

**ASSEMBLY APPROVES NEGOTIATED DRAFT RELATIONSHIP
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ICC AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

States Parties to the treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC) adopted this morning a negotiated Draft Relationship Agreement between the Court and the United Nations (ICC-ASP/3/15).

The International Criminal Court's cooperation with the United Nations is of critical importance for its work. Key aspects of this cooperation are exchanges of information, judicial assistance and cooperation on infrastructural and technical matters.

The President of the Assembly of States Parties, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, announced that he will send a letter today to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, informing him of the decision of the ASP.

In addition, the ASP took note of the report on the participation of and reparation to victims, and the report on options for ensuring adequate defence counsel for accused persons. Introducing the reports, the Registrar of the ICC, Mr. Bruno Cathala, said that they were the product of important consultations with various international experts.

In further business, Mr. EDMOND WELLENSTEIN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, said that all States Parties must work to attain their common goal of universal jurisdiction of the Court by encouraging ratification of the Rome Statute. "The EU, in line with its Action Plan and Common Strategy, stands ready to help those states which might need some assistance in this respect. The EU has always defended the integrity of the Rome Statute and will continue to do so," he added.

He stressed that the ICC budget should be based on a medium-term strategy which sets out clearly how the Court intends to fight against impunity. Moreover, for reasons of coherence, consistency and cost-effectiveness any unnecessary duplication of structures should be avoided.

The EU also recommended that the ASP take steps to strengthen its own structure and consider an extension of ASP meetings by one week.

Donations to the Trust Fund for Victims

The United Kingdom and Finland announced pledges of €25.000 and €100.000 respectively to the Trust Fund for Victims.

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