



BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

Twelfth meeting

17 July 2025

(in-person, The Hague)

Agenda and decisions

The meeting was chaired by the President of the Assembly, Ambassador Päivi Kaukoranta (Finland). Vice-President Ambassador Margareta Kassangana (Poland) also participated.

In recognition of the Day of International Criminal Justice, the President recalled that the Rome Statute, adopted 27 years ago on 17 July 1998, established the foundation for the International Criminal Court. Since commencing operations in 2002, the ICC had made significant strides in combating impunity for atrocity crimes, issuing landmark verdicts, giving victims a voice for the first time in international criminal justice, awarding reparations to victims, and shifting global norms toward greater accountability and justice. However, the Court faced ongoing challenges, including limited jurisdiction, non-cooperation by States, political interference, allegations of bias, lengthy procedures, budgetary constraints, cyber-attacks, and sanctions imposed by the government of a non-State Party. These obstacles underscored the need for stronger State support, institutional reforms, and broader global engagement. Although the ICC continued to face challenges and criticisms, particularly regarding enforcement and the scope of its prosecutions, its achievements remained significant milestones in international law and human rights.

1. Update by the President

The President provided the following updates to the Bureau:

Meeting with OIOS

During the President's visit to New York for the special session of the Assembly, she met with the leadership of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The OIOS leadership assured her that the investigation was a priority for that office, that work was still on-going, and it was not in a position to indicate the expected completion date.

Identification of Panel

The President recalled the Bureau's 4 June 2025 decision to appoint an ad hoc Panel of three external judges, serving in a personal capacity and reflecting gender and regional diversity. The Secretariat had approached several international and regional tribunals to enquire whether any judges were willing to sit on the ad hoc Panel, and had received both negative and positive responses. Of those that responded positively, three judges had indicated their willingness and availability to serve in their personal capacity. The three judges had received

their consultancy contracts with the Court, which were pending their signatures, as well as the Terms of Reference and the confidentiality agreement.

The President noted that once the contracts were signed, the Panel would be on stand-by and ready to immediately begin its mandate of legal characterization of the OIOS fact-finding report, when she receives it. The Panel would act in an advisory role and not act in place of the Bureau.

Bureau members highlighted the need for the Panel members to act in their personal capacity and not as representatives of their respective tribunals, as well as the need for transparency, confidentiality and urgency in the process. The President reiterated that the Panel would serve in an advisory role. She noted that the Bureau would consider the report of the OIOS together with the Panel's report and that either the Assembly or the Bureau would be the decision-making body, pursuant to articles 46 and 47 of the Rome Statute and rules 81 and 82 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of States Parties. She also referred to the on-going discussion in The Hague Working Group in the context of IER recommendation R108 on the establishment of a panel of experts to address reports of misconduct by elected officials. The President indicated that remuneration of the experts would be charged to the budget of the Secretariat.

2. Other matters

a) Response of the ASP regarding sanctions against the Court and its personnel

The Bureau discussed the situation of the elected officials designated by the US Administration. The imposition of sanctions on elected officials of the Court remained a serious concern for the Assembly and its Presidency and had provoked strong opposition from States Parties in bilateral and multilateral forums. Many States had publicly expressed their dissatisfaction, including during the General debate of the Special Session and at the Security Council meeting on 10 June 2025. The Bureau discussed possible additional concrete measures States Parties could take to respond to sanctions and support elected officials and staff of the Court. Some States of nationality of the designated judges indicated the difficulties they had encountered.

