



Fifth Diplomatic Briefing of the International Criminal Court

Compilation of Statements

The Hague, 26 October 2005

Philippe Kirsch, President

I would like to welcome you to the fifth briefing of the diplomatic community. The Court continues to provide you with information regarding its activities. The aim of these diplomatic briefings is to enhance communication between States Parties and the Court and to keep you up to date on developments at the Court.

I hope that the information package you received last week was useful to you in preparation for today's briefing. We are open to questions you might have in relation to this material or otherwise at the end of our presentations.

We propose to focus our presentations today on a number of key issues of interest in view of the upcoming ASP. The Prosecutor will give you an update of activities in relation to the three ongoing investigations. The Registrar will give you an overview of challenges faced by the Court in conducting its activities in the field and at headquarters. The Director of the Secretariat of States Parties will describe preparations for the ASP. I will begin by saying a few words regarding the Court's overall activity and how this is reflected in the proposed budget for 2006.

The International Criminal Court has now issued its first warrants of arrest. On 14 October, Pre-Trial Chamber II unsealed five warrants of arrest against senior leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army for crimes committed in Uganda since July 2002. The gravity of the alleged crimes included in the warrants is an important reminder to all of us of the need for an international criminal court.

These warrants also reflect the fact that the Court is now firmly in the judicial phase of its operations. Three situations are under investigation – Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Darfur, Sudan. The Court has developed a significant presence in the field in connection with these investigations.

Proceedings are underway at the Pre-Trial level. A number of decisions have been taken by Pre-Trial Chambers I and II. You will find them on the Court's website. Indeed, the Court has been

active in its judicial operations. Since 1 January 2005, 31 written judicial decisions have been issued by Chambers. In addition, 260 documents, including applications, decisions and reports, have been registered.

Subject to cooperation of States in arresting and surrendering persons, trial activity could also start soon. As you will hear shortly from the Prosecutor and Registrar, conducting complex investigations and carrying out the Court's other statutory activities in the field involve a number of challenges. These include: ensuring the security of Court staff, victims and witnesses; and arranging adequate transportation, logistics and communications. Furthermore, each situation imposes its own particular requirements on the Court, for instance in terms of local language capacity.

Such essential field-related activities represent a large part of the necessary growth in the Court's proposed budget for 2006. As you may know, the Court proposed an increase of 23.3% over last year's budget. This increase is not only due to field activities, but also costs related to Courtroom proceedings. In 2006, we expect the Court will continue pre-trial activity in all three situations and, subject to State cooperation, conduct two trials. Courtroom proceedings will impose specific costs, including: meeting the language requirements of the Statute and of the different situations; and carrying out the Court's obligations with respect to victims and witnesses.

As you may be aware, the Committee on Budget and Finance met in The Hague this month - the Court has just received the CBF's report. We are in the process of reviewing the report but I will give you a few highlights: The CBF did not propose substantial reductions to situation-related expenses and the overall reductions proposed by the CBF would reduce the proposed budget by approximately 3.3%.

The CBF considered carefully the Bureau's proposal for the establishment and budgetary implications of an ICC liaison office in New York, and concluded that its establishment would assist in responding to genuine needs of the Court, and that the cost associated with its establishment appeared reasonable.

The CBF discussed three reports provided by the Court regarding permanent premises. The Court indicated that no definitive recommendation or decisions on the permanent premises was needed by the Committee or the Assembly this year. In terms of interim premises, the Committee took note of the current impasse that exists over the next step of the Court's growth. The Committee urges the Host State to do the utmost to make sure that by 2006 the Court can expand in accordance with the staffing estimates provided.

The Court remains committed to developing its Strategic Plan. The plan is expected to be completed in Spring 2006. As part of the strategic planning exercise, the court is developing a Court Capacity Model which will be completed by the end of 2005. Among its purposes, the Model will serve as a basis for formulating the Court's staffing requirements for the permanent premises. The CBF had previously endorsed the Court's approach to the Strategic Plan. At its recent session, the CBF recommended increasing the priority to be given to the Strategic Plan. The Court is committed to the Plan as a high priority.

Let me turn now to the future activities of the Court. While the Court has made progress, both in its field activities and in relation to courtroom proceedings, fulfilment of the Court's mandate depends upon the level of cooperation it receives from external actors. This cooperation is required in areas such as preserving and providing evidence, sharing information and securing the arrest and transfer of persons to the Court. In light of the release of the Court's first warrants of arrest, this cooperation is of increasing importance. Without arrest and surrender, there can be no trials.

