



Executive Council

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Following consultations with members who have reacted to this item. The Secretary-General is submitting to the Council this revised version of the document.

Report of the Secretary-General

Part III: Administrative and statutory matters

(d) Guidelines on the selection of venues of Executive Council and General Assembly sessions

I. Background

1. Article 8(2) of the Statutes provides that the meetings of the Assembly and of the Council shall meet at the Headquarters of the Organization unless the respective organs decide otherwise.
2. Although the wording of the Statutes implies that meeting outside Headquarters should be the exception, in the practice of the Organization, meetings have hardly ever taken place in Madrid. Out of the nineteen meetings of the General Assembly held to date, only four were held in Spain (of which two were held in Madrid). Out of the ninety-three regular Council sessions held to date, only twenty-seven have been held at the Headquarters of the Organization.
3. The Executive Council at its sixteenth session, Rome 1981, [Decision CE/DEC/13(XVI)] noted that although the expenses incurred for the meetings of the organs of UNWTO held away from Headquarters are covered by the host States, such meetings entail additional charges for the Organization and increase the workload of the Secretariat staff. The decision was that “as a general rule the meetings of the Council and its subsidiary organs should be held at UNWTO Headquarters”, and the Council recommended that the Assembly also follow that practice.
4. In 2009, in its report on the “Review of management and administration in the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)” (JIU/REP/2009/1), the Joint Inspection Unit recommended to the General Assembly and to the Executive Council of UNWTO to “revisit the practice of holding its meetings outside Headquarters in the light of potential associated benefits and drawbacks”.
5. The Executive Council, through its decision CE/DEC/18(XCIII) adopted at its ninety-third session in Madrid, Spain, requested the Secretary-General “in collaboration with the Members of the Executive



Council, to establish guidelines regarding decisions on the venue of the Executive Council and the General Assembly meetings and to submit them to the 94th session of the Executive Council”.

6. Consequently, the Secretary-General presents in this document the established practice followed by the Organization in this regard and proposes a procedure for the selection of venues of Executive Council and General Assembly meetings.

II. Procedure for the selection of venues of the General Assembly meetings

7. In 1995, the General Assembly adopted by virtue of resolution A/RES/351(XI) a procedure for the selection of a venue for its meetings that has been consistently applied by the Organization. The Secretary-General, on the basis of this established practice, wishes to include some changes and proposes the following procedure for the selection of venues of General Assembly meetings:

- (a) States wishing to host the General Assembly should inform the Secretary-General four months before the Assembly that is required to decide on the venue of the session in question.
- (b) The Secretary-General communicates to the Member States of the Organization, in the month following the closing date for the reception of candidatures, the list of candidates to host the Assembly, requesting them to indicate if they grant their sponsorship to this or these candidatures. In order for a candidature to be eligible, it must receive the sponsorship of at least 25% of the Member States. Granting sponsorship does not mean a commitment to vote for such candidature. Consequently, a Member may sponsor several candidatures.
- (c) The Secretary-General will then transmit to the States concerned a set of standard requirements, including the basic provision that the host country shoulder the extra expenses involved (Rule 1, paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly) and indicating the conditions applicable to the necessary premises and equipment, as well as the transport and stay of the Secretariat staff, additional conference staff, experts, consultants and journalists. Mention will also be made of the transport of documentation and the services to be provided on the premises where the meetings will be held.
- (d) Before the General Assembly adopts the resolution concerning the place of its next session, the States concerned shall undertake in writing to observe the standard requirements mentioned above.
- (e) Two months before the General Assembly that is required to adopt the resolution concerning the place of its next meeting, the Secretary-General will transmit to the Member States the list of candidatures having received at least 25% sponsorship.
- (f) From among the candidatures having received 25% sponsorship the General Assembly will designate the host State of its next session and take note of the other candidatures in the order that it will determine.
- (g) All the conditions to be met for holding an Assembly session will be the subject of an agreement between the government of the host State and the Organization, which will spell

out the commitments of the State and be accompanied by a set of standard requirements.

- (h) The final date for the signature of the agreement between the parties is fixed at one year before the opening of the session in question.
- (i) Once this time-limit has passed, the Secretary-General reserves the right to propose to the Executive Council for decision another of the candidatures received. If the time-limit prevents the submission of the decision to the Council, the Secretary-General will take a decision and inform the Council accordingly as soon as possible.
- (j) All candidatures received will be circulated in the Assembly document under the relevant agenda item.

8. The Secretary-General proposes to extend to fifteen months the final date referred to in (h) above, since the one-year limit has proven in the practice to be too short to secure all the necessary preparations for the meeting of the Assembly.

9. The Secretariat has developed a template agreement for the hosting of a General Assembly meeting (attached as Annex I of this document) that establishes the standard requirements of the Organization in terms of Privileges and Immunities, logistic arrangements and security, among others. These conditions are primarily determined by Article 32 of the Statutes, by the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations of 1947 and its Annex XVIII, adopted by the seventeenth General Assembly through Resolution A/RES/545(XVII) and by Resolution A/RES/136(V) of the fifth General Assembly of the Organization. The acceptance by the candidate of the conditions laid out in this template agreement is a preliminary condition for the submission of a valid candidacy to host a General Assembly meeting, as provided in 7(c) and (d) above.

10. Despite the decision of the Executive Council [CE/DEC/13(XVI)] mentioned above, since 1981 only one meeting of the General Assembly took place at Headquarters, in 1987. In practice, the General Assembly has applied consistently the principle of regional geographic rotation in the selection of the venues for its meetings. This practice has contributed to promote the role of tourism and of the Organization all around the world.

11. UNWTO Assembly meetings are meetings of the supreme Governing Body of a specialized agency of the United Nations. As such, candidates to host the meetings are required to comply with the policy and requirements set by the United Nations for the hosting of UN events outside Headquarters.

III. Procedure for the selection of venues of the Executive Council meetings

12. The Executive Council at its third session, Tunis 1976, [Decision CE/DEC/21(III)] had decided that “the sessions at which the Council elects its officers shall be held at the Organization’s Headquarters”, establishing the need to hold one Executive Council per year at least at the Headquarters of the Organization, preferably the second meeting of the Executive Council of each year, where the officers are being elected.

13. In 2006, a note verbale from the Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation in Spain to the Secretariat recalling the importance of complying with Article 8(2) of the Statutes was transmitted to the Executive Council. The note verbale not only expressed the concern of the Host Country that the exception provided in Article 8(2) had become the general rule in practice, but also highlighted the need

to consider “effectiveness in management and economizing expenditures. Holding meetings of the governing organs away from the Headquarters is costly for the Organization as well as for the host countries, and generates problems in the organization and functioning of the governing organs.”

14. The Secretary-General proposes, for consistency purposes, that the Executive Council follow the practice of the General Assembly and therefore proposes the following guidelines for the selection of venues of the Executive Council:

- (a) The next Executive Council meeting following the one held immediately after the General Assembly must be held at the Headquarters of the Organization. It decides the places of the meetings of the Council up to the next General Assembly.
- (b) States wishing to host the Executive Council should inform the Secretary-General ninety days before the Executive Council that is required to decide on the venues of these forthcoming meetings. Such candidature must specify the ordinal number of the Executive Council meeting that the country wishes to host.
- (c) The Secretary-General communicates to the Member States of the Executive Council, in the month following the closing date for the reception of candidatures, the list of candidates to host the Executive Council, requesting them to indicate if they grant their sponsorship to this or these candidatures. In order for a candidature to be eligible, it must receive the sponsorship of at least 25% of the Full Members of the Executive Council