International Criminal Court ICC-ASP/25/24

Assembly of States Parties

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Report of the Bureau on the scheduling of Assembly sessions

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. Article 112, paragraph 6, of the Rome Statute establishes that the Assembly of States Parties ("the Assembly") shall meet once a year at the seat of the Court or at the Headquarters of the United Nations and, when circumstances so require, hold special sessions. The same provision provides that, except as otherwise specified in the Statute, special sessions shall be convened by the Bureau on its own initiative or at the request of one third of the States Parties.

2. At its seventeenth session, in 2018, the Assembly, in resolution ICC-ASP/17/Res.5, requested the Bureau, in consultation with all States Parties, the Court and civil society, both in New York and The Hague, to assess the benefits and challenges of the existing schedule of Assembly sessions, including the proposal to hold future sessions in the first semester of each calendar year, the duration of sessions, including the proposal to shorten them, and the location of meetings of the Assembly and the Bureau, and to make recommendations to improve efficiency.[1]

3. At its eighteenth,[2] nineteenth,[3] and twentieth[4] sessions, the Assembly reiterated the mandate regarding the review of the scheduling of Assembly sessions and further requested the Bureau to address the proposal to hold sessions for a duration of up to six days, preferably over one calendar week, unless judicial or prosecutorial elections were scheduled.

4. The mandate was further developed at the twenty-first session of the Assembly, which requested the Bureau to consider, as general objectives for the scheduling of Assembly sessions, the need to ensure effective, efficient, concise and productive sessions, with the broadest participation of States Parties and effective use of resources. The Bureau was also requested to consider the need to avoid duplication through a division of labour between New York and The Hague, and to further examine the possibility of a transition period to avoid an impact on the Court's budget and work.[5]

5. At its twenty-second session, the Assembly decided to revert to the question of scheduling at an appropriate time, preferably ahead of its twenty-fifth session.[6] This decision was reiterated for the 2026 intersessional period in resolution ICC-ASP/24/Res.6, adopted at the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly.[7]

6. In resolution ICC-ASP/24/Res.6, the Assembly reiterated its decision concerning the alternation of Assembly sessions between the seat of the Court and the Headquarters of the United Nations, as well as the need to ensure effective, efficient, concise and productive sessions, with the broadest participation of States Parties and effective use of resources, while avoiding duplication through a division of labour between New York and The Hague.[8] The Assembly further decided that its annual session shall have a duration of up to six working days, with a possible extension of up to three additional days in election years, as required, and that, in such cases, the first three days shall focus on the elections of judges.[9]

7. The mandate concerning the scheduling of Assembly sessions is contained in resolution ICC-ASP/24/Res.6, annex I, paragraph 10, which reads as follows:

[1] ICC-ASP/17/Res.5, annex 1, para. 11(i).
[2] ICC-ASP/18/Res.6, paras. 102-103.
[3] ICC-ASP/19/Res.6, paras. 103-104.
[4] ICC-ASP/20/Res.5, paras. 106-107.
[5] ICC-ASP/21/Res.2, para. 110.
[6] ICC-ASP/22/20, para. 107.
[7] ICC-ASP/24/Res.6, para. 110.
[8] ICC-ASP/24/Res.6 para. 112.
[9] ICC-ASP/24/Res.6, annex I para. 10(a).

> 10. With regard to the **working methods review**,
>
> (a) *decides* that its annual session shall have a duration of up to six working days with a possible extension of up to three additional days in election years, as required, and to focus, in such cases, the first three days on the elections of judges;
>
> […]
>
> (d) *also invites* the facilitators and focal points to commit themselves for a period of up to three years, considering the particularities and the complexity of each mandate and to submit, in addition to their regular reports, a final written report to the Assembly at the end of their mandate, including lessons learnt;

8. Implementation of the mandate was allocated by the Bureau of the Assembly to the New York Working Group on 14 January 2026, and Ms. Keke Motsepe (South Africa) was appointed by the Bureau as focal point for the scheduling of Assembly sessions, by the Bureau, on 2 September 2026.[10]

B. Background

9. During the 2023 intersessional period, the Bureau focal point for the scheduling of Assembly sessions conducted consultations with States Parties, focusing on the timing, duration and location of Assembly sessions. These were the most recent consultations on the scheduling of Assembly sessions prior to the 2026 intersessional period. With regard to the duration and location of Assembly sessions, the focal point recalled the general understanding reached in 2022 to limit sessions to a maximum of six days, unless judicial or prosecutorial elections were scheduled, and to maintain the practice of holding two consecutive sessions in The Hague and one in New York, when judicial elections were held. Delegations reiterated their positions on these matters during the consultations, and the Bureau subsequently recommended maintaining these arrangements. Concerning the timing of Assembly sessions, views differed on the proposal to hold sessions during the first semester of the year. Concerns were raised regarding the implications of holding a resumed session during the second semester for the adoption of the Court's budget, particularly the additional costs involved and the potential impact of separating budget negotiations from other Assembly discussions. The difficulties faced by delegations in New York owing to overlapping meetings during the second semester were also highlighted. No consensus emerged on the subject.

