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Report of the Bureau on the Plan of action of the Assembly of States Parties for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

I. Introduction

1. At its fifth session, the Assembly of States Parties (hereinafter “the Assembly”) adopted, by consensus, the Plan of action of the Assembly of States Parties for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (hereinafter “the Plan of Action”).¹

2. At its twenty-second session, the Assembly welcomed the annual report of the Bureau on the Plan of action, endorsed the recommendations contained therein and requested the Bureau to continue to monitor the implementation of the Plan and to report thereon to the Assembly during its twenty-third session.²

3. The Plan of action calls upon States Parties to proactively make use of the political, financial, and technical means at their disposal to promote the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute through bilateral, regional and multilateral relationships. Furthermore, the Plan of action calls upon the Secretariat to support States in their efforts to promote universality and full implementation of the Statute by acting as a focal point for information exchange, within existing resources, including by collecting and ensuring dissemination of such information. It also requires the Assembly, through its Bureau, to keep the Plan of action under review.

4. On 6 March 2024, the Bureau of the Assembly re-appointed the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea as *ad country* focal points to facilitate the implementation of the Plan of action.

5. The reporting period covers the period after the adoption of the previous report³ in November 2023 until November 2024. During this period, the *ad country* focal points conducted consultations and briefings in order to exchange information between States, Court officials, members of civil society and other interested parties.

¹ *Official Records of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Fifth session, The Hague, 23 November to 1 December 2006* (ICC-ASP/5/32), Part III, ICC-ASP/5/Res.3, annex I.

² ICC-ASP/22/Res.3, para. 9 and Annex I, para. 1.

³ ICC-ASP/22/26.

II. Updates on efforts to promote universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute

A. Activities of the Court

6. The Court continued to contribute actively to the efforts to promote universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute in cooperation and coordination with other actors, including the President of the Assembly, the co-focal points on the Plan of Action, other States Parties, regional and intergovernmental organizations, and civil society, notably the Coalition for the ICC and Parliamentarians for Global Action. Periodic virtual meetings chaired by the co-focal points continued to prove highly useful and effective for the purpose of exchanging information and coordinating activities between these different actors.

7. During the reporting period, the President of the Court held many high-level meetings with States not parties with the specific purpose of promoting ratification of the Rome Statute, either in The Hague during official visits hosted by the Court or during official travel.

8. More generally, the principals of the Court used numerous occasions of meetings, exchanges and public speeches to draw attention to the need for increasing membership in the Rome Statute as well as its implementation in national legislation, both in terms of providing national procedures for cooperation as well as incorporating the Rome Statute crimes in national law. The Court also engaged in many technical, working-level exchanges with state officials of States not parties on questions related to the ratification of the Rome Statute.

9. On 14 and 15 November 2023, the Court organised a high-level regional seminar in Seoul focused on universality and cooperation, with funding from the European Commission, and the participation of a number of States Parties as well as States not party to the Rome Statute.

10. On 19 July 2024, the Court organised the sixth Asia-Pacific Forum, with the aim of raising awareness about the Court and strengthening the understanding of the Court and the Rome Statute in the region. Additionally in September 2024, the ICC held a seminar with partner universities in the Asia Pacific region.

11. The Registry availed itself in several instances during the reporting period to provide support and technical advice to interested States engaged in a domestic process to adopt cooperation implementing legislation. While the Registry will not provide substantive advice on matters of national concern, it remains ready, when requested and when considered helpful for advancing national implementation of the Rome Statute, to participate in discussions, provide submissions to national stakeholders at the request of the State on the key elements of Part 9, and share what has been its experience and lessons learned in applying the cooperation provisions of the Statute with States Parties.

12. The Court's public information activities, notably through the ICC website and social media channels, maintained in multiple languages, and platforms of partners and influencers such as the United Nations (UN), continued to serve as a crucial tool for raising awareness and providing access to information essential for the promotion of the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute. The Court launched an [#ICCProcess social media information campaign](#) in multiple languages to answer key questions about the Court, which was amplified on UN social media platforms.