I will now hand the floor over to the Prosecutor who will give a more detailed update of activities in the three investigations.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Prosecutor

Thank you Mr. President. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as requested, I have the honour to provide further information on our activities in our three investigations.

Uganda

I would like to start with a comparatively detailed explanation of the Uganda investigation, in light of the issuance of arrest warrants.

On 28 July 2004, after the preliminary analysis required by the Statute, I took the decision to open an investigation.

The criteria for selection of the first case was gravity. We analyzed the gravity of all crimes in Northern Uganda committed by all groups – the LRA, the UPDF, and other forces. Crimes committed by the LRA were dramatically more numerous and of much higher gravity than alleged crimes by other groups. We therefore started with an investigation of the LRA.

During the investigation, we also continued to collect information on other groups. We collected documents and carried out interviews of several sources. We will continue to collect information on allegations concerning all other groups, to determine whether the Statute thresholds are met and the policy of focusing on the persons most responsible is satisfied.

The investigation was carried out by a multinational investigation team, supported by the entire Office and the Registry. The team works in a highly challenging environment, investigating massive crimes during an ongoing conflict.

Operating in small groups of two or three, we made more than fifty missions to Uganda. The main part of the investigation was over in nine months. We took a number of measures to protect the security of potential witnesses, the victims, and our investigators.

On 6 May 2005, we filed an application to Pre-Trial Chamber II for warrants of arrest for five of the most senior commanders in the LRA, including its leader Joseph Kony. We requested that the application and the warrants be sealed, primarily because of security considerations.

The Pre-Trial Chamber issued the five arrest warrants on 8 July 2005. Since then, we have been making preparations for security and unsealing. The Government of Uganda has the main responsibility for security on the ground. Together with the Victims and Witnesses Unit of the Registry, we prepared protective measures for victims and potential witnesses. In light of these measures, the Pre-Trial Chamber took the decision to unseal the warrants on 13 October 2005.

The six attacks that are the focus of our investigation are some of the gravest attacks on civilians that the LRA has carried out in Northern Uganda since July 2002. The attacks were carried out in several different regions of Uganda.

The warrants are against five leaders of the LRA on counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The alleged crimes include rape, murder, enslavement, sexual enslavement, and forced enlisting of children.

Joseph Kony is the absolute leader of the LRA and controls life and death within the organization. We collected evidence showing how he personally manages the criminal campaign of the LRA. Vincent Otti is second in command, and has personally led attacks on civilians in Uganda. Raska Lukwiya is Army Commander of the LRA and is responsible for some of the worst attacks committed by the LRA during the investigated period.

Dominic Ongwen was an LRA Brigade Commander, commanding the most violent of the four brigades of the LRA. In the last weeks, it was reported that Ongwen was killed in combat, following an attack on an IDP camp.

In all our work, we are guided by the interests of the victims and we will always be respectful of local traditions. My team made over twenty missions to Uganda to listen to the concerns of local

community leaders, including religious and traditional leaders, local government officials, Members of Parliament, and local and international NGOs.

I also held meetings here in The Hague with leaders of the Lango, Acholi, Teso, and Madi communities. We agreed to working together as part of a common effort to achieve justice and reconciliation, the rebuilding of communities, and to end violence in Northern Uganda.

Our involvement brings a justice component to a comprehensive strategy. These efforts can reinforce each other. For example, we have already received reliable reports of LRA members demobilizing in reaction to the warrants. To them it was a signal that the international community is now taking the situation seriously and that it is no longer a local issue. In order to deter defections, LRA leaders have been claiming that the ICC will pursue more warrants against all fighters. It is important to get out the message that we are focusing only on the persons most responsible. The justice component work may help isolate the top leaders, contributing to security and an end to violence.

The next step is arrest. Arrest warrants of the ICC will help galvanize international efforts to apprehend the four suspects. The responsibility to execute the arrests is the responsibility of States Parties and the international community. Reports indicate that the fugitives are moving between three countries: Uganda, DRC, and the Sudan. These countries must work together, with the support of the international community, to carry out the arrests.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the DRC situation, given the scale of the crimes and the number of armed groups, we must work sequentially. We are starting with one or two cases, selected based on gravity, while continuing to develop other cases. We identified the Ituri region as the area with the gravest crimes within our temporal jurisdiction. We then identified and prioritized the groups most responsible for crimes.

