

SECRETARIAT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES

THE HAGUE WORKING GROUP OF THE BUREAU

Complementarity

First Meeting

29 September 2025

Informal Summary

The meeting was chaired by the ad country co-focal points for complementarity, Ambassador Blaak-Sow (Uganda) and Ambassador French (Australia).

1. Presentation of the Draft Programme of Work

Ambassador Blaak-Sow (Uganda) outlined the work plan for the year, noting that the facilitation would continue its dialogue with the Court and stakeholders on complementarity-related capacity-building to support national jurisdictions. It would also pursue discussions on gender-based crimes (GBC) within the complementarity framework, focusing on ways to assist the Court in addressing Rome Statute crimes. In addition, the facilitation would review its own functioning to ensure efficiency and integration within the Hague Working Group (HWG), while promoting greater use of the complementarity platform for information exchange and identification of capacity-building needs.

2. Updates from the OTP Complementarity and Civil Society Team on Complementarity Activities Including Situation-Specific completion strategies

Ambassador French (Australia) invited Ms. Eugenia Valenzuela, Head of the Complementarity and Civil Society Section of the OTP, to brief the Working Group.

Ms. Valenzuela updated delegations on the OTP's policy on complementarity and cooperation, including the Complementarity Trust Fund, which has supported national authorities under Article 93(10) of the Rome Statute. She highlighted activities in Colombia, Guinea, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as work in situations under investigation, such as Ukraine, Darfur (Sudan), and Libya. She also reported on engagement with closed situations, including Guinea and Colombia.

In commenting, several delegations expressed strong support for the OTP's efforts in advancing complementarity.

3. Updates from the OTP Gender and Children Unit on the Implementation of the Gender Based Crimes Policy

Ambassador Blaak-Sow invited Ms. Priya Narayanan, Head of the Gender and Children Unit, OTP, to present the Unit's work.

Ms. Narayanan highlighted OTP's renewed commitment to addressing priority crimes, namely: gender-based crimes (GBC); gender-based persecution (GBP); crimes against and affecting children (CAAC); and slavery-related crimes (SC). She noted the contribution of the Trust Fund for Advanced Technology and Specialized Capacity in supporting the Unit's work, and emphasized the centrality of complementarity and cooperation across all four policy areas, while acknowledging important advances achieved at the national level.

She further outlined policy implementation plans, mainstreaming activities for 2024-2025, baseline and specialized training for staff, highlighting training conducted with the support of seconded national experts. She also described how policies are being put into practice through casework, and briefed on capacity-building initiatives in Ukraine, Colombia, and Darfur. In this context, she stressed the importance of regional and thematic consultations in shaping OTP policy.

In commenting, several delegations expressed strong support for the work of the Gender and Children Unit and sought clarification on challenges faced and areas where States Parties could provide assistance. Ambassador Blaak-Sow, drawing on her role within the Gender Rapid Response (GRR) team, highlighted opportunities for collaboration, including use of the GRR roster of experts. In response to a question regarding the Ukraine situation, the OTP emphasized the work of the joint team operating under Eurojust.

4. Presentation on the Complementarity Platform

Ambassador French invited Ms. Gaile Ramoutar, Legal Officer, to present on the Complementarity Platform and the Secretariat's facilitation role.

Ms. Ramoutar recalled that the 2010 Review Conference, in resolution RC/Res.1, recognized the importance of States assisting one another in strengthening domestic capacity to investigate and prosecute serious international crimes. The resolution mandated the Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of information between the Court, States Parties, and other stakeholders, a mandate that has been renewed annually. As such, since 2011, the Secretariat has acted as a liaison between States and actors able to provide capacity-building support. To improve this role, the Secretariat and the co-focal points launched the Complementarity Platform in 2018. Available on the ASP website, the Platform allows States to request assistance, with the Secretariat connecting them to potential providers, after which States liaise directly with those providers.

Although progress has been made in national prosecutions, the Platform receives only a few requests each year. The Secretariat encouraged States to use the tool to identify technical assistance needs, and urged greater engagement to ensure that all States Parties can meet their obligations under the Statute.

5. Other matters

Ambassador Blaak-Sow invited delegations to raise any additional matters. With no interventions from the floor, she informed participants that the facilitation will now prepare its draft report for submission to the Bureau by 3 November 2025.

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