13. The Court's Public Information and Outreach Section (PIOS) supported various events and actions which contributed to enhancing global awareness about the Court and its work, including the events at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for 17 July, the anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute. This notably included supporting and publicising the [ASP's high-level panel discussion](#) on "Truth, Memory and Justice" as well as opening the physical exhibition [Common Bonds](#) with remarks by the ASP and ICC Presidents, on display for both the diplomatic community and the general public for one month. The [Common Bonds online photo exhibition](#) was simultaneously launched on the ICC website for amplification on social media by partners. The exhibition covers personal stories from all 17 investigations that have been launched by the Court as well as stories from Court-ordered reparations beneficiaries and calls for all States to "Join us in building a more just world".

14. Under its Legal Professionals Programme (LPP) funded by the European Commission, the Court seeks to offer young and mid-career legal professionals from situation countries and developing regions an opportunity to enhance their professional skills in the field of international criminal law by working at the Court. One of the objectives of the programme is to benefit the national jurisdictions of the participants, who will bring their enhanced knowledge and skills back to their domestic system upon return from the Court. During the reporting period, 9 Legal Professionals were selected for a six-month working placement at the Court under the LPP.

15. The free, online ICC Legal Tools Database (LTD),⁴ which is supported by the Court with funding from the European Commission, continued to be a leading international law digital resource. The LTD plays an important role by providing free global access to international criminal law legal sources, for which there is high demand globally, including in States not party to the Statute. As such, the LTD helps promote awareness of the Court and its jurisprudence in jurisdictions that may join the Rome Statute in the future, as well as strengthen the Court's profile as a leading institution in the field, reinforcing positive perceptions among legal communities as a key stakeholder group. With funding from the European Commission, the Court launched the LTD interface in French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese, in addition to the original English language version.

16. As part of the Legal Tools project, the Court has also developed the ICC Case Law Database (CLD), which indexes all judgments, decisions, orders and any other similar document issued by a judicial body of the ICC in an easily searchable format. In addition to the full text of the Court's jurisprudence since 2004, the CLD provides substantive analysis in the form of legal findings (extracts from the Court's case law with jurisprudential value). So far, almost 15,000 legal findings have been extracted and indexed with a level of importance, one or more keywords, and their relationship with other decisions in the Court's jurisprudence. The CLD is now available in English, French and Spanish. The availability of the database in additional languages enables access to key ICC jurisprudence to a significantly expanded number of countries and legal communities around the world.

B. Activities of the President of the Assembly and the Secretariat

17. Throughout the reporting period, the President of the Assembly of States Parties, Ms. Päivi Kaukoranta, conducted a number of bilateral and multilateral meetings where she urged States to join the Rome Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court. She also highlighted the necessity for States to adopt implementing legislation at the national level. During these discussions, she pointed out that the universality of the Rome Statute would enhance the Court's legitimacy and broaden its jurisdiction, as the Court can only increase its scope through ratifications of the Statute without a referral from the United Nations Security Council.

18. The President in coordination with the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu (Sierra Leone) and Ambassador Margareta Kassangana (Poland), reached out to non-States Parties and encouraged them to engage with their governments to facilitate the ratification of the Rome Statute. The Presidency of the Assembly also addressed the crucial importance of universality before major regional organizations as well as the regional groups of States Parties in the contexts of the Assembly and the United Nations and called for their action to further promote universality.

19. The President of the Assembly organized an event at United Nations Headquarters to commemorate the Day of International Criminal Justice on 17 July, which aimed to inter alia promote the universality of the Rome Statute system. The President of the Assembly and the President of the Court delivered remarks at the event. They also took part in the opening of the exhibition entitled "Common Bonds" at United Nations Headquarters.

20. In addition to the commemorative events, the President participated in other events organized by States Parties where she also continued to encourage non-States Parties to considering ratification/accession to the Rome Statute, as well to invite them to attend the annual sessions of the Assembly of States Parties. These events included her participation at the Bled Strategic Forum, which took place on 2 and 3 September 2024; the President spoke at the panel

⁴ <http://www.legal-tools.org/>.

entitled “Summit of the Future: What kind of future can it deliver”. The President of the Assembly sent a prerecorded video at the 13th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action and the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Islamabad on 28-29 October 2024. She also delivered a statement at the opening of the 30 and 31 October meeting organized in Johannesburg with senior officials from African Governments on the review of the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression; the meeting was entitled “Mobilising African States Parties to the ICC to raise awareness and generate ownership. The President also continued to promote the ratification of the Rome Statute at meetings held during her visits to New York, including International Law Week in the latter part of October.