10. The discussions held during the consultations, together with the conclusions and recommendations arising therefrom, were reflected in the report of the Bureau on the scheduling of Assembly sessions, submitted to the Assembly at its twenty-second session.[11] Following consideration of the report, the Assembly decided to hold its sessions alternately two years at the seat of the Court and one year at the United Nations Headquarters, when elections are held. It further decided that sessions should, as a rule, have a duration of up to six days, preferably over one calendar week, unless judicial or prosecutorial elections are scheduled, and stressed the need for effective, efficient, concise and productive sessions, with the broadest participation of States Parties and the effective use of resources, while avoiding duplication through a division of labour between New York and The Hague.[12]

[10] See Decisions of the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties, Twenty-first Meeting, 2 September 2026, available at: https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/asp_docs/Bureau21.agenda.and_.decisions.15Sep26.0950.pdf.
[11] ICC-ASP/22/32.
[12] ICC-ASP/22/20, para. 108.

II. Discussions in the New York Working Group

11. The facilitation held two meetings during the 2026 intersessional period, open to States Parties, Observer States, the Court and non-governmental organizations, on 11 September and 12 October 2026.

12. At the meeting held on 11 September 2026, the focal point recalled the mandate concerning the scheduling of Assembly sessions and provided an overview of the consultations conducted in 2023, including the principal issues relating to the timing, duration and location of sessions. She also introduced the draft programme of work for 2026, which was adopted. The focal point clarified that the facilitation was not intended to reconsider the location of the twenty-fifth session of the Assembly, noting that any such reconsideration would follow the relevant Bureau procedures. She further indicated that the arrangements for future Assembly sessions remained open for discussion.

13. The focal point invited delegations to exchange initial views on the general objectives and issues to be considered in the discussions, and encouraged States Parties and civil society to submit written comments to the Secretariat by 25 September 2026.

14. At the meeting held on 12 October 2026, the focal point, in accordance with the facilitations mandate, invited delegations to consider whether the current arrangements regarding the timing, duration and location of Assembly sessions should be maintained or whether changes were necessary to ensure broader participation by States Parties, greater efficiency and the effective use of resources.

15. A delegation reiterated concerns raised during the 2023 consultations regarding the overlap between Assembly sessions and other significant United Nations meetings and processes during the second semester of the year, which could affect the participation of legal advisers and smaller delegations. The importance of examining alternative arrangements that could facilitate broader participation in the Assembly's work was emphasized. In this context, the focal point referred to previous proposals to hold the principal Assembly session during the first semester, with a possible resumed session later in the year to address budgetary and other matters, and invited delegations to consider whether the concerns identified in 2023 remained relevant.

16. It was suggested that alternative scheduling arrangements could be explored on a limited basis, including by commencing relevant discussions earlier in the calendar year. The focal point took note of the suggestion.

17. In view of the limited time remaining before the reporting deadline, the focal point indicated that the draft report would likely be circulated under a silence procedure, allowing delegations an opportunity to review and comment before its finalization.

III. Recommendations

1. The facilitation recommends that the Assembly continue consideration of the scheduling of its sessions, taking into account the need to ensure broad participation of States Parties, the scheduling of other United Nations meetings and processes, the implications of any changes for the Court's budgetary cycle, the work of its subsidiary bodies, judicial and prosecutorial elections, and the effective use of resources.

2. The facilitation further recommends that consideration be given to commencing relevant discussions on scheduling the Assembly sessions earlier in the intersessional period, with a view to facilitating the timely consideration of matters.

3. The facilitation recommends that the Assembly maintain the existing arrangements concerning the location and duration of its sessions, namely, holding sessions alternately two years at the seat of the Court and one year at the Headquarters of the United Nations, when

elections are held, as a rule for a duration of up to six working days, preferably over one calendar week, unless judicial or prosecutorial elections are scheduled. It further recommends that, under exceptional circumstances, the Bureau may decide on the venue of a session, taking into account the relevant practical, financial and institutional considerations.

4. Accordingly, the facilitation proposes the text in annex I for inclusion in the omnibus resolution.

Annex I

Draft language to be included in the omnibus resolution

1. The following paragraphs of the 2025 omnibus resolution (ICC-ASP/24/Res.6), located in the section on the **working methods review**, are to be amended as follows:

> *110. Welcomes* the report of the Bureau on the scheduling of Assembly sessions and the recommendations therein,[1] ~~and *decides* to revert to the question at an appropriate time, preferably ahead of the twenty-fifth~~**sixth** ~~session of the Assembly~~**, and *decides* to continue consideration of the question of scheduling of Assembly sessions, with a view to ensuring their effective and efficient organization and the broadest possible participation of States Parties, ahead of the twenty-sixth session of the Assembly;**
>
> (…)
>
> 112. *Decides***,** ~~to hold,~~ bearing in mind past practice, **to hold** the Assembly sessions alternately two years at the seat of the Court and one year at the ~~Headquarters of the~~ United Nations **Headquarters**, when elections are held, as a rule with a length of up to six **working** days, preferably over one calendar week, unless judicial or prosecutorial elections are scheduled, and stresses the need for effective, efficient, concise and productive Assembly sessions, with **the** broadest participation of States Parties and effective use of resources, as well as the need ~~for~~ **to** avoid~~ing~~ duplication with a division of labour between New York and The Hague**;**

2. The following paragraphs of the 2025 omnibus resolution (ICC-ASP/24/Res.6), located in annex I, are to be maintained:

> 10. With regard to the **working methods review**,
>
> (a) *decides* that its annual session shall have a duration of up to six working days with a possible extension of up to three additional days in election years, as required, and to focus, in such cases, the first three days on the elections of judges;

[1] ICC-ASP/25/24.