We have continued to carry out missions. With the Registry, we have established a field office in Kinshasa. We also have an operational presence in Bunia.

We have interviewed witnesses, insiders, and suspects, have and collected documents and materials with respect to crime base, linkages, and military structures. We continue with the Registry to develop witness protection arrangements.

Transport, security, and logistics remain major challenges. We remain heavily reliant on MONUC. For example, it is 1700 kilometers from Kinshasa to Bunia, so we must arrange transport with MONUC planes; such arrangements are subject to available space and frequent flight cancellations. In some areas, we do not have secure alternatives to finding accommodation in peacekeeping camps. At times, because of security related concerns and logistical problems – for example, difficulties securing space in camps – we have had to postpone or cancel missions. Despite some organizational and legal problems, support on the ground is generally good. We are striving to become as autonomous as possible in the circumstances, but in some areas, we will not be able to operate without support.

Darfur

With regard to the Darfur investigation, I reported to the Security Council on 29 June 2005, detailing our activities. The report is available on our website.

We recruited our investigation team, including investigators, analysts, and field officers, as well as interpreters in local languages. The team completed its training on issues such as legal aspects of the elements of crimes, investigation strategy, crimes of sexual violence, and local culture and society.

We have secured cooperation of several key sources of evidence, including organizations and individuals. We have collected and analysed documents reports and video and photo records. The team has conducted twelve missions to third countries in order to interview witnesses,

including victims. We have also conducted missions to Chad to establish an operational presence there.

We are analyzing national proceedings and admissibility issues.

We have had good interactions with the Government of Sudan, and have had exploratory meetings and received information on national proceedings. Because we are commencing our investigation from outside of the territory, we have not yet issued any requests for cooperation to the Government of Sudan. Unfettered cooperation will be essential for an efficient investigation.

The Security Council encouraged the Court to support efforts to promote rule of law and human rights, and emphasized the need for reconciliation and efforts to restore long-lasting peace. We will continue to work in a manner mindful of these initiatives, and bring a justice component to a comprehensive strategy. We are also looking forward to cooperation with the AU, as set forth in the Council resolution.

Analysis

In addition to the three investigations, we are conducting analysis of 7 situations of concern. We are planning missions to the Central African Republic and to Côte d'Ivoire to collect additional information on the criteria of Article 53. Our budget assumptions foresee a fourth investigation starting in 2006.

Cooperation

The Court as a whole needs the cooperation of the international community. We are grateful for the strong statements of support from so many actors. In order to carry out our mandate, we need concrete, practical cooperation from all States Parties.

For example, the Office of the Prosecutor needs information in order to carry out efficient and objective investigations. At this time, we have agreements to share sensitive information with only two States Parties. The Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry will frequently need logistical support to carry out operational activities in the field. We may need political support to arrange access to witnesses and evidence. We need any help possible to create conditions for arrest. We need States Parties working within international and regional organisations to create the most supportive environment possible. By acting on this common commitment, we have a unique opportunity to advance the aims of the Rome Statute.

The Registrar, Mr. Bruno Cathala, will now discuss some of the specific challenges we face in these contexts and the ways in which we overcome them.

Bruno Cathala, Registrar

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address you all today at this, the fifth, ICC Diplomatic Briefing.

My intention is to provide you with a succinct presentation of the current activities of the International Criminal Court and the expected developments in the coming year, developments which are in fact reflected in the 2006 draft budget sent to you in early September. To be even more specific, images will be projected behind me which convey the reality on the ground in some cases more effectively than my words.

The Court has been working in three complex and challenging situations on the ground, whilst continuing to conduct judicial work here, in The Hague. I will first brief you on our field operations (following up on what I presented to you in June) and then share some information with respect to the Court in session.

As regards field operations, the Court faces the challenge of ensuring security for its staff working in the field as well as appropriate protection and support for victims and witnesses. This often requires putting flexible rapid reaction systems in place to respond and adapt to a very unstable situation on the ground. I am certain you will agree that the environment in which the Court is working can be described as difficult, to say the least.

Establishing and developing a security “umbrella” for the Court’s operations involved extensive liaison with your various governments and security forces, which can intervene locally. Indeed I would like to express my gratitude for the practical support and human resources provided to us by a number of States. Conducting initial threat assessments, harmonisation with the UN security system, and selecting, hiring and training guards at national level are also integral to the continuing development of a security system which needs to be fine-tuned to the needs of our particular remit.