21. The President worked closely with non-governmental organizations, including the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Human Rights Watch, Open Society Justice Initiative and the American Bar Association's ICC Project, the International Bar Association, the American Society of International Law, as well as in connection with their local NGOs and focal points, to promote the environment conducive to expanding the universality of the Rome Statute.

22. The Secretariat, for its part, continued to support the collection of information on the promotion of universality and the full implementation of the Rome Statute. As of 31 October 2024, the Secretariat had received four responses to the questionnaire concerning the Plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute. Relevant information submitted by States and international organizations can be found on the Assembly’s website.⁵

C. Activities of the focal points

23. Throughout the reporting period, the initiatives of the co-focal points, continuing the work of the previous focal points, focused mainly on two categories of activities: firstly, on synergizing efforts of different stakeholders in the promotion of the universality and the full implementation of the Rome Statute; and secondly, on directing efforts at non-States Parties to the Rome Statute. Several activities were undertaken in order to make progress on both categories. The most important activities are listed below.

24. On 14 and 15 November 2023, the Republic of Korea and the ICC hosted a high-level regional seminar in Seoul. The event was attended by high-level ministerial, judicial, and technical representatives from a number of States Parties as well as States not party to the Rome Statute. The Seminar focused on raising awareness of the ICC and the Rome Statute within the Asia-Pacific region and strengthening dialogue between the ICC and key regional stakeholders regarding the Court’s mandate and activities, efforts to promote the universality of the Rome Statute, as well as partnership and cooperation to combat impunity.

25. Following Armenia’s deposit of its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute on 14 November 2023, the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands organized a meeting on 24 November 2023 by inviting the Ambassador of Armenia to warmly welcome its ratification. Numerous States Parties participated in the meeting, engaging in a Q&A session focused on the ratification backgrounds, process, future plans, and other relevant topics. Armenia’s accession marked the first new State Party to join in four years since 2019, drawing considerable interest from the ICC officials, the ASP, and States Parties.

26. During the 22nd session of the Assembly of States Parties, the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with Belgium, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court and Global Rights Compliance organised a side-event on the universality of the International Criminal Court and the importance of ratifying the Rome Statute, its amendments and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities. At this side-event, both the President of the Assembly of States Parties, Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, and the President of the Court, Judge Piotr Hofmański, delivered presentations, which were followed by a meaningful exchange on the importance of achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute in order to combat impunity at the global level.

⁵ <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sessions/plan-of-action/2022-Plan-of-Action>.

27. Throughout the year, the working-level meetings have taken place with the European External Action Service and civil society organizations – in particular, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court and Parliamentarians for Global Action – in order to promote the universality of the Rome Statute. In addition, the ambassadors of the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands have been in regular contact with the President of the Assembly of States Parties on the possibilities of promoting the universality of the Rome Statute in specific target States.

28. In addition to translating the Rome Statute into Somali last year, for the purposes of the parliamentary approval procedure in Somalia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands hosted three parliamentarians from Somalia who are pushing for the parliamentary approval of the Rome Statute. The delegation was led by Dr Mahad Haji, who has been appointed by the previous President of the ASP as Special Advisor to the President of the ASP for the parliamentary approval procedure of the Rome Statute in Somalia. On this occasion, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea also met Dr. Mahad Haji to exchange views on the efforts of the Somali Parliament to ratify the Rome Statute and explore possible ways of assistance. The Kingdom of the Netherlands also hosted an Armenian delegation from Yerevan in The Hague. The members of this delegation were experts in charge of implementing the Rome Statute in the domestic law of Armenia. The Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security gave a presentation on the implementation of the Rome Statute in Dutch law and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained the work of the ASP. In addition, a similar meeting took place in The Hague, when the Kingdom of the Netherlands hosted a delegation of eight Ghanaian parliamentarians. The parliamentarians were members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs and were tasked with implementing the Rome Statute into the domestic law of Ghana.

29. The Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands also welcome the fact that Ukraine has ratified the Rome Statute and will become the 125th State Party on 1 January 2025. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has, in the previous years, undertaken various initiatives in order to encourage the ratification of the Rome Statute by Ukraine.

30. The co-focal points proposed during the Review Mechanism discussions on the moratorium to consider whether the newly introduced moratorium would have a potential impact on the universality of the Rome Statute, and States Parties agreed through extensive consultations that the moratorium would not compromise the spirit of universality of the Rome Statute. A new provision was also included in the moratorium stating that it would not apply to nationals of non-States Parties who have explicitly expressed their intention to ratify the Rome Statute, thereby aligning it with a framework that promotes universality.

