

**SECRETARIAT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ROME
STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
THE HAGUE WORKING GROUP**

Complementarity

Third meeting

24 June 2026

Informal summary

The meeting was chaired by one of the ad country focal points, Australia.¹

1. Complementarity Platform

(i) Latest update from the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties (“the Secretariat”) provided an update on the Complementarity Platform, including its origins, functioning, and recent developments. The Secretariat recalled that the Platform was established in 2011 following the mandate entrusted to the Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of information among States Parties, the Court, and specialised actors with a view to strengthening national jurisdictions.² The Platform was presented as a practical mechanism aimed at connecting States Parties requesting technical assistance with organisations and institutions capable of providing support. The Secretariat also outlined the Platform’s operational framework, including the annual circulation of a note verbale inviting States Parties to submit requests for assistance, the coordination undertaken by the Secretariat with relevant Court organs, and the role played by external assistance providers where support could not be delivered directly by the Court. Particular emphasis was placed on confidentiality safeguards, coordination mechanisms, and efforts to avoid duplication of assistance. It highlighted key developments that had contributed to strengthening the Platform, including the review of its operational modalities in 2018 and the enhanced engagement of Court organs following the adoption of the Office of the Prosecutor’s Policy on Complementarity and Cooperation. Reference was also made to the establishment of coordination arrangements between the Secretariat and Court organs, including a Standard Operating Procedure to facilitate coordination and information-sharing.

The Secretariat presented the recent developments regarding the platform, including a revised request form, a guidance note for requesting States, and an updated information flyer, as well as the development of a follow-up questionnaire aimed at assessing the effectiveness of assistance provided. The Secretariat also indicated that it was exploring the possibility of developing an online application system in the future, subject to technical and security considerations.

¹ Ms. Hannah Trout, Legal Adviser.

² RC/Res.1.

(ii) Exchange of information and capacity-building needs

The Office of the Prosecutor (“OTP”) provided an overview of an initiative conducted with the authorities of Panama through the complementarity framework to strengthen the knowledge of the Attorney General’s Office in Panama and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The initiative was developed in response to a request from the Panamanian authorities. It consisted of a series of information and training sessions aimed at strengthening national capacity to investigate and prosecute Rome Statute crimes. The sessions, delivered in Spanish, focused on the structure and functioning of the OTP, the application of the principle of complementarity, judicial cooperation mechanisms, and forensic investigations. OTP’s evolving approach to complementarity places increased emphasis on cooperation, information-sharing and support to national jurisdictions. Reference was made to initiatives established under this framework, including the Complementarity and Cooperation Forum, the Complementarity and Cooperation Trust Fund, secondments and specialised capacity-building activities.

OTP described the different sessions delivered to Panamanian officials, including discussions on cooperation procedures, forensic investigations and the use of forensic evidence in international criminal investigations. Particular attention was given to the contribution of forensic expertise to investigations of Rome Statute crimes, the role of the OTP’s Forensic Science Section, and opportunities for cooperation through initiatives such as the Global Forensic Network. OTP further noted the strong engagement and expertise demonstrated by participants, and highlighted interest expressed in judicial cooperation procedures, complementarity mechanisms, forensic methodologies and opportunities for future collaboration. The initiative was presented as a positive experience that could be replicated with other States Parties seeking similar forms of assistance.

Delegations sought further information regarding the nature of requests received through the Platform, feedback from participating States, resource implications and opportunities for future engagement. OTP emphasized that requests were driven by the priorities identified by States Parties and confirmed its willingness to continue supporting capacity-strengthening initiatives within available resources. OTP also underscored the positive feedback received from participants and reiterated its commitment to strengthening relationships with national authorities through practical cooperation activities.

The Secretariat and the OTP further exchanged views with delegations on the coordination of requests, the role of external assistance providers, the criteria to identify partners, resource constraints, and mechanisms for monitoring outcomes and sharing feedback. In this regard, the Secretariat recalled that one of the criterion is language, and indeed the actor’s expertise. It was noted that continued cooperation among States Parties, Court organs and external partners remained important to ensuring that the Platform could effectively support national efforts to investigate and prosecute Rome Statute crimes.

2. Other matters

The ad country focal point informed of the postponement of the fourth meeting on Complementarity, scheduled for 29 July 2026, due to the Special Session of the Assembly of States Parties that will take place on 24 July 2026 in New York.
