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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-21/10** |
| **8 August 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| UPDATE ON BUSINESS CONTINUITY MODALITIES FOR ITU MEETINGS 2028-2029 | |
| **Purpose**  This report is submitted at the request of Council as an update to the document on the business continuity modalities for ITU meetings during the construction period of the new ITU headquarters building in 2028 (and potentially in 2029), presented to Council in its June 2025 session (Document [C25/60](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0060/en)). It provides additional information on the different options for holding ITU meetings in the period in question and their financial implications.  **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 Documents* [*C25/95*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0095/en)*,* [*C25/105*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0105/en)*,* [*C25/60*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0060/en)*,* [*C25/105*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0105/en) | |

# 1 Background

Approximately 60 to 65 meetings are held each year in ITU headquarters, supplemented by additional capacity in CICG/CCV. These meetings comprise statutory technical meetings (Study Groups and Working Parties) for all sectors (mandated by Union and sector constitutional documents with decision-making functions and strategical importance), as well as Advisory Group meetings, Council, and Council Working Groups.

The detailed list of meetings expected to be held in 2028, based on 2024 data and including the number and size of rooms, typical numbers of participants, and technical requirements, is available as part of the information for potential ITU Meetings Hub hosts [here](https://council.itu.int/2025/en/hosting-itu-meetings/).

Due to the construction of the new building within the ITU headquarters project, the ITU meeting rooms in the Tower and Varembé buildings will not be available as of 2028. Meeting rooms in the Montbrillant building may be available in 2028, subject to further analysis and confirmation. As the construction schedule cannot be confirmed before finalization of planning (mid-2026), it is assumed at this stage that meeting rooms in the Tower building will remain unavailable throughout 2029.

# 2 Business continuity modalities

The secretariat has explored the following options to ensure business continuity in the period in question:

Alternative venues in Geneva

CICG

Under the present FIPOI plans, CICG is unlikely to be available for use throughout 2028 due to renovation work currently planned to begin in 2028 and will have limited availability at best in 2029. Switzerland, ITU’s host country, remains committed to providing support to ITU during the period of CICG’s renovation within the limits of available resources, but cannot give firm guarantees at this stage.

Palexpo

Thenewly extended Palexpo conference centre offers an alternative venue to hold the majority of ITU meetings in one location in Geneva in 2028 (and 2029 if necessary). The indicative cost of hosting all meetings in Palexpo for one year is 4.6M CHF (as per the full breakdown of costs reported in Document [C25/60](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0060/en)), and the deadline to sign a contract with Palexpo at this preferential rate is 31 December 2025. Given current budget estimates and the lack of identified funds, the option of holding meetings in Palexpo is not feasible.

Other UN/international entities

There is increased pressure on meeting spaces in international Geneva in the period up to 2030 as several major construction projects are taking place in parallel, demand is high and few meeting rooms are available for external use.  A limited number of rooms may be available to rent in 2028 on an ad hoc basis in different venues such as WHO and UNOG, but this availability may only be confirmed six months in advance at best.

UNOG Tempus

As part of the ongoing renovation of its conference facilities, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) has built a temporary conference structure, Tempus, which may be available for lease by ITU in 2028. It can hold 600 participants in one room or be reconfigured into three rooms, each seating 200 participants, enabling it to hold some 13 ITU meetings throughout the year.

The cost for rental for one year in 2028, including reconfiguration into three rooms and dismantlement of the temporary structure, is estimated at 640 000 CHF. Additional costs for security are estimated at 4 000 CHF per day. Further costs for technical services would also apply.

Given its limited capacity and high costs, rental of the structure on a yearly basis does not provide a reasonable return on investment and cannot be considered a viable option. However, renting space in Tempus as one room (600 participants) on an ad hoc basis, as one of a selection of alternative venues in Geneva, may be considered.

Indicative overview of costs in other UN agencies on an ad hoc basis

The following table provides an indicative comparison of the cost of rental for a selected number of indicative meetings, noting that technical and services fees will also apply:

