



## **BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES**

### **Guidelines for the preparation and conduct of sessions of the Assembly<sup>1</sup>**

The Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,

Mindful that, under article 112 (3) (c) of the Rome Statute, the Bureau shall assist the Assembly in the discharge of its responsibilities,

In view of the role of the Bureau in preparing the annual session of the Assembly and the need to continue to streamline and increase the efficiency of the sessions of the Assembly,

1. Decides to adopt the enclosed “Guidelines for the preparation and conduct of the sessions of the Assembly of States Parties”;
2. Decides to request the Secretariat to distribute the text of the present decision and its enclosure among States Parties and Observer States.

### **Appendix**

#### **1. SIDE-EVENTS**

##### **a) General**

- Side events are organized in the margins of the official meetings of the Assembly.
- The topic of the side event should be relevant to the work of the International Criminal Court/Assembly of States Parties;
- The Bureau sets the deadline for the submission of requests to organize side events at the venue of the Assembly.
- Side events should be sponsored by a State Party. Side events not sponsored by a State Party are to be held in the two rooms allocated to non-governmental organizations, in direct consultation with the Coalition for the International Criminal Court;
- Side events should not be organized during the official working hours of the Assembly (10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00) so as not to interfere with its work. Side events scheduled during those hours will not be included in the Journal of the Assembly.
- Side event organizers are discouraged from holding side events during the first few days of the session (mainly during the general debate or election of judges) as the official plenary meetings might be extended during the lunchbreak and into the evening.
- Side event organizers must provide the Secretariat with the name, date, time and sponsorship of a side event.
- The organizers of side events should plan to hold their event in English or make their own interpretation arrangements as the Secretariat does not provide interpretation services for side events.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the Bureau at its meeting on 15 November 2018.

- The Secretariat does not send invitations to side events. The invitations should be sent by the organizers for their respective side event.
- Side events are only open to participants accredited to the respective session of the Assembly.<sup>2</sup> Organizers of events seeking selected, not accredited, audiences, or attendance by invitation only, should acquire a booking at a different location, i.e. outside the secured parameters of the venue of the Assembly.
- The Secretariat keeps an overview list of all side events. All side events are included in the Journal of the Assembly (once all information is available).<sup>3</sup> In order to be included in the Journal, the organizers should send the title of the event, names of the organizers, and time and venue, to the Secretariat. The Journal is published on the webpage of the respective session of the Assembly.
- The Secretariat shall make every effort to accommodate all eligible requests for side events. However, due to the high demand of side events during the sessions of the Assembly, it might not be possible to accommodate all requests at the venue of the Assembly.
- Official and informal meetings of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies have first priority over other events or meetings. Therefore, side events may have to be cancelled at the last minute, and without prior notice, if an urgent meeting of the Assembly or its subsidiary body needs to use the meeting room where the side event was scheduled to take place.

#### **b) The Hague**

- In addition to the main plenary room, the Secretariat has four mid-size rooms available for informal meetings of the Assembly, meetings of the regional groups, and side events, as well as five small executive rooms for bilateral meetings requested by States and the Court. In The Hague, the Secretariat is responsible for the allocation of rooms and all associated services. However, the arrangement and associated costs of any additional services, such as interpretation, supplementary IT equipment or catering, are the responsibility of the organizers. Organizers of side events are requested to contact the focal point for side events at the World Forum Convention Centre. Due to the limited space availability, the Secretariat kindly requests organizers of side events to send their requests for rooms before the deadline determined by the Bureau, which is generally four weeks prior to the commencement of the session. All requests are processed depending on availability of the conference rooms, which are allocated on a first-come first-served basis, and to the extent possible, on the requested dates and time. Furthermore, there should be an endeavour to allow all States Parties an opportunity to organize side events at the World Forum Convention Centre, given the finite spaces available at the venue.
- Side events are only open to participants accredited to the respective session of the Assembly. Accreditation, registration and issuance of badges are the responsibility of the Secretariat. If side event organizers wish to request an access badge for one or more participants (such as panellists)<sup>4</sup> who are not officially accredited to the respective session of the Assembly, the Secretariat usually provides them with a temporary access pass valid for the duration of the side event. In order to obtain a temporary access pass, the request should first be placed by the organizers. Consequently, once confirmed by the Secretariat, the participant is required to leave a valid Identification Document (ID card or passport) at the registration desk and to collect it again upon the conclusion of the event and return of the temporary pass to the registration desk.
- The Secretariat ensures that the rooms are tidy and free before each side event. The Secretariat also places signs outside the conference rooms indicating the name of a respective side event. The configuration of the rooms cannot be altered and the organizers are requested

