



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GLOBAL COALITION CALLS FOR STATES TO ELECT THE MOST QUALIFIED OFFICIALS AND PROPERLY FUND INTERNATIONAL COURT**

*10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court To Open in New York*

**New York/The Hague, 7 December 2011**—States parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC) should demonstrate their commitment to international justice at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) in New York next week by electing only the most qualified candidates in ICC elections and by adopting a budget that is commensurate with the expanding demands on the Court, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court said today.

The ASP is meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 12 to 21 December 2011 to discuss and decide on a number of issues central to the ICC; in particular, the election of a new chief prosecutor, six judges and six members of the Committee on Budget and Finance, as well as the adoption of a budget for 2012.

In the past few years the ICC's membership has steadily grown and the Court's involvement in situations throughout the world expanded, demonstrating its ability to be a pivotal global force for peace and justice, and making this year's elections all the more critical. The elections represent the largest change in leadership in the ICC's history, and will likely shape the direction of not only the Court—but the Rome Statute system of justice as a whole—in the coming years.

"The International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute system have made important strides in the past year, with the opening of new investigations in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire, two new possible trials in Kenya and the anticipated conclusion of its first trial, as well as a new case in the Darfur, Sudan situation," said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition for the ICC. "It is imperative that these efforts towards international justice be built upon, and therefore states ought to provide the Court with the needed political and financial support."

In advance of the ASP, the Coalition—through its Campaign on ICC Elections—took a number of steps to ensure that the Court’s future is in the hands of highly qualified individuals elected through fair, transparent and merit-based processes. The Coalition established the Independent Panel on ICC Judicial Elections, which provided an independent and objective assessment of each candidate’s qualifications based on standards set out in the Rome Statute (the Panel’s assessments are its own and do not represent the views of the Coalition). Additionally, the Coalition met with judicial candidates, hosted public panels to allow them to introduce themselves to states and civil society, and asked candidates to complete questionnaires on their qualifications and backgrounds.

“The judges that are elected next week will significantly shape the Court’s future and its standing as a respected international judicial institution,” Pace said. “States should take that into account, objectively weigh each candidate’s qualifications, and cast their votes for those they deem the most highly qualified.”

The ASP is poised to discuss the establishment of its own committee to facilitate the election of the most qualified judicial candidates in future elections, a development welcomed by the Coalition.

The Coalition also met with the four potential prosecutorial nominees commended by the Search Committee for the position of ICC Prosecutor, a body established by the ASP to facilitate the election of the next prosecutor by consensus. States parties have since reached an informal agreement to nominate and elect Ms. Fatou Bensouda, the current ICC deputy prosecutor. The Coalition closely monitored the Search Committee process and successfully advocated for greater transparency and reporting by the Committee—including on gender and regional statistics—as well as encouraged the identification of potential candidates from all regions.

Because the ASP is meeting in an environment of global economic and financial uncertainty, the Court’s budget is likely to be an important topic of debate. A number of states are expected to push for a “zero-growth budget”—one that is exactly the same as the previous year’s budget—despite increasing demands on the Court. But with the winding down of several ad-hoc international tribunals and billions spent on military campaigns, states should take a “long view” of international justice, recognizing that investing in justice today can save money—and lives—tomorrow.

The Coalition also urges both states and the ICC to use the ASP as a venue to discuss the undertaking of reforms in order to achieve efficiencies that would streamline ICC processes and make them more cost-effective.

*For journalists wishing to cover the ASP, information on media accreditation is available at:*

*[http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/asp\\_docs/ASP10/ASP10-MediaGuidelines-ENG.pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/asp_docs/ASP10/ASP10-MediaGuidelines-ENG.pdf)*

*For more information on the 10th ASP, visit: <http://coalitionfortheicc.org/?mod=asp10>*

*For more information on ICC elections, visit: <http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/?mod=elections>*

**Background:** *The ICC is the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. 120 states have joined the Rome Statute, the Court’s founding treaty. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. There are currently seven active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Côte d’Ivoire; Darfur, the Sudan; Uganda, Kenya and Libya. The ICC has publicly issued 19 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The ICC prosecutor has also made public that it is examining eight situations on four continents: Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria and Palestine.*

*The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)*

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