

Statement of qualifications

Detailed statement submitted in accordance with article 36, paragraph 4 (a), of the Rome Statute, and with paragraph 6 of the resolution of the Assembly of States Parties concerning the procedure for the nomination and election of judges of the International Criminal Court.

The Government of the Republic of Panama has decided to present the candidacy of Judge Graciela Dixon, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Panama, for the post of judge of the International Criminal Court, and will include her name in List A, in accordance with article 36, paragraph 3 (b) (i), of the Rome Statute, in the election to be held during the sixth session of the Assembly of States Parties to the aforementioned Statute, which is scheduled to take place from 30 November to 14 December 2007.

This candidacy reflects the desire of Panama, as a Member State of the United Nations, to promote a policy of defence of human rights, international humanitarian law and respect for international law, the guiding principles of the Rome Statute, to which Panama is a party.

The nomination of such a distinguished Panamanian citizen is based on her extraordinary personal, professional and academic merits and, in particular, on her recognized competence in criminal law and procedure.

Judge Dixon, whose curriculum vitae is attached, is fluent in English and French, in addition to her native Spanish. Her publications include the article on “The image of women and its degrading uses by certain communications media”, in the Panamanian newspaper *La Prensa*; the article “Perspective of political prisoners and war refugees”; and the monograph published in 1999, “The Rome Treaty: for an International Criminal Court”.

Judge Graciela Dixon has stood out in Panama since her youthful days of struggle in the social field, during which she steadfastly demonstrated a great sensitivity for understanding the problems of the lower-income sectors of the country’s population and, in particular, of people subjected to discriminatory practices for reasons of gender and race.

Chief Justice Graciela Dixon has been a judge of the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Republic of Panama since 1998 and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court since last year. During her tenure, she promoted institutional modernization and development and the strengthening of the system of institutional communication to allow access to judicial information by the national and international press and by the general public. She also worked to expand the coverage of the alternate conflict resolution services and to promote training and awareness-raising programmes on legislation, access, participation and the human rights of the most vulnerable social groups.

The solidity of her academic and professional background can be seen from the high responsibilities entrusted to her by various international associations. Chief Justice Graciela Dixon is President of the International Association of Women Judges and President of the Latin American Federation of Judges.

The political participation of Chief Justice Dixon includes her work as legal representative of the victims of the military invasion of Panama by the United States of America and her appointment by the United Nations to participate as an observer of the installation of Ecuador’s Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Dixon also has experience as a professor in the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Panama, where she has taught Human Rights, Principles of Political Science, Social Security Law and Social Law.

The participation of Chief Justice Graciela Dixon in numerous conferences and congresses, both national and international, has enabled her to keep abreast of judicial issues and to enrich her knowledge and experience in the field. Among the more recent international events she has attended, mention should be made of her participation as a speaker at the symposium on “West Indian participation in the construction of the Panama Canal”, which was held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2000. In 2003, she attended the Conference on “The Statute of the International Criminal Court and its implications for the rule of law in Latin American countries”. In 2005, she participated in the VI Meeting of Women Judges of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the Dominican Republic, and in 2006 she participated in the Inter-American Dialogue on “Afro-descendant populations and legal systems in Latin America”, held in Washington, D.C.

In 2006, she participated as a guest of honour and speaker in the Transnational Judicial Dialogue “Strengthening Networks and Mechanisms for Judicial Consultation and Cooperation”, at Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. In that same year, she spoke at the Seventh International Conference of Chief Justices of the World on the subject “Strengthening international law to guarantee the conservation of the environment for future generations”. This year, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she participated as a guest of honour in the Ordinary General Assembly of the Latin American Federation of Judges and the International Bar Association, presenting a paper on “Judicial independence and security”.

At the national level, Judge Graciela Dixon participated as one of the speakers in a roundtable held in 1984 on “The equality of women”. In 1995, she was a guest speaker at the Conference on “The Family Code, Current Status, Content and Application”, organized by the Movement of the Unemployed of Colón. That same year, she participated in the seminar on “Our cultural legacy”, organized by the Society of Friends of the Afro-West Indian Museum of Panama, and in the seminar on “Women with access to opinion programmes”, organized by the Centre for the Panamanian Woman, at which she made a presentation on the subject “The importance of women in the future development of Panama”.

She also participated in the roundtable on “The Ombudsman: a reality in the face of national uncertainty”, and in the seminar on “The application, interpretation and efficiency of criminal law”, organized by the Law School of Panama and sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Judge Dixon also participated in the seminar on “Manifestations of the principle of due process as opposed to other legal processes”, organized by the same entities. She also participated in the seminar on “Criminal procedure reform processes” and in a seminar on “Measures restricting rights”.

In 2001, Chief Justice Dixon was a speaker at the First University Congress on Judicial Sciences on the subject “Preventive detention and cautionary measures in Panamanian legislation”. In 2004, she participated in the XIII Colloquium on Public Defence in Panama, speaking on the subject “Criminal dogma as an instrument of defence”.

The professional practice of Judge Graciela Dixon also encompasses her work as an international consultant on human rights for the Central America Human Rights Commission (CODEHUCA); national consultant of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Technical Committee for the Implementation of the Family Code; Legal Adviser in the Office of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Panama; Legal Adviser of the Association of Friends of the Afro-West Indian Museum of Panama; Legal Adviser of the Social Security Fund Centre for Social Training; and Technical and Legal Adviser of the Women’s Commission of the Legislative Assembly of Panama.

For her contributions in the different spheres of national life, she has earned the recognition of such entities as the National Institute of Culture, which has honoured her for her contribution to the country's progress and culture. Similarly, the Inter-Oceanic Regional Authority has recognized the excellent work done by Judge Dixon, the first woman to hold the Office of President of the Board of Directors of that entity. The University of Panama highlighted the generous support provided by Judge Dixon to that institution. The Committee to Honour and Celebrate Our Heritage designated her "Champion of Jurisprudence and Defender of the Constitutional Rights of Panamanian Citizens and their Ethnic Roots", in 1999, in New York.