D. Activities of international organizations and other organizations

31. **The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)** continued advocating for the universal ratification of the ICC Rome Statute around the world. Activities undertaken by the Coalition include activities by member organisations – which often work under the umbrella of National Coalitions for the ICC – as well as activities undertaken by the Coalition’s International Secretariat.

32. In 2024, the Coalition for the ICC promoted universality in Armenia and Ukraine. With advocacy and support from civil society, Armenia became the 124th ICC State Party on 1 February 2024⁶. The CICC and member organisations continue to support Armenia with implementation of the Rome Statute, including with a mission to Armenia in November 2024. Following several years of campaigns and awareness raising in the country, Ukraine ratified the Rome Statute and several of its amendments and deposited the ratification instruments with the UN on 25 October 2024. Ukraine will become the 125th State Party in January 2025⁷. Civil society has also called on Ukraine to fully harmonise its domestic legislation with the Rome Statute and IHL provisions.

33. Throughout 2024, the Coalition’s International Secretariat has continued to coordinate with, and to support the initiatives on universality of the Presidency of the ICC, the ASP President, the ASP focal points on universality and States Parties, as well as the European Union in its demarches and efforts to advance ratifications of the Rome Statute.

⁶ <https://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/armenia-becomes-ICCstateparty>.

⁷ <https://twitter.com/ngos4justice/status/1850832436944412871>.

34. **Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)** has been among the leading international civil society organizations in supporting Armenia and Ukraine’s ratification of the Rome Statute through field missions, visits of parliamentary delegations to the Hague and ASP, and technical assistance. PGA has been actively involved in drafting and refining the Rome Statute’s implementing legislation in both countries, offering crucial technical support throughout the process, which culminated in Ukraine adopting the legislation in October 2024. To advance the implementing legislation process in Armenia, PGA is joining its civil society partners in the organisation of the Workshop and Roundtable in Armenia in November 2024.

35. In addition, PGA has worked closely with its members in Ghana and Mexico to amend domestic laws regarding complementarity and cooperation with the ICC. PGA also facilitated parliamentary delegation visits from Ghana, Somalia, and Suriname to the ICC, fostering greater understanding of the Rome Statute and commitment. In Somalia, PGA has been supporting its members in promoting the process of the accession to the Rome Statute, including through introducing a motion to this end and raising awareness among parliamentarians.

36. At the end of October, PGA held its biennial Consultative Assembly on the ICC and the Rule of Law in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Assembly brought together over 80 participants from 30 countries, both in-person and virtually. During the two-day session, parliamentarians highlighted the importance of ICC universality and encouraged their parliamentary counterparts—including from Pakistan, the host country—to ratify the Rome Statute. They also shared experiences on advancing implementing legislation and discussed challenges to inspire other parliamentarians in their legislative efforts.

III. Recommendations

37. In general, there is a continuing need for further sustained efforts in promoting the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court. Many activities are already being undertaken on an on-going basis, and the scope for better coordination and identification of possible synergies as well as more systematic follow-up on initiatives should be explored further. Enhanced use of ICT and social media could play an important role in this regard, in particular when reaching out to academia and students, building on existing initiatives. Against this background, the following recommendations are made:

A. To the Assembly of States Parties

1. To continue to monitor closely the implementation of the Plan of action.

B. To the States Parties

2. To continue to promote, as far as possible, the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute in their bilateral, regional and multilateral relationships, including enhancing the cooperation between international and regional organizations and the Court;
3. To continue their efforts to disseminate information on the Court at the national, regional and international level, including through events, seminars, publications, courses and other initiatives that may raise awareness about the work of the Court;
4. To continue to provide the Secretariat with updated information relevant to the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute, including current contact information on national focal points;
5. To continue to promote, as far as possible, the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute in collaboration with the Court, civil society, academia, international organizations and professional organizations;
6. To organize, in conjunction with the Court, civil society, academia, international organizations and professional associations, seminars, panel discussions and events focusing on promoting the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute, in New York, in The Hague and in different regions, and to disseminate information about the Court’s work and the provisions of the Rome Statute;

7. To continue to provide, wherever possible, technical and financial assistance to States wishing to become party to the Statute and to those wishing to implement the Statute in their national legislation;
8. To provide financial and/or other support, wherever possible, to civil society, academia, international organizations and professional associations that provide technical assistance to overcome the challenges to ratification and implementation identified in this report;
9. To continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for Least Developed Countries and other developing States to promote the attendance of States not party to the sessions of the Assembly; and
10. To continue to cooperate with the Court so that it can fulfil its functions accordingly.