---

<sup>2</sup> Registered States representatives, invited inter-governmental organizations and accredited non-governmental organizations. General public, staff of other organizations located in The Hague, academia, etc. interested in attending a side event are not accredited participants of the sessions of the Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> An advance version of the ASP Journal is posted on the web page of the Assembly four weeks prior to the commencement of the session.

<sup>4</sup> Not applicable to non-accredited general public, such as staff of other organizations located in The Hague, academia, etc. interested in attending a side event.

to remove all their materials after the conclusion of the side event as side events take place in conference rooms where official meetings are also held.

**c) New York**

- At the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ), the Secretariat is not in charge of room allocation for side events nor does the Secretariat cover any costs associated with these events.
- Delegations interested in organizing side events must request a conference room directly with the United Nations via their respective Permanent Missions. Their request should be directly addressed to the relevant conference services departments of the United Nations, which then dispatch the pre-booking to requestors via appropriate channels.
- All associated services and required equipment must be booked via the respective Permanent Mission.
- Arrangements and associated costs of any additional services, such as interpretation, supplementary IT equipment or catering are the responsibility of the organizers, who should contact the United Nations directly.
- Issuance of badges is controlled by UN Security. If a side event participant is not a delegate nor accredited through a non-governmental organization, the organizing State must request the United Nations access pass on the participant's behalf.
- The sale of any printed materials or goods at the UNHQ during the side events or at any other time is strictly prohibited.

**2. GENERAL DEBATE**

**a) Pre-session**

- Once the programme of work for the session of the Assembly is approved by the Bureau,<sup>5</sup> the Secretariat sends a note verbale informing States of the dates when the General debate segment is scheduled, as well as the opening date and time for inscription on the list of speakers. The list of speakers is open for inscriptions six weeks prior to the session of the Assembly.
- The Secretariat only accepts written inscriptions sent after the opening date and time. Inscriptions sent prior to that date and time will not be taken into consideration and will have to be resent.
- The list of speakers is divided into four categories:
  - a) States Parties;
  - b) Observer and invited States;
  - c) Intergovernmental Organizations;
  - d) International Criminal Court Bar Association;<sup>6</sup> and non-governmental Organizations.
- The order of speakers within each segment<sup>7</sup> is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, the Secretariat records the inscriptions of delegations based on the exact time and date of the request for inscription.
- Within each segment, Ministerial level speakers are accorded precedence on the list, followed by Vice-Ministers.
- A State speaking on behalf of a group of States is also accorded precedence on the list of speakers.
- The allocated time slot is determined as follows:
  - a) If the speaker is a Minister, the allocated time slot is at the beginning of the Ministerial level, i.e. he/she would be the first speaker at the Ministerial level.

---

<sup>5</sup> Usually in the course of September.

<sup>6</sup> Bureau decision of 18 October 2017.

<sup>7</sup> A segment is the three hour period of a morning/afternoon plenary devoted to the General debate.

- b) If the speaker is a Vice-Minister, he/she would speak immediately after the Ministerial level speakers and would be the first speaker at the Vice-Minister level.
  - c) If the speaker is not a Minister or a Vice-Minister, the allocated time slot would be immediately after the Ministerial and Vice-Ministerial level speakers.
  - d) In the case of two or more speakers at the same level, the general rule will be applied and the time slot shall be accorded on a first-come first-served basis.
- Each delegation will be allocated **one slot only**, irrespective of the level of representation.
  - Delegations are advised that any changes to the level of representation for the General debate segment should be communicated as soon as possible to the Secretariat. In case of a change in level of speaker (from Minister/Vice Minister to lower level) the delegation shall be inscribed in the order in which the initial request was received.
  - The list of speakers shall be prepared on the basis of the agreed **five minute** statement by each delegation.
  - States may wish to participate in the General debate by making written submissions instead, which would be posted on the website of the Assembly. The Bureau of the Assembly encourages States in a position to do so to submit written statements only.
  - One week prior to the commencement of the session of the Assembly the Secretariat will send an e-mail to each delegation with the approximate date and time of their allocated time slot on the list. Delegations should bear in mind that the indicated date and time is approximate.