The Court requires reliable means of transportation and secure communications. Roads are often impassable due to heavy rain or peppered with mines. Suitable vehicles are vital for transporting our teams and are relied upon to transport sensitive witnesses to covert, secure, specially-prepared locations for interviewing. In such cases, the vehicles used are sometimes armoured, with tinted windows, and blend into the local landscape. It is incumbent upon us to do all that is necessary to minimise the risks run by such individuals.

In addition, the environmental challenges vary radically from one country to another and have proven to be a particularly demanding factor. Physical hardship and poor sanitary conditions have had repercussions on the Court's operations. You will not be surprised to hear that a large number (approximately 80%) of those ICC staff working in the field have returned to Headquarters sick. Malaria is just one of the illnesses our staff is faced with, but the number of viruses prevalent is not to be underestimated.

I mentioned earlier that protection and adequate support for witnesses is a priority for the Court. What does it take to implement the requisite mechanisms and systems on the ground?

In terms of protection, I would like to emphasize once again that your cooperation and assistance is key. Although specialised ICC staff is working together with local authorities on local resettlement programmes, in certain cases, notably those of sensitive witnesses under serious threat, it is crucial to be able to relocate witnesses outside the countries concerned.

While the local resettlement programme might appear easier to put in place, it does entail a team effort and the support of reliable local networks. Local persons of trust, able to communicate with the witness in his/her own language/dialect, who are familiar with neighbouring villages and who can effectively assist the witness and his/her family in this process are extremely important. We should not forget that the witnesses who we need to interview are sometimes ill or in need of appropriate specialised psychological support, or are victims of sexual violence, or indeed are elderly or children.

It is also crucial to provide timely and accurate information on the ICC's role and activities to help affected communities understand the Court and its potential impact.

The President touched upon the joint communication strategy of the Court. In this context, I would like to dwell on the outreach role which the Registry carries out in the field. Outreach involves not only disseminating information about the Court in general, but now, and even more so next year with the commencement of two trials, also involves relaying developments in judicial proceedings.

The Court needs to rely on the advice, support and hard work of many actors on the ground in order to ensure effective communication for its outreach. In certain countries, internet is not an effective way of reaching out to lawyers or the media. Uploading documents to and downloading them from the internet is practically impossible, either as it takes an excessively long time or because the internet simply does not work. In order to avoid a breakdown in communications between The Hague and the places where the Court is active, the Court must have representatives on site to provide Congolese lawyers and journalists with hard copies.

The same can be said of making contact with affected communities and disseminating information and standard application forms to them, as well as facilitating legal representation of victims, which requires not only financial resources but also a network of reliable intermediaries. Adequate training for such intermediaries is a priority for the Court.

In working with local partners and intermediaries, the Court feels that it must adapt its working methods to local cultures and specificities.

All the activities I have mentioned can only be conducted with strong administrative support and through pragmatic organisation. The role of the administrative wing (operating from The Hague or the field offices) is to support the activities of the teams by ensuring efficient procurement of services and purchases, speedy recruitment of local personnel when needed, and secure lines of communication to facilitate continuous dialogue between Headquarters and teams in the various countries concerned.

Allow me now to share with you the challenges for the Court in session as we see them today.

The procedural rules established by the statutory documents and the Regulations of the Court are to a large extent new and need to be interpreted and developed. That work is in fact ongoing as we speak, now that prosecution teams, defence counsel and the legal representatives of victims are appearing before the Court. This level of activity is and will continue to be accompanied by a significant rise in the work of the Interpretation and Translation Section.

In order to conduct fair and public trials, the participants in the proceedings must be able to express themselves in their language, and to that end interpretation must be provided where required. Here again the difficulty that arises relates to finding interpreters able to speak the languages of the accused, witnesses (in cases where they do not speak the same language as the accused), victims, etc. Missions undertaken in the field by the Court have clearly indicated *inter alia* that it is extremely difficult to find suitable interpretation for certain rarer languages such as Zaghawa and Massalit, which by the way are not written languages. In addition, in some countries the knowledge of foreign languages has been found to be so lacking that it is difficult to find individuals who might potentially act as interpreters and are able to write, or even read English or French, the working languages of the Court. In addition, most of the candidates interviewed by the Court on site are barely able to meet the security and medical requirements to work as an interpreter for the Court.