C. To the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties

11. To continue to support States in their efforts to promote the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute by acting as a focal point for information exchange and by making available updated information on this matter, including on the website of the Court;
12. To compile information on all available resources and potential donors, and post it on the Court's website for easy access by States; and
13. To prepare a matrix to serve the purpose of enhanced information-sharing between potential recipients and donors of technical assistance.

Annex

Draft language to be included in the omnibus resolution

A. Universality of the Rome Statute

1. *Welcomes* the State that has ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court since the twenty-second session, *invites* States not yet parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to become parties to the Rome Statute, as amended, as soon as possible and *calls upon* all States Parties, all international and regional organizations, and civil society to intensify their efforts to promote the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute;
2. *Invites* also all States Parties not yet parties to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court, to become parties to this Agreement.
3. *Notes with deep regret* the notification of withdrawal from the Rome Statute submitted by a State Party under article 127(1) of the Statute on 17 March 2018 as well as the withdrawal of its instrument of accession by another State on 29 April 2019, and *calls upon* these States to reconsider these withdrawals;¹
4. *Welcomes with appreciation* also the continuation by the President of the Assembly of the dialogue on the “Relationship between Africa and the International Criminal Court” initiated by the Bureau during the fifteenth session of the Assembly of States Parties, and *invites* the Bureau to further widen and deepen this dialogue as needed with all interested State Parties;
5. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice² and *recommends* that, on the basis of lessons learnt, all relevant stakeholders, together with the Court, continue to engage in preparation of appropriate activities and share information with other stakeholders to that effect through the Secretariat of the Assembly³ and otherwise;
6. *Decides* to keep the status of ratifications under review and to monitor developments in the field of implementing legislation, inter alia with a view to facilitating the provision of technical assistance that States Parties to the Rome Statute, or States wishing to become parties thereto, may wish to request from other States Parties or institutions in relevant areas, and *calls upon* States to annually provide the Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties with updated information about actions and activities in support of international justice, as per the Plan of Action (paragraph 6(h));⁴
7. *Recalls* that the ratification of the Rome Statute must be matched by national implementation of the obligations emanating therefrom, notably through implementing legislation, in particular in the areas of criminal law, criminal procedural law, and international cooperation and judicial assistance with the Court and, in this regard, *urges* States Parties to the Rome Statute that have not yet done so to adopt such implementing legislation as a priority and *encourages* the adoption of victims-related provisions, as and when appropriate;
8. *Welcomes* the report of the Bureau on the Plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute⁵ and *notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Court’s President, the Office of the Prosecutor, the President of the Assembly, the Assembly, States Parties and civil society to enhance the effectiveness of universality-related efforts and to encourage States to become parties to the Rome Statute, as amended, and to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court, as well as relevant efforts undertaken in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council;

¹ Depository Notification C.N.138.2018.TREATIES-XVIII.10, see at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CN/2018/CN.138.2018-Eng.pdf>.

² *Official Records... Review Conference...* 2010 (RC/11), part II.B, Kampala declaration (RC/Decl.1), para 12.

³ See at: <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/asp-events/ICJD/default>.

⁴ ICC-ASP/5/Res.3, Annex I.

⁵ ICC-ASP/22/26.

9. *Recalls* rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of States Parties, and *underscores* the importance of promoting the universality of the Rome Statute and of strengthening the openness and transparency of the Assembly;

10. *Takes note* of the outcome of the discussions, including in particular, the Siracusa Declaration on ensuring consistent and sustainable support for the International Criminal Court drafted at the end of the Siracusa symposium on 12 and 13 October 2023;

B. Mandates of the Assembly of States Parties for the intersessional period

1. With regard to universality of the Rome Statute,

(a) *endorses* the recommendations of the report of the Bureau on the Plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute; and

(b) *requests* the Bureau to continue to monitor the implementation of the Plan of action for achieving universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute and to report thereon to the Assembly at its twenty-fourth session.
