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| **Agenda item: PL 3** | **Document C25/4-E** |
| **16 May 2025** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2026 PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE |
| **Purpose**The purpose of this document is to update the Council on the status of preparations for the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26).**Action required by the Council**The Council is invited to **note** the current status of the preparations for PP-26, **approve** the ethical guidelines, and **consider** the proposed improvements.**Relevant link(s) with the Strategic Plan**Convening platforms.**Financial implications**Within the allocated budget 2024-2025 and foreseen budget 2026-2027.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References***Documents* [*PP-14/75*](http://www.itu.int/md/S14-PP-C-0075/en) *(B/75/1),* [*PP-14/DT/66*](https://www.itu.int/md/S14-PP-141020-TD-0066/en)*,* [*PP-14/161*](http://www.itu.int/md/S14-PP-C-0161/en)*,* [*PP-14/175 (Recommendation 8)*](http://www.itu.int/md/S14-PP-C-0175/en) *of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014); Council Documents* [*C15/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0004/en)*,* [*C15/99*](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0099/en)*,* [*C16/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0004/en) *and* [*C16/120*](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0120/en)*; Circular Letters* [*CL-16/48*](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-SG-CIR-0048/en) *and* [*CL-17/7*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-SG-CIR-0007/en)*; Document* [*CWG-FHR-7/10*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CLCWGFHRM7-C-0010/en)*; Council Documents* [*C17/INF/6*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0006/en)*,* [*C17/4(Rev.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0004/en)*,* [*C17/76(Rev.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0076/en)*,* [*C17/78(Rev.2)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0078/en)*,* [*C17/96*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0096/en)*,* [*C17/DL/8*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-170515-DL-0008/en)*,* [*C17/130*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0130/en)*,* [*C18/5*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0005/en)*,* [*C18/50*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0050/en) *and* [*C18/109*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0109/en)*; Documents* [*PP-18/31*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0031/en)*,* [*PP-18/63(Add.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0063/en) *(IAP/63A1/7, IAP/63A1/23),* [*PP-18/68(Rev.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0068/en) *(ARG/CAN/CTR/DOM/PRG/S/68R1/1),* [*PP-18/55(Add.5)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0055/en) *(AFCP/55A5/1),* [*PP-18/72(Add.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0072/en) *(ARB/72A1/38),* [*PP-18/DT/18(Rev.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-181029-TD-0018/en)*,* [*PP-18/155*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0155/en)*,* [*PP-18/173*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-PP-C-0173/en) *of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Dubai, 2018); Council Documents* [*C19/13*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0013/en) *and* [*C19/112*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0112/en)*; Circular Letter* [*CL-19/57*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-SG-CIR-0057/en)*; Council Documents* [*C20/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0004/en)*,* [*C20/INF/8*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-INF-0008/en)*,* [*C21/4(Rev.1)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0004/en) *and* [*C21/86*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0086/en)*; Letters* [*DM-21/1016*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-DM-CIR-01016/en) *and* [*DM-21/1017*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-DM-CIR-01017/en)*; Documents* [*PP-22/40*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0040/en)*, PP-22/68(Add.17) (*[*RCC/68A17/1*](https://www.itu.int/net4/proposals/PP22/Detail/Index?idProposal=55)*),* [*PP-22/189*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0189/en) *and* [*PP-22/206*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0206/en) *of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022); Council Documents* [*C23/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0004/en)*,* [*C23/84*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0084/en) *and* [*C23/107*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0107/en)*; Circular Letter* [*CL-24/11*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-SG-CIR-0011/en)*; Council Documents* [*C24/INF/13*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0013/en)*,* [*Decision 636 (C23-ADD/14)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0014/en)*,* [*C24/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0004/en)*,* [*C24/86*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0086/en) *and* [*C24/113*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0113/en)*.* |

# 1 Introduction

At the last Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) held in Romania, as per the revision of Resolution 77, it was decided to hold the next PP (PP-26) during the last quarter of 2026 in Doha, Qatar. At its 2023 additional session, the Council decided to hold PP-26 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center from Monday, 9 to Friday, 27 November 2026 ([Decision 636](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0014/en)).

