes either as arbitrators, administrators or counsel, and inviting Judge Holtzmann to act as chairman.

Now, eight years later, as we celebrate our second centenary, I can report to you that this work is finished. I am pleased to announce that this magnum opus, the significance of which should not be underestimated, has been published by Oxford University Press under the title *International Mass Claims Processes: Legal and Practical Perspectives* [click here]. Those charged with designing new mass claims systems, both inside and outside of governments, will now have the benefit of a useful handbook to guide them in their efforts. Mr. President, it is with great satisfaction that I present to you, also on behalf of the editors, a complimentary copy of this book.

My second observation is that, at its commemorative session in that same year – 1999 – this very Council requested the Secretary-General to undertake an outreach program to promote its services. Shortly thereafter, I introduced a program intended to bring to the various regions of the world the PCA’s dispute-resolution platform, through the establishment of so-called “regional facilities”. With these facilities, the conduct of arbitral proceedings is possible in selected host countries, under conditions similar to those under our headquarters agreement with the Government of the Netherlands. This endeavor removes the need for parties to a dispute, and their counsel, to travel to The Hague from what is often a great distance, and therefore saves significant expense in terms of both time and money.

Significant effort has been spent on this program, and the results are tangible. This year alone, two facility agreements have been concluded: one with the Government of South Africa and the other with the Government of Singapore. This brings the number of PCA facilities in the regions to four. The earlier facilities were established in Costa Rica and Lebanon. A further two, and possibly three, are expected in the near future.