**b) In-session**

- The list is made public on the first day of the General debate and placed at the conference officer's desk in the conference room.
- In order to assist the speakers with the timely delivery of their statements, a light mechanism (timer) will be installed at the lectern and set to five minutes.
- Delegations wishing to change their allocated time slot can do so by approaching another delegation and securing a swap of the time slot. If this is the case, the delegations should inform the Secretariat of the changed time slot as soon as possible.

**c) Post-session**

- After the closing of the General debate segment, the Secretariat shall prepare a final list of speakers and post it on the Assembly web page with the respective statements. All statements, including written submissions, shall be listed on the website in alphabetical order within their respective categories.
- The Bureau encourages delegations to submit an electronic copy of their statement to the Secretariat as soon as possible so as to enable the Secretariat to post them on the website.

**3. DOCUMENTS**

**a) Paper-light**

- In accordance with the "paper-light" approach endorsed by the Bureau the Secretariat continues its endeavors to increase the efficiency of meetings by providing delegations with electronic access to meeting programmes, agendas, documents and statements, while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint and waste, as well as providing financial savings to States Parties.
- In this context, the Secretariat shall provide the documents for Bureau meetings and the meetings of its Hague and New York Working Groups in digital format only, with the exception of the budget, the draft reports to be considered for adoption by the Bureau, and any other document which the President or the respective Vice-President deems necessary to be available in printed copy at the meeting.

- All States Parties are encouraged to use the Extranet designed for the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Bureau and the Assembly, containing all necessary documentation on the work in progress.<sup>8</sup>
- With regard to the sessions of the Assembly, pre-session documents shall be made available to delegations on a USB stick as soon as possible after the opening of the session.

**b) Distribution of documents, paper and statements**

- Any document, paper or statement that representatives wish to circulate in the room can only be distributed by the Secretariat staff once the distribution is authorized by the presiding officer. In such cases, representatives are requested to provide 250 copies to the conference room officer.
- Written statements shall not be reproduced at the expense of the Assembly and shall not be issued as official documents.

**c) Statements made before or after the adoption of resolutions**

- The Secretariat shall reflect in the Official Records of the respective session the statement *as delivered* at the respective plenary meeting of the Assembly.

\*\*\*

---

<sup>8</sup> ICC-ASP/14/Res.4, para. 65(e).

## Appendix\*

### 2. DOCUMENTS

#### a) Paperless

- The Secretariat shall apply paperless- approach endorsed by the Bureau as it continues its endeavours to increase the efficiency of meetings by providing delegations with electronic access to meeting programmes, agendas, documents, reports and statements, while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint and waste, as well as providing financial savings to States Parties.
- In this context, the Secretariat shall provide the documents for Bureau meetings and the meetings of its Hague and New York Working Groups as well as subsidiary bodies of the Assembly in digital format only. The President, the respective Vice-President, or chair of the respective subsidiary body may however, when deeming an exception to be necessary, authorize that a limited number of hardcopies be available at the meeting or at the plenary.

#### b) Reducing carbon emissions/ecological footprint

- Reports of the Assembly, its subsidiary bodies or reports of the Court to the Assembly should not exceed 16 pages with exceptions to be authorized by the President of the Assembly (for example annual budget and financial statements) or the chair of the respective subsidiary body.
- No hardcopies of the Assembly documentation nor documents of subsidiary bodies would be printed nor shipped at cost to the Assembly.
- All States Parties are encouraged to use the Extranet designed for the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Bureau and the Assembly, containing all necessary documentation on the work in progress.\*\*
- With regard to the sessions of the Assembly, all pre-session documentation will be posted on the website of the Assembly as an additional measure to decrease the need for printing services and in accordance with a “paperless” approach reflecting the trend in international organizations.