Pursuant to No. 2 of the Convention, in the event that the precise place and exact dates of a PP have not been set by the preceding PP, they shall be fixed by the Council with the concurrence of the majority of the Member States. Further to the adoption of Decision 636, this decision was then confirmed following a consultation of all Member States ([CL-23/44](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-SG-CIR-0044/en) and [CL-23/53](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-SG-CIR-0053/en)).

# 2 Organization with the host country

Discussions between ITU and the Government of Qatar on the provisions of the Host Country Agreement are ongoing.

The ITU secretariat conducted a site visit from 4 to 8 November 2024 to meet with Host Country counterparts, examine the conference centre, infrastructure, and hotels, prepare the security and communication plans, address protocol issues, and commence the organization of logistics.

The ITU secretariat and the Host Country team in charge of the preparation of PP-26 have been holding monthly virtual meetings to exchange information, discuss all elements of the preparation of the event, and address pressing issues. In addition to the monthly meetings, regular bilateral meetings have been taking place with the Host Country to address specific areas of the organization of the event.

As announced at C24, the Host Country has identified Mr Ahmad Abdulla AlMuslemani as the PP-26 Chair-designate. Mr AlMuslemani has met the ITU management team and is actively preparing by participating in briefings with the secretariat as well as ITU official meetings.

# 3 Improvements as decided by C24

At the [third Plenary](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0113/en) of its 2024 session, further to discussion of the outcome of consultations on proposed improvements to the PP (Documents [C24/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0004/en) and [C24/86](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0086/en)), the Council decided to:

– request the secretariat to continue implementing the successful measures already taken at PP-22 on time management, delegate training, and improvement of processes and to work with the Host Country to implement any possible improvements at PP-26;

– invite the CWG-SFP to review the proposals made to improve the PP, specifically on streamlining resolutions and decisions and their financial implications, and to report back to Council-25; and

– invite Member States to consider sponsoring programmes that foster the participation of women and young people at the conference.

Delegate preparation

As requested by Member States during the consultation, the secretariat is exploring ways to improve delegate preparation, including training through the ITU Academy, online training/workshops/presentations, and leveraging the experience of former conference officers and delegates. Training could also be organized in conjunction with regional meetings. Topics such as PP objectives, negotiation techniques, procedures, timelines, delegates’ functions, chairing committees, resolution drafting, administrative processes and procedures, credentials, what to expect at the PP, election procedures, rules of procedure, newcomers’ session/induction video could be explored.

Regional groups and Member States interested in hosting training sessions and supporting the development of training programmes, as well as former chairs of committees willing to share their experience, are invited to contact the secretariat.

Regional and inter-regional preparations

Building on the successful experiences of PP-18 and PP-22 during which three informal inter-regional meetings were organized with the support of the secretariat, it is proposed to continue strengthening the inter-regional process with the goal of formalizing it as is the case for other ITU world conferences. The main aim is to improve the preparation in order to improve the time management plan and limit late-night and weekend working sessions during the conference.

Starting these preparations well in advance will allow the Chair-designate to engage regularly with regional groups and delegations and facilitate exchanges on subjects that will require more in-depth discussion.

It will allow: advanced agreement on potential chairs and vice-chairs of committees and eventual ad hoc/drafting groups; identification of areas of consensus and subjects which require more in-depth discussions; agreement upon working methods and time management for maximum efficiency; agreement upon the structure of the conference and allocation of documents; and discussion of streamlining and financial implications of resolutions and decisions (see also below).

It is proposed to improve the communication between the regional groups and the secretariat in advance of the conference and between the regions. RTOs are strongly invited to send to the secretariat as soon as possible the dates for their regional preparatory meetings if they have not yet done so. Each RTO could submit a report to the ITU secretariat after each preparatory meeting that would be circulated to all members for information. The secretariat will create and regularly update a dedicated page on the PP-26 website on regional preparations for the PP. RTOs are also invited to send to the secretariat the names of their focal point(s) per issue/resolution for PP to liaise with the secretariat.

As for PP-22, it is proposed to organize the inter-regional meetings in conjunction with other important ITU meetings. The proposal is to hold three or four hybrid meetings as follows:

– a meeting that could take place in conjunction with WTDC-25;

– a meeting in conjunction with C26 (28 April – 8 May 2026);

– a meeting in June or July 2026, possibly in conjunction with WTPF-26;

– a meeting after the deadline for submission of candidatures (no later than 23.59 on the 28th day prior to the conference, as per General Rule (GR) 170: 23.59 on 12 October 2026). Saudi Arabia has offered to host this last meeting, as was done in 2018 and 2022.

Shortening contributions

Efforts will be made to continue shortening the secretariat’s contributions to the conference.

Guidelines on drafting resolutions will be developed to explain the format of the Resolutions and the importance of the operative part which highlights the activities to be implemented by ITU and its membership.

Streamlining and financial implications of resolutions and decisions

Regarding the mapping exercise of resolutions and decisions aimed at harmonizing the outcomes of the Plenipotentiary Conference, a PP resolution mapping tool is being developed and was presented to the CWG-SFP. The group discussed the creation of non-mandatory guidelines for Member States to reference when reviewing and/or drafting resolutions and decisions for PP-26. These proposed guidelines are being presented to Council-25 in Document [C25/29](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0029/en) for consideration.

Regarding the financial implications of proposed resolutions and decisions, Member States recognized the helpfulness to assess the financial impact of proposals and the role of the Budget Control Committee. The CWG-FHR discussed this issue during both of its meetings and decided to invite the secretariat of the conferences and assemblies to provide transparent information on the possible financial implications of proposals submitted as early as possible to support discussion (see Document [C25/50](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0050/en)).

Participation of women and young people

Building on the outcomes of the 2022 Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22), the secretariat is working to strengthen the participation and leadership of women delegates in the Union’s work.

The aim is to reach at least 40 per cent of women's participation in the conference compared to 33 per cent at PP-22. The secretariat will invite Member States to support women's participation in their delegations and encourage delegations to be led by women.

The secretariat plans to provide capacity building, networking, and mentoring opportunities before and during PP-26 to help address disparities in representation.

Regional focal points for women are recommended as part of the PP-26 preparatory process, along with consultations involving participants from previous programmes and existing ITU Networks of Women.

In line with PP Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), which promotes youth mainstreaming across the ITU, plans are being developed to support delegates under 35 through capacity building and mentoring on PP processes. Efforts will also include enabling youth participation as public observers where appropriate and facilitating intergenerational dialogues on digital development. The inclusion of youth focal points in each region and the creation of a dedicated youth track at PP-26 are proposed to amplify young voices.

Member states interested in support initiatives aiming at strengthening the participation of women and young people are invited to contact the secretariat.

# 4 Digitalization

The secretariat will continue to improve processes for delegates, such as registration, room booking, protocol service, as well as digital tools. An ITU mobile app is under consideration.

As part of the ongoing transformation project, the secretariat is advancing several initiatives aimed at integrating AI technologies to optimize the preparatory process and enhance operational efficiencies. Additionally, the secretariat is actively learning from initiatives and projects at other organizations, specifically how to use AI to improve the efficiency of governing bodies’ processes

Considering the support expressed by Member States in the consultation, it is proposed to provide remote participation at the Plenary and committee level.

# 5 Greening the PP

The Host Country and the secretariat will continue the efforts undertaken at PP-22 and will endeavor to implement the Green UN event Check List.

Before the conference, the secretariat will provide comprehensive guidelines and resources to encourage delegates on how to support a green conference. Green electoral campaigns will be promoted, and practices such as refraining from printing campaign materials, distributing non-ecofriendly gifts, and sending non-recyclable parcels to the conference premises will be encouraged.

