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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-20/9** |
| **20 January 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| BUSINESS CONTINUITY MODALITIES FOR ITU MEETINGS 2028-2029 | |
| **Purpose**  Following the approval of Decision 640 on the new Varembé building project at ITU Council 2024 (Doc. [C24/132](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0132/en)), the Secretariat provided an update on progress in the implementation of the Decision at the nineteenth meeting of CWG-FHR (Doc. [CWGFHR19/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CWGFHR19-C-0010/en)). The update indicated that activities are on schedule in accordance with the project milestones provided in the annex to Decisions 640, which establishes 2028 as the initial year for the execution of the project.  This report, therefore, sets out business continuity options for holding ITU meetings in 2028 and 2029 in accordance with this project milestone.  Note: This document does not include any costs related to the temporary relocation of staff which may be necessary during the heavy construction period of the new Headquarters building.  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on financial and human resources is invited to **note** this report.  *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*  ***References***  [*CWG-FHR website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-fhr/Pages/default.aspx)*; Decision* [*640 (C24)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0132/en)*; CWG-FHR update* | |

Background

Current status of ITU meetings in Geneva

Approximately 60 ITU meetings each year are currently held in ITU headquarters (Popov, Room A and Room C in the Tower, Rooms H, L and K in Montbrillant, Rooms G and E in Varembé), supplemented by additional capacity in CICG/CCV.

These meetings comprise technical meetings for all sectors (Study Group and Working Party meetings), Advisory Group meetings, Council and Council Working Groups, AI for Good and WSIS.

Currently, a limited number of technical meetings are held outside Geneva, organized and hosted by a Member State or Sector Member on an ad hoc basis dependent on interest and relevance. Some technical meetings are also held entirely virtually.

The AI for Good Global Summit and WSIS+20 High-Level Event will be held in Palexpo in 2025.

New building project

Under current plans for the New Building Project, ITU meeting rooms will remain available until the end of 2027. Given the revised scope of the project, no disruption is anticipated in this period. In 2028, meeting rooms in the Tower, Montbrillant and Varembé will not be available due to construction work. As the construction schedule cannot be finalized before the selection of the architect and design team (April 2025) and finalization of planning (mid-2026), it should be assumed at this stage that these meeting rooms will remain unavailable throughout 2029.

CICG will be unavailable for use throughout 2028 as it is undergoing a renovation process currently planned for 2028. There is a possibility that this renovation may be pushed back to 2029. In addition, there is increased pressure on meeting spaces in international Geneva in this period as several major construction projects are taking place in parallel and demand is very high.

CICG will have limited availability at best in 2029 and there is therefore no guarantee of sufficient space or of the availability of the existing financial subsidy for ITU meetings which provides rooms free of rental charges. It should additionally be noted that any request for meeting room facilities in CICG must be made and confirmed a minimum of 18 months in advance of the date of the meeting.

This document does not include the potential cost of rental fees for meeting rooms at CICG/CCV to replace the missing Varembé rooms in 2030/31 (and in 2029 if necessary).

Holding all ITU technical meetings on an ad hoc basis in different host countries is not feasible at an operational or logistical level at this scale.

Business continuity modalities

The aim of this document is to present an overview of alternative meeting spaces for 2028 -2029 to ensure business continuity for ITU meetings, activities and membership.

Modality 1: Geneva

Given that CICG is not available in 2028 and is only available on a limited scale in 2029 due to the generally high demand for room spaces in international Geneva, the newly extended Palexpo conference centre offers the most viable alternative to hold ITU meetings within Geneva in 2028-2029.

Palexpo have provided a quote of 558 980 CHF for the rental of 12 meeting rooms on an exclusive basis, managed autonomously by ITU, for a period of 12 months. Additional rooms may be rented, subject to availability, with a discount of 40% on standard costs.

Additional costs must be calculated for technical services, security, cleaning and any change to room set up (from classroom to boardroom style, for example). Indicative costs for cleaning services provided by Palexpo are 260 CHF per day; cleaning services may be outsourced if required. Security services are costed at 58 CHF per hour and must be provided by one of Palexpo’s three official partners. These costings are based on 2024 rates and are indicative only.

Indicative costs of hosting all meetings in Palexpo for one year

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| Item | Cost (CHF)/year |
| Rental (12 meeting rooms) | 558 980 |
| Rental for additional rooms | 560 000 |
| Technical services & room set-up | 3 000 000 |
| Security | 600 000 |
| Cleaning | 60 000 |
| **Total** | **4 778 980** |

Palexpo requires any contract for 2028 to be signed by 31 December 2025 at the latest; and for 2029, by 31 December 2026 at the latest.

Following initial discussions on business continuity with the host state, Switzerland, if ITU seeks to hold meetings elsewhere in Geneva during the period of CICG renovation, Switzerland is prepared to consider providing financial support to ITU according to the resources available at that time. However, Switzerland cannot give any guarantee at this stage.

The advantages of continuing to hold all meetings in Geneva include excellence and centrality of location, delegate familiarity with Geneva, ease of access to ITU staff and expertise, provision of ITU support services and access to the wider UN network.

Modality 2: ITU Meeting Hubs

An initial call for expressions of interest in hosting physical ITU meetings during the construction period of the new ITU headquarters was sent to all Member States in October and November 2021 (Circular Letters [CL21/47 and CL21/47-Addendum](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-SG-CIR-0047/en)). This was followed by an information session at Council in July 2023 presenting detailed requirements for hosting ITU technical meetings (<https://council.itu.int/2023/en/programme/hosting-itu-meetings/>), whereby in line with Resolution 5 of the Plenipotentiary Conference and the respective Sector resolutions, the Host Country covers the cost of venue, facilities, technical services and running the Meetings Hub, in addition to ITU staff costs onsite.

Several Member States subsequently requested that the secretariat develop a more comprehensive proposal for an ITU Meetings Hub with a Member State hosting many or all ITU technical meetings in one venue for a period of one year. The expression of interest process remains open and ongoing, with concrete discussions continuing with China, Hungary and Qatar. Assessment of suitability for an ITU Meeting Hub is based on accessibility of location, the readiness of venues and facilities, proven experience with international events of this nature, visa facilitation and costs.

The Host Country benefits from global recognition as a major digital hub and international events organizer, access to industry expertise, status as a trusted ITU partner and extended real return on investment at local, regional and national levels, as well as international visitor traffic and spending in the local economy.

ITU membership benefits from expanded visibility, long-term business continuity for meetings, ease of planning, delegate familiarity with venue, established facilities and technical services and opportunities for ITU staff outside Geneva.

One Host Country may hold all 60 ITU technical meetings in one year; or meetings may be split between two or more Host Countries.

Modality 3: Remote meetings

Given the availability of platforms open to all and the familiarity of Member State delegates, ITU staff and technical support with online meetings following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is technically and practically feasible to hold fully virtual technical meetings. This option would provide a low-cost alternative for the limited period of time when meeting rooms in ITU headquarters are not available (2028-2029).

Combining modalities

A combination of the above modalities may also be considered, holding meetings in Palexpo, in Member State hosts and virtually dependent upon the nature and size of each individual meeting. This may be beneficial in terms of costs and flexibility. This approach would call for detailed planning within a relatively tight timeframe (given Palexpo contract deadlines) and may introduce additional complexities in communication, travel and technical support or additional costs (lack of economy of scale in Palexpo contract, for example).

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