| **Meeting** | **Days** | **Rooms/ capacity** | **Costs  (CHF)** | **CICG** | **UNOG** | **Palexpo** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Council | 12 | 1×350, 1×150, 1×80, 2×30, 1×20 | Rental | 27 368 | 33 792 | 95 400 |
| Security | 10 220 | TBD | 14 099 |
| Technical | 50 000 | 44 000 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **87 588** | **TBD** | **TBD** |
| CWGs | 12 | 1×150, 1×80 | Rental | 21 560 | 14 784 | 56 760 |
| Security | 10 220 | TBD | 14 099 |
| Technical | 35 000 | 28 800 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **66 780** | **TBD** | **TBD** |
| TSAG | 5 | 1×200, 1×50, 1×30,1×20 | Rental | 14 050 | 7 920 | 26 400 |
| Security | 7 200 | TBD | 7 242 |
| Technical | 18 000 | 15 200 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **38 450** | **TBD** | **TBD** |
| BR WPs 5A-B-C | 12 | 1×200, 1×120, 1×80,1×50, 1×30 | Rental | 27 128 | 31 488 | 90 720 |
| Security | 10 220 | TBD | 14 099 |
| Technical | 75 000 | 101 600 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **112 348** | **TBD** | **TBD** |
| TSB SG17 | 12 | 1×200, 2×50, 1×30, 3×20, 3×15 | Rental | 23 720 | 63 360 | 102 240 |
| Security | 10 220 | TBD | 14 099 |
| Technical | 120 000 | 178 400 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **153 940** | **TBD** | **TBD** |
| BDT SGs1&2 | 12 | 1×250, 1×30 | Rental | 20 120 | 14 400 | 39 600 |
| Security | 10 220 | TBD | 14 099 |
| Technical | 30 000 | 44 000 | TBD |
| **Total:** | **60 340** | **TBD** | **TBD** |

Notes

(1) Weekends are included in the price where applicable

(2) Security includes cost of unarmed security contractors and cost of badging assistants

(3) UNOG rental and technical available in USD, converted here to CHF for purpose of comparison only at rate of 1 USD = 0.8 CHF. This cost may increase subject to exchange rates; UNOG rooms available for reservation at last minute

(4) Palexpo prices for Council and CWGs are estimated at 40 per cent discount from catalogue price

(5) WHO costings were not available at the time of submission of this report; an oral update will be provided if possible.

ITU Meetings Hub

The concept of the ITU Meetings Hub provides for a Host Country to cover the cost of venue, facilities, technical services and management of all ITU technical meetings for the entire period when the facility is required (or a year), in addition to ITU staff costs onsite, in line with Resolution 5 of the Plenipotentiary Conference and respective Sector resolutions.

Subsequent to an initial call for expressions of interest sent to all Member States in October and November 2021 (Circular Letters [CL-21/47 and CL-21/47-Addendum](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-SG-CIR-0047/en)) and information sessions at Council in July 2023 and at CWG-FHR in February 2025, (<https://council.itu.int/2025/en/hosting-itu-meetings/>), several Member States requested more comprehensive, tailored proposals with indicative costings.

Following the stated interest of several Member States at Council 2025 in further exploring this option, the secretariat will issue a circular letter by end of August 2025 for a Call for Proposals including full details of all requirements, with a deadline for replies by end of October 2025. 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 results of the Call for Proposals will be presented to the next session of CWG-FHR for its consideration.

Virtual 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 feasible to hold fully virtual technical meetings. However, current practice allows for fully virtual meetings to be held for up to 3 hours per day around 1200 p.m. Geneva time. This would impact upon the flexibility and length of technical meetings, which are typically held over 5 to 8 days. The difficulty of holding such meetings with participants in differing time zones was raised in discussions on this topic in Council 2025.

# 3 Conclusion

Given the lack of additional funds available within the financial plan or from extrabudgetary sources, as well as the deadline of 31 December 2025 for the contract to be signed at the preferential rates set out here, the option of holding the majority of ITU meetings in Palexpo is not considered viable at this stage.

A combination of meeting spaces in Palexpo, UNOG and other UN agencies in Geneva may be considered. However, the cost estimates provided by other organizations establish that renting meeting rooms on an ad hoc basis will lead to higher costs and less scope for efficiency in use of financial and human resources. Additionally, as availability cannot be guaranteed earlier than six months in advance, Union activities and delegate planning would be subject to uncertainty. Holding meetings on an ad hoc basis in Geneva therefore represents considerable financial, logistical and organizational challenges.

An ITU Meetings Hub (or Hubs) hosted by a Member State or a number of Member States may be considered as a viable option for hosting ITU meetings. The outcome of the call for proposals issued in August 2025 will be presented to CWG FHR in its January 2026 meeting for further consideration. As noted previously, hosting all ITU meetings fully virtually remains a fallback option but may require further guidance from Member States.

As the building project progresses, it will be possible to better understand the extent to which (and subject to which conditions) ITU headquarters premises may be used for meetings during the period of 2028-2029, dependent on levels of disturbance and more exact schedules for construction work.

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