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KRT plans rule changes

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THE Khmer Rouge tribunal is set to enact broad reforms to victim participation in the courtroom at its seventh plenary session, which convened on Tuesday.

“The current plenary session has a specific objective, which is to ... consolidate civil party participation in [court] proceedings,” plenary president Kong Srim said in his opening remarks.

Among the reforms likely to be approved is the establishment of one team of lead co-lawyers to represent all civil parties in the courtroom.

Ninety civil parties participated for the duration of the court’s first case. The court had received 4,004 civil party applications for Case 002 as of Friday. The number, plenary vice president Silvia Cartwright said, “greatly exceeds the capacity of the trial chamber to involve [civil parties] individually”.

Case 002 is set to try Democratic Kampuchea leaders Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, Ieng Thirith, Khieu Samphan and Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, the sole accused in the court’s first case.

Kong Srim also announced on Tuesday that the court’s pre-trial chamber will now be working in Cambodia on a full-time basis. The pretrial chamber rules on appeals and other procedural requests.

The pretrial chamber judges had previously met just a few times per year, and UN court spokesman Lars Olsen said their full-time schedule would expedite the tribunal’s proceedings, particularly given the complexity of the second case.

In Case 001, there was just one defendant, and he did not contest the charges against him. In Case 002, by contrast, “You have five defence teams ... all maintaining their different lines of interests, and that itself obviously means more filings of appeals,” Olsen said.

Also on Tuesday, the court swore in new international co-prosecutor Andrew Cayley and reserve co-prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian.