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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-21/7** |
| **8 August 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General  |
| BIDDING PROCESS FOR HOSTING ITU CONFERENCES |
| **Purpose**Following the request of the Council in its June 2025 session that the secretariat propose a selection process for ITU conference host countries, this document provides an overview of existing practice in selecting host countries as a first step. It additionally includes an initial benchmarking of common practice in other UN-system organizations. Based on the guidance provided by CWG FHR, the secretariat will then develop a proposed selection process for the consideration of CWG-FHR in its January 2026 session. **Action required**The Council Working Group on financial and human resources is invited to **consider** this document and **provide** guidance on the way forward.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References** [*CWG-FHR website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-fhr/Pages/default.aspx)*; Council Document* [*C25/101*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0101/en)*.* |

Background

Following the presentation of Document [C25/101](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0101/en) on the location of the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027, the Council requested the secretariat to develop a formal, collaborative, and transparent bidding process for hosting future ITU conferences, and for selecting amongst multiple candidatures, to be presented to the Council Working Group on financial and human resources.

As the important first step in this process, this document sets out the current practice in the selection of host countries for statutory conferences and assemblies held outside ITU’s headquarters in Geneva.

Dates and locations of conferences and assemblies

In accordance with Article 1 (no. 2) and Article 3 (nos. 41 – 42) of the Convention, the precise location and dates of a conference or assembly may be fixed by the Plenipotentiary Conference. In the absence of such a decision, the Council shall determine the place and dates with the concurrence of a majority of Member States. The consultation with Member States to obtain this concurrence is conducted in accordance with Article 47 of the Convention.

This procedure applies whether the conference is held at the seat of the Union in Geneva, which is the default location in the absence of an inviting government (CS/Article 30 and GR 35), or is held elsewhere at the invitation of a Member State.

Submission of multiple candidatures

There is no codified formal process or specified time period for the submission of candidatures from Member States interested in hosting ITU conferences or assemblies. Any Member State may present its candidature for hosting a conference to the Plenipotentiary Conference or the Council.

In the event of multiple expressions of interest, Member States typically conduct informal discussions with a view to narrowing the number of candidatures, if possible, to a single candidate. As a matter of due diligence, and to assist the decision-maker (the Plenipotentiary Conference or the Council) in taking an informed decision, the secretariat conducts site visits to assess the suitability of proposed venues. This due diligence covers logistical capacity, security arrangements, ICT infrastructure, and other operational requirements. The Plenipotentiary Conference or the Council is then called upon to decide on the dates and location, as per the procedure mentioned above.

While no formal body exists for selecting among multiple bids, Resolution 144 (Rev. Busan, 2014) instructs the Secretary-General to prepare and the Council to adopt model host country agreements in advance of conferences to facilitate the work of potential host countries. To this effect, the Council endorsed a model host country agreement at the 2007 session of the Council (Document [C07/22(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S07-CL-C-0022/en)). This model, along with final signed agreements from previous conferences (which are published as conference documents) serve as key reference documents in terms of legal and operational expectations for the successful hosting of a conference or assembly.

Procedure for invitations to conferences and assemblies after a decision is taken

Once the location of a conference or assembly outside Geneva has been determined, a formal procedure and timeline for the issuance of invitations by the inviting government or the Secretary-General is set out in Chapter I of the General Rules of Conference (namely GR 5–22).

Current practice in other UN agencies

An initial benchmarking exercise aimed at understanding practices in the selection of Member State hosts for conferences held by sister UN agencies was carried out in July 2025. The responses of the seven organizations received to date are outlined below:

– The **World Bank** holds its Annual Meetings in a host country every three years with hosts selected via a transparent bidding process. After a call for bids, countries have six weeks to express interest and twelve more to submit full proposals, which are then. evaluated by experts from the Secretariat, based on defined logistical and technical criteria. When multiple countries compete, the final decision is made by vote by the Board of Governors.

– **CITES** typically holds its Conferences of the Parties (CoPs) and some committee meetings in host countries. While general rules exist under Resolution Conf. 19.1, there is no fully formalized process. Hosts are usually announced at the preceding CoP, and if no offers are received, Geneva is the default location. Host Country Agreements outline financial and logistical expectations. Competing bids are rare in recent years, with decisions made by consensus or vote at the CoP.

– **UN Women** does not hold its large conferences or governing body meetings in host countries.

– The **ILO** organizes its large meetings in Geneva but holds one regional meeting per region every four years in various host countries. A call for hosts is issued within each region, and proposals must be submitted 18 months in advance. Logistical and financial criteria are shared with potential hosts. If multiple countries are interested, the region decides, and the proposal is then approved by the ILO Governing Body.

– **UNHCR** holds its Executive Committee meetings and the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, in accordance with established rules and the Global Compact on Refugees. Hosting in other locations is not standard practice.

– The Conference of the Parties to **FAO** treaties occasionally meets in host countries. A call for offers is made ahead of each meeting, and the decision —based on whether a Host Country Agreement is reached— is made by the governing bodies. The default location remains Rome or Geneva when no offers are received. Competing offers are rare.

– **UNODC** holds conferences in host countries but does not follow a formal process or criteria, with selection made on a first-come, first-served basis.

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