b) Special session of the Assembly

The President recalled that at the July 7–9 2025 special session at UN Headquarters in New York, States Parties and stakeholders had discussed whether to amend the Rome Statute to harmonize provisions on the crime of aggression. There were two key positions, i.e. many States supported timely amendment of the Rome Statute to harmonize the jurisdiction of the Court regarding the crime of aggression, while others sought more time to assess its implications. Despite these differences, the cooperative and flexible spirit of delegations enabled consensus on a resolution, resulting in the following key decisions: establishment of a dedicated subgroup within the Working Group on Amendments to lead this process and report annually to the Assembly of States Parties; to convene a two-day intersessional meeting in 2027 in New York to assess progress and advance discussions; and to hold a Special Session in 2029 in New York (of up to five days) to consider a proposed amendment and other possible avenues for strengthening the Court's jurisdiction. She emphasized the importance of consensus-building and institutional strengthening, and urged the Working Group on Amendments to establish the subgroup and the active participation of all Member States in the ongoing and future sessions.

c) Staff Engagement Survey results

The Bureau had before it the results of the 2025 Staff Engagement Survey:

- 1) ICC Staff Engagement Survey - Your Voice Matters 2025 - Whole Organisation Report.
- 2) ICC Staff Engagement Survey - Your Voice Matters 2025 - Whole Organisation by Organ/Programme Report.

The survey results had been previously circulated within The Hague Working Group in June 2025 and were scheduled for consideration by the Study Group on Governance at its next meeting on “Working Culture,” with the broader aim of overseeing the implementation of the IER recommendations on working culture as mandated by the Review Mechanism. In terms of oversight and accountability, it was noted that, according to resolution ICC-ASP/2/Res.3, the Director of the Secretariat was responsible to the Bureau for the proper functioning of the Secretariat. Further, the Assembly, in its omnibus resolution of December 2024, had endorsed the Independent Oversight Mechanism’s recommendations to redesign the Secretariat along functional lines and had tasked the Bureau with implementation in early 2025. Now that the new Director had assumed her role, the Bureau was in a better position to proceed with this mandate. It was regarded equally important to consider the Bureau’s views on both the staff engagement survey results and the planned restructuring, which were seen as interlinked issues.

The restructuring of the Secretariat would be discussed at the September meeting of the Bureau. Some support was expressed for the continued work on the IER recommendations, and the importance was noted of observing how recommendations were being implemented, especially regarding the significance of workplace culture, with engaged and motivated staff being essential to progress.

The Bureau requested that the Director submit an annual report on actions taken to ensure the proper functioning of the Secretariat, and agreed to bear in mind the results of the 2025 Staff Engagement Survey in its implementation of its mandate on restructuring of the Secretariat in 2025.

d) Evaluation Programme Committee- next steps

The President recalled the Bureau’s 7 May 2025 decision on the establishment of an Evaluation Programme Committee and the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Committee.¹ She noted the provisions of section 3 of the Terms of Reference titled “Composition”,² and requested Bureau members to consult within their regional groups in order to identify members to be appointed to the Evaluation Programme Committee. They should inform her of candidates as soon as possible, so that the Committee could begin its work.

e) Vacancy on the Committee on Budget and Finance

As regards the casual vacancy on the Committee on Budget and Finance that arose upon the 7 November 2024 resignation of the member from Slovakia, the President noted that during the nomination period for the presentation of candidates from the Eastern European group to fill the vacancy, and after three extensions of the nomination period, no candidate had been presented.

The Bureau agreed to re-open the nomination period for this vacancy to run concurrently with the already open nomination period for the six regular vacancies that will arise on the Committee in December 2025, as well as the one remaining seat to be filled pursuant to resolution ICC-ASP/22/Res.8. At its twenty-fourth session, the Assembly would also take up this vacancy under agenda item 11, “Election of members of the Committee on Budget and Finance”.

¹ https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/asp_docs/2025-Bureau8-Agenda-Decisions.pdf

² *Ibid.*, see annex.

f) Implementation of rule 41 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of States Parties

The President noted that the Secretariat was attempting to alleviate the administrative burden of note-taking and reporting on meetings of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. The Bureau agreed that, pursuant to rule 41 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of States Parties,³ the Secretariat would make recordings of meetings of the Bureau and of the facilitations, in order to make the task of transcription and minute-taking quicker and easier.

³ “The Secretariat shall make and keep sound recordings of meetings of the Assembly and the Bureau and, when so decided, of any subsidiary body.”