

PRESS RELEASE

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**STATES PARTIES TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
END SESSION BY APPROVING 2005 BUDGET**

- Contingency Fund is established -

The President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, closed the third session of the Assembly today. The Court's 2005 programme budget was adopted and a Contingency Fund was established.

The President invited Patricio Ruedas (Spain), Chairperson of the Working Group of the Programme Budget to introduce the report of that body (ICC-ASP/3/WGPB/L.1). The Assembly approved appropriations totalling €66,784,200 for the Court's expenses. It resolved that the Working Capital Fund for 2005 would be established in the amount of €5,565,400.

In further action, the Assembly took note of the report of the Working Group on the Trust Fund for Victims, presented by Gaile Ann Ramoutar (Trinidad and Tobago), Chairperson of the Group. The Assembly of States Parties decided to establish a Secretariat of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims and to authorize the provisional application of the provisions contained in parts 1 and 2 of the draft regulations of the Board.

The President of the Assembly of States Parties welcomed the announcement made by France of a pledge of €150,000 to the Trust Fund for Victims.

The Assembly approved the establishment of a Contingency Fund in the amount of €10,000,000, amending regulation 6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules to that end. With these resources the Court can meet costs associated with an unforeseen situation following a decision by the Prosecutor; unavoidable expenses for developments in existing situations that could not be foreseen or could not be accurately estimated at the time of the adoption of the budget; or costs associated with an unforeseen meeting of the Assembly of States Parties.

In its report, the Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression, chaired by Christian Wenaweser (Liechtenstein), recommended allocating more time to this issue in subsequent meetings of the

Assembly. During the third session the Group discussed the Court's jurisdiction of the crime of aggression; the incorporation and placement of provisions on the crime of aggression in the Statute; complementarity and admissibility; and general principals of criminal law.

The Assembly took note of the oral report and agreed to include the Chairperson's discussion paper in the report of the session.

The Assembly then approved a resolution (ICC-ASP/3/L.4) welcoming the entry into force of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court and calling upon States that have not yet become parties to the Agreement to take the necessary legislative or other action, pending their ratification or accession, to exempt their nationals employed by the Court from national income taxation with respect to salaries, emoluments and allowances paid to them by the Court, or to grant relief in any other manner from income taxation in respect of such payments to their nationals. The resolution also requests the Registrar, in consultation with the Prosecutor, to take steps to conclude bilateral tax reimbursement agreements with States, where this is appropriate and in the operational interests of the Court.

By the same resolution, the Assembly took action on various matters related to the strengthening of the ICC and the Assembly of States Parties.

With regard to counsel, the Assembly decided to authorize the provisional application of the provisions of the draft Code of Professional Conduct for counsel and requested the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties to prepare an amended draft Code for adoption by the Assembly at its fourth session.

By the same resolution, the Assembly invited the Court and the States Parties to take all necessary measures to protect the name "International Criminal Court", and the abbreviation of that name (ICC-CPI), as well as the emblem, logo, seal, flag or insignia adopted by the Assembly or the Court.

The Assembly also decided to establish a staff pension committee of the ICC composed of two members and two alternate members appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties for a term of two years; two members and two alternate members appointed by the Registrar for a term of two years; and two members and two alternate members who are themselves staff members of the ICC.

By a resolution the Assembly decided to hold its next regular session, for six days, in November 2005, in The Hague. The President of the fourth to six sessions of the Assembly of States Parties will be Bruno Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica), who was elected during this Assembly of States Parties.

The next meeting of the Committee on Budget and Finance will be held in The Hague, from the 4 to the 6 of April 2005.

As the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute was meeting for the first time in The Hague, the Assembly took note with appreciation of the welcome given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

During its third session the Assembly of States Parties elected Ms. Fatou Bensouda (the Gambia) to the office of Deputy Prosecutor (Prosecutions) of the International Criminal Court. The term of office of the Deputy will be nine years, starting on 1 November 2004.

The Assembly considered and approved, by consensus, the negotiated Draft Relationship Agreement between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations. It also decided to apply the

Agreement provisionally pending its formal entry into force. It further called upon the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt the Agreement as expeditiously as possible.

The President of the Assembly of States Parties, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini, noted that contributions to a Trust Fund by States and by the Human Rights Institute of De Paul University had facilitated the participation of least developed countries in the session: a total of 28 LDCs had benefited from the Fund at the current session.

The Director of the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties, Mr. Medard Rwelamira, acted as Secretary of the Assembly. Substantive servicing was provided.

In his closing remarks, the President said that the success of the Court will depend primarily on the extent to which the welfare of victims of atrocities are prioritized in the decisions and commitments of all parties involved in the work of the ICC.

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