# 6 Ministerial participation

Further to the outcome of the consultation, it is proposed to continue to improve the roll-out of policy statements, including limiting speaking time to 3 minutes for Ministers and 2 minutes for other heads of delegations. The secretariat is also exploring other ways to enhance the participation of Ministers and other high-level delegates such as round-table discussions and dedicated sessions for Ministers in the first three days of the conference, as well as improving the services provided to assist in the organization of bilateral meetings.

# 7 Electoral process and ethical guidelines

Electoral process

PP-22 instructed the Council to examine the conduct of election campaigns and procedures for electing the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Directors of the Bureaux, and members of the Radio Regulations Board by the end of the 2024 session of the Council. At the request of C23, the secretariat conducted a consultation with Member States on this issue and other improvements; the results were reported to C24 and no further decision was taken on this issue.

Ethical guidelines

As the PP approaches, it is important to maintain a campaigning atmosphere which is fair and ethical. Therefore, considering the support that Member States expressed during the aforementioned consultation on improvements in 2024, it is proposed that the Council re-endorse the guidelines on “Ethical aspects of certain campaign activities” found in the Annex, as was done in 2017 and 2021.

# 8 Next steps

Internal organization

Internally, the Coordination Committee will establish the Doha Preparatory Group (DPG) with representatives from all Bureaux and the General Secretariat.

Invitations and call for proposals and candidatures

As per GR 5 and 6, the Secretary-General will send an invitation on behalf of the Government of Qatar one year before the date of opening of the conference.

Additionally, as per GR 40 and 168, immediately after the invitations have been sent, the Secretary-General will issue another letter inviting submission of contributions to the work of the conference as well as candidatures. Candidatures shall be published as conference documents as soon as they have been received by the Secretary-General (GR171).

Annex

Guidelines on “Ethical aspects of certain campaign activities”[[1]](#footnote-2)
prior to the Plenipotentiary Conference

The guidance provided in the document is based on the current framework and practice.[[2]](#footnote-3) It is relevant primarily to candidates with a current role in the Union —this includes appointed staff members as well as Elected Officials.

In addition to basic principles such as fairness, equity, transparency, good faith, dignity and mutual respect, individuals who must balance an existing role in the Union with a candidature should be particularly mindful of general principles in the following three key areas, described further below: (A) Use of Union resources; (B) Campaign activities around Union events; and (C) Engagement with Member State representatives.

# A) Use of Union resources

General principle

**– The resources of the Union may only be used for the purpose of delivering the organization’s mandate and advancing its best interests.**

Application: Candidates should be mindful not to use any Union resources or their current position —including personnel support, official travel and expense reimbursement, or any office resources— for the purpose of advancing their candidature. Doing so may provide those with access to such resources an undue advantage and allow them to improperly draw a personal benefit from resources that are intended for official use only.

For example:

– Official travel for a mission or event should not be undertaken or authorized if the traveller would not typically attend such event in the normal course of their official duties for ITU. Conversely, if a staff member in active service would typically attend an event in the course of their official duties, their candidature should not preclude attendance. For further guidance on conduct while at an official event or during a mission, see below.

– There should be no use of any Union symbols (i.e., the ITU flag and/or emblem or the logos for specific conferences arranged by ITU) in any materials to promote a candidacy. This may improperly create the appearance of an official endorsement of a candidate. The Ethics Office (ETO) is available to review draft materials and advise on any specific cases.

– ITU Computers, printers, communications channels —including, ITU social media accounts— and ITU letterhead should not be used for any campaign activities. A private email account (not on the ITU corporate system) should be used for correspondence relating to campaign activities. To the extent an individual is contacted on their ITU corporate account regarding their candidature, the correspondence should be forwarded to the private account, and further correspondence should occur through that channel.

– Candidates should not seek the support of ITU staff responsible for communications activities of the Union (or any other ITU staff) to prepare any promotional materials for their candidature. This includes requests for advice, pictures, assistance or feedback with any promotional materials.