#### c) Distribution of documents, paper and statements

- Any document, paper or statement that representatives wish to circulate in the room can only be distributed by the Secretariat staff once the distribution is authorized by the presiding officer. In such cases, representatives are requested to provide 20 copies for distribution to the President, Rapporteur, Secretariat, and interpreters to the conference room officer.
- Written statements shall not be reproduced at the expense of the Assembly and shall not be issued as official documents.

#### d) Statements made before or after the adoption of resolutions

- The Secretariat shall reflect in the Official Records of the respective session the statement *as delivered* at the respective plenary meeting of the Assembly.

\*\*\*

\*Adopted by the Bureau at its meeting on 8 September 2021.

\*\* ICC-ASP/14/Res.4, para. 65(e).

**BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE  
ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**Guidelines and recommendations for enhancing the security of participants  
in the work of the Assembly**

**Background**

The Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court holds its regular session once a year, with the participation of States, observers, and non-governmental organizations. Side-events are also organized in the margins of the sessions, during which human rights defenders and individuals cooperating with the Court also participate. In addition to annual regular sessions, there are meetings convened by the Working Groups of the Assembly in The Hague and New York as well as meetings convened by the various mandate holders of the Assembly throughout the year, most of them also open to the wide participation of state and civil society representatives.

During the twenty-first session of the Assembly of States Parties, held in The Hague in December 2022, some States and non-governmental organizations representatives expressed concerns about security risks for human rights defenders by virtue of their work in support of the Court or accountability in general. In the closing plenary meeting, the President referred to these concerns and recalled that the Assembly and the Court have a shared responsibility to promote and protect the goals and work of the Court, including from any threat or attack against the Court itself, its officials or those cooperating with it. She noted her intention to engage in consultations on this important matter and she committed to exploring appropriate measures which could be taken to enhance the security of all those who participate in Assembly sessions. Since the Assembly session, consultations have taken place on existing mechanisms to counter intimidation and reprisals in other fora, including with Senior officials of the United Nations, notably the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and UN focal point on reprisals, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations.

Considering these consultations, the Presidency proposes the adoption by the Bureau of Guidelines for enhancing the security of participants in regular Assembly sessions as well as its side events. The proposed Guidelines are set out in annex I and, if agreeable, could be incorporated into the existing Guidelines for the preparation and conduct of sessions of the Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the adoption of the Guidelines by the Bureau, it is proposed that the Bureau recommends that additional language be included in the Omnibus resolution in connection with the Guidelines in order to recall that it is the primary responsibility of States to prevent, and refrain from attacks, threats or acts of intimidation or reprisals against individuals by virtue of their participation in Assembly sessions and side events as well as in other meetings of Working Groups and mandate holders of the Assembly and to encourage the Bureau to continue developing measures to this effect in consultation with States Parties, the Court and Civil Society and to report to the Assembly at its twenty-third session (2024).

The adoption of the guidelines and the incorporation of additional language in the omnibus resolution, aiming at offering to participants a more secure space at Assembly sessions and side event as well as in meetings of other bodies of the Assembly, would follow up on the strategy for responding to threats or attacks against the Court, its officials and those cooperating with it, adopted by the Bureau on 29 July 2022.<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\*

---

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the Bureau on 15 November 2018 and updated on 8 September 2021. Available at: [https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/2022-04/Guidelines-preparation-conduct-ASP-with-appendix.ENG\\_15Feb22.pdf](https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/2022-04/Guidelines-preparation-conduct-ASP-with-appendix.ENG_15Feb22.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/2022-08/Bureau-Proposal-Rec-169-ENG.pdf>. An annex to the strategy, approved by the Bureau on 2 December 2022, is available at: <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/2022-12/PASP-Request-R169-Good-Practices.pdf>.