When warrants of arrest were issued by the Prosecutor for five top leaders of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army, ICC translators had to translate them into Acholi. This might seem to be a routine task of the Court, but it was in fact a daunting challenge as some of the legal terms we use have no equivalent in the target language, making it necessary to coin new terms. We need translators and linguists/language experts who can overcome these difficulties whilst strictly observing the rules of morphology and etymology of these local languages.

Judicial work has to be supported by secure and reliable logistics. The main courtroom, which has already been the venue of hearings, is fully operational. The audio-visual and IT systems are in

place, but must be made sufficiently reliable to ensure that the proceedings are not interrupted frequently due to technical failures. The communication systems are, as you will appreciate, intrinsically linked to delivering public trials. The trials are held at the seat of the Court, far from the communities most directly concerned. The Court must be able to ensure that its proceedings are public and that they can be followed by those awaiting justice to be done.

I could give several other examples, not least in connection with victims and witnesses. I suggest that I elaborate on those topics at one of our upcoming meetings. Nonetheless, I would like to stress before concluding that to meet the multitude of challenges we face, each and every factor is important. This includes the premises made available to the Court; these should be suitable for the specificities of the Court's work, both in terms of their appearance and of their layout.

I hope that this brief description of our work has made more tangible to you the content of the introduction to and body of the draft budget, in particular the fact that the rise in the 2006 budget is due in part to the Court's work in the field and in part to the work of the Court in session.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the Court's success lies on a very sensitive mix between high-quality judicial work and a functional institution which is able to work in a flexible, efficient and planned fashion. The Court, and each of its organs, is striving to maintain that delicate balance each day. As I am sure you are well aware, we need your support to achieve this objective and to breathe life into the words of the Statute, in the spirit that prevailed in Rome.

Medard Rwelamira, Director, Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties

Mr. President,

Mr. Prosecutor,

Mr. Registrar,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be with you in order to convey some of the most important developments regarding States and the Court. I will limit myself to some highlights since most of the information is reproduced in the information package you have received.

Recent ratifications

We welcome the recent ratifications to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court by Belize, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Lesotho, Liberia, Paraguay and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. These ratifications bring the total number of parties to 31.

Fourth session of the Assembly

Invitations to the fourth session of the Assembly, to be held in The Hague, from 28 November to 3 December 2005, and to the resumed session, scheduled in New York on 26 and 27 January 2006, were sent to States Parties, Observer States and invited States on 18 March 2005. In light of the work to be carried out by the Assembly, this fourth session will last a total of six days, up to and including Saturday, 3 December.

As regards the seating arrangements for the upcoming fourth session, they have been determined in accordance with the recommendation contained in decision ICC-ASP/1/Decision 4, of 3 September 2002. Accordingly, at a Bureau meeting held in New York on 16 June 2005, the President of the Assembly of States Parties, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al'Hussein, drew lots to determine the State Party that shall occupy the first desk during the fourth session of the

Assembly: Nigeria. Observer States and invited States shall occupy a second and third group of seats in alphabetical order behind States Parties.

A note on credentials and registration was sent to all States in the latter part of September 2005. Both registration forms and a useful Handbook for participants are available on the Internet website of the Court, in English and French. We encourage representatives to register as soon as possible in order to expedite the issuance of conference badges. Please note that for States Parties, we need to receive both the registration form for each individual member of the delegation, as well as the credentials.

As regards the provisional agenda for the fourth session and the resumed fourth session, the Secretariat mailed copies to States Parties on 28 September 2005. An annotated agenda is under preparation. We recall in this connection that many documents, including the proposed programme budget for 2006 and the recent report of the Committee on Budget and Finance, are available on the website. The main issues to be considered by the Assembly include, inter alia: the proposed programme budget for 2006; the arrears of States Parties; the New York Office; the draft Code of Professional Conduct for counsel; permanent premises; guidelines on gratis personnel; and the crime of aggression.

As regards the draft Regulations of the Trust Fund for Victims, we wish to note that the Bureau has yet to submit a report on the matter. Informal consultations among interested parties should take place in the coming weeks so as to facilitate submission by the Bureau of a report that would reflect the consensus of States Parties.

Elections

The two day resumed fourth session in New York will be devoted to the election of judges and of members of the Committee on Budget and Finance.