# B) Campaign activities around Union events

General principle

**– Campaign-related activities should not interfere with the conduct of Union affairs at official events.**

Application: Union events —and the informal and social occasions that surround these events— are an opportunity to engage with Member State representatives. Some candidates may be in attendance at such events due to their official responsibilities with ITU. Others may be in attendance as they currently serve on the delegation of a Member State. Still others may not have an official reason to attend the event but wish to use the opportunity of stakeholders being convened in a single location.

The basic principles of fairness and equity suggest that candidates should have an equal opportunity to engage with Member State representatives when they are convening for such events. At the same time, it should be noted that the purpose of these events is to advance the Union’s work in a specific area, not to serve as a forum for campaigning. Thus, individuals should refrain from engaging with Member State representatives to promote their candidature during the course of a Union event. Informal or social occasions surrounding these events —not in the event space itself— may be used by candidates for campaign activities. Overall, candidates should refrain from behaviour that would suggest that the fullest care for Union affairs is being displaced by attention to campaign-related activities.

For example:

– *Actively* engaging Member State representatives to discuss a candidature during the course of official proceedings may detract from the ability to conclude official matters during that event. Thus, it would be best to avoid actively engaging Member State representatives on election issues during a Union event. Candidates who are approached during a Union event to discuss their candidacy should consider inviting the relevant party to discuss further outside of the official meetings. Preferably, this would be at a meeting scheduled after proceedings for the day have concluded rather than during a coffee or lunch break (which are frequently otherwise used to continue discussions on official matters).

– During ITU events, candidates are discouraged from using the event space for any campaign activities. This includes refraining from delivering any candidate campaign statements during event break sessions sponsored by the Member States advancing their candidacy. As noted above, candidates may engage in campaign activities at informal or social occasions (such as receptions hosted by Member States) outside of the ITU event space itself.

– Individuals travelling to the site of an event to promote their candidature—who would not otherwise attend the event in the normal course of their official duties—should do so while on leave from the Union. Furthermore, as noted above, costs for attendance at an event for such individuals should not be borne by the Union. Individuals are strongly encouraged to contact the ETO to inform of planned presence at an ITU event in a private capacity such that specific aspects of the relevant campaign activities can be discussed.

# C) Engagement with Member States

General principle

– **The fundamental values of independence, loyalty to the Union and impartiality should be respected even while coordinating a candidature with a Member State.**

Application: A candidature will inevitably involve some level of coordination with a Member State. This type of engagement with a Member State should not jeopardize the independence and impartiality of the individual as an international civil servants and loyalty to the Union. Respect for these principles requires scrupulous attention to the possible perception that behaviour taken in an official capacity will be viewed as reflecting the interests of a particular Member State and/or primarily intended to advance a candidature rather than serve the interests of the Union. There should be no suggestion that official acts on behalf of the Union —whether current or future— are, or will be, unduly influenced in exchange for support with a candidature.

For example:

– The coordination of a candidature should not involve sharing information with the Member State promoting the candidature that is not otherwise available to all Member States or not appropriate for public disclosure. This includes information related to the workplace performance of other candidates.

– Events organized by Member States to promote the candidature of an individual may involve a public speech by the candidate to outline their vision for the Union. There may also be written materials that are prepared in this regard. Those already serving the Union should endeavour to express their strictly personal views as candidate without calling into question their independence from Member States, impartiality, and loyalty to the Union. A message that would reasonably appear to be focused on criticizing the Union and/or any other candidates rather than presenting a positive vision would be inconsistent with the basic principles of good-faith, dignity, and mutual respect and may be contrary to the obligations of international civil servants to remain loyal to the Union and refrain from publicly airing grievances. In light also of provisions in the legal framework regulating outside activities (including statements to the press and submission of materials for publication which relate to the purpose, activities or interests of the Union), the ETO is available, on a confidential basis, to review in advance and advise on any public remarks or publication materials.

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1. The text of these guidelines is identical to the text of the guidelines adopted by the 2018 session of the Council and re-endorsed by 2021 session of the Council and published on the PP website. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In principle, the Ethics Office (ETO) considers that campaign activities of candidates should be limited until the steps to formalize a candidature have taken place. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)