## Annex I

### Guidelines for enhancing the security of participants in the regular sessions of the Assembly of States Parties and its side events adopted by the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties

#### I. General principles<sup>3</sup>

The general principles underlying the proposed Guidelines are the following:

- The right of participants to have unhindered access to public meetings of the sessions of the Assembly of States Parties and side-events held in the margins of those sessions.
- The freedom for participants from any form of intimidation or reprisals, or fear of intimidation or reprisals, by virtue of their work in support of the Court, including their participation in the Assembly of States Parties.
- The right of participants to privacy, confidentiality, and non-discrimination.
- The importance of ensuring that the Assembly offers a safe, secure and open space, where the risk of reprisals or other attacks, threats, acts, intimidation or reprisals against participants is minimized to the fullest extent possible.
- The responsibility of States to refrain at all times from acts constituting attacks, threats, intimidation or reprisals against persons by virtue of their participation in the sessions of the Assembly and its side events. This responsibility also entails to take appropriate measures to prevent, protect against, investigate, and ensure accountability and to provide remedy for such acts through appropriate channels and procedures.

#### II. Measures against allegations of attacks, threats or reprisals

1. Guided by the general principles, and to ensure a safe, secure and open space and a fruitful dialogue at Assembly sessions and their side events, all State and non-governmental organization representatives are reminded of the importance of ensuring a free and inclusive expression of views, before, during and following Assembly sessions including for participants attending side events. To this effect, they must refrain from any acts or omissions constituting a form of attack, threat, intimidation or reprisal, including but not limited to:<sup>4</sup>
  - Acts, omissions or contacts intended to dissuade a person from participating in the Assembly session and side events.
  - Acts, omissions or contacts intended to interfere with participation in the Assembly session or side events, including but not limited to sustained disruption of discussions through hostile language against certain participants.
  - Taking pictures or making audio or visual recordings of participants without their consent.
2. Allegations of acts, omissions or contacts such as those referred to in paragraph 1 may be submitted in writing to the President of the Assembly through the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties. Such information may be submitted in confidence. The Secretariat of the

<sup>3</sup> These general principles are broadly based on the general principles set forth in the *San Jose Guidelines against intimidation or reprisals* (HRI/MC/2015/6, OP 5(e)); and the *United Nations Guidance Note on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space*, available at [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/UN\\_Guidance\\_Note.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/UN_Guidance_Note.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The acts listed are based on discouraged conduct enumerated in guidelines and codes of conducts during meetings of several organizations, such as the *Virtual Safety Guidelines and Principles*, shared by NGO CSW during the event ‘Preventing and Addressing Intimidation & Reprisals for Cooperation with the UN in the context of CSW67’ on 2 March 2023, available at <https://ngocsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Virtual-Safety-Guidelines-and-Principles.pdf>; the *International Bar Association Harassment Policy*, available at <https://www.ibanet.org/iba-harassment-policy>; the *Code of Conduct*, Section E of the 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law (ASIL) Frequently Asked Questions, available at [https://www.asil.org/sites/default/files/annualmeeting/pdfs/ASIL\\_AM\\_FAQS.pdf?v=3](https://www.asil.org/sites/default/files/annualmeeting/pdfs/ASIL_AM_FAQS.pdf?v=3), p. 5; the *EJC Code of Conduct* of the American Bar Association/National Legal Aid & Defender Association Equal Justice Conference, available at [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono\\_public\\_service/ejc/codeofconduct/#:~:text=Use%20welcoming%20and%20inclusive%20language,their%20own%20behavior%20and%20actions](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service/ejc/codeofconduct/#:~:text=Use%20welcoming%20and%20inclusive%20language,their%20own%20behavior%20and%20actions); and conduct mentioned in meetings with the President of the Assembly.



Assembly, on behalf of the President of the Assembly, shall confirm receipt of such information.

3. Should the President of the Assembly consider it appropriate, he or she shall take steps to ensure a response to the alleged attack, threat, intimidation or reprisal, including but not limited to those listed in Part I of the annex to the strategy for responding to threats or attacks against the Court, its officials and those cooperating with it, adopted by the Bureau on 2 December 2022.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/2022-12/PASP-Request-R169-Good-Practices.pdf>