The nomination period for both judges and members of the CBF ran from 18 July to 9 October 2005. On 29 August, the Secretariat sent a note (ICC-ASP/4/SP/11) regarding the status of the nominations, halfway through the nomination period. In accordance with the relevant resolutions, the nomination period for judges has been extended twice so far. The first extension ended on 23 October and the second extension shall end on 6 November. Communications to that effect have been sent to States and posted on the Internet (first extension: ICC-ASP/4/SP/15 of 10 October; second extension: ICC-ASP/4/S/17 of 24 October 2005). Nominations received before or after the nomination period will not be considered.¹

For its part, the nomination period for members of the CBF closed on 9 October. The Secretariat received six nominations for the six positions available. Once the nomination period closes, the Secretariat will send a note to States Parties that includes all the relevant information regarding the nominations.

Bureau

As regards the election of the two Vice-Presidents and 18 members of the Bureau, consultations are taking place among regional groups and it is hoped that the precise composition of the new Bureau would be agreed to in advance of the opening of the fourth session of the Assembly.

Committee on Budget and Finance

¹ Detailed information on the candidates, as well as on a possible additional extension of the nomination period beyond 6 November, can be found at <http://www.icc-cpi.int>, Assembly of States Parties.

The Committee on Budget and Finance held its fifth session from 10-14 October 2005. The report of the Committee (ICC-ASP/4/27) was posted on the website last Friday, 21 October; hardcopies will be sent to States Parties, along with a second set of documents.

In its report, the CBF makes a series of recommendations to the Assembly. As regards the draft programme budget for 2006, the CBF recommends the approval of the budgetary proposals of Major Programmes I, IV and V, while recommending the approval of most, though not all the budgetary proposals, of Major Programmes II and III. The Committee also formulated recommendations on the approach regarding the long-term budgetary consequences of the pension scheme regulations for judges; on the proposal concerning the conditions of service and compensation of the Prosecutor and Deputy Prosecutors; and on the draft Code of Professional Conduct for counsel.

Furthermore, the Committee endorses the recommendations of the External Auditor; these relate to the areas of budgetary planning and control, transfers within programmes, accountability arrangements and the establishment of an audit committee with full independence. The Committee also recommends prioritizing the development of the Strategic Plan of the Court.

As regards the issue of permanent premises, the CBF noted that the Court would not be seeking definitive decisions by the Assembly at its fourth session, but that the Court was seeking:

- Recommendations on one of the three housing options;
- Comments on the financing issues;
- Awareness of the implications of the time schedule;
- Support for the necessary preparatory and planning work.

The CBF recommends that the Assembly consider the establishment of expert committees on buildings and finance to advise it.

In relation to the membership of the CBF, we note that Ms. Inna Šteinbuka (Latvia) resigned a few weeks ago following her appointment as Director of the Department of Economic and Regional

Statistics at EUROSTAT. Ms. Šteinbuka had been elected for a three year period that commenced on 21 April 2005. The Bureau would have to address the issue of the best means to fill the vacancy.

Bureau Working Groups

As regards The Hague Working Group of the Bureau, its fourth meeting is scheduled to take place next Wednesday, 2 November 2005, from 09.30 to 13.00, here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Invitations were sent to all States via e-mail last Friday, 21 October. The meeting would focus on the issue of permanent premises. Electronic versions of the relevant documents have been e-mailed to States and are also available on the website.

Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression

The Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression has established a “Virtual Working Group” to advance the discussions held at Princeton from 13-15 June 2005. The group is open to all interested States. Information on how to subscribe to the respective mailing list is contained in your information package.

ASP Extranet

On 2 September 2005, an ASP Extranet was established with the intention of providing States Parties expeditious access to documents, as well as to providing a forum for exchange of information between the Court and States Parties. This would enable States Parties to access important documentation in real time, at Embassies and UN Missions, as well as at Finance, Foreign and Justice ministries. We are pleased to note that States Parties are making frequent use of the ASP Extranet; so far in October we have registered 228 hits, a number which will surely increase as we approach the ASP. Over the long term, use of the ASP Extranet would reduce the costs associated with printing, storing and mailing hardcopies of documents for all concerned. Nonetheless, States Parties will still be able to receive hardcopies of all documents in the language of their choice.

We recall that most ASP documents are posted on the Internet website of the Court and that, in a subsidiary manner, some ASP documents would be posted on the ASP Extranet when, given their nature, the Committee on Budget and Finance wishes to review them before disseminating such documents to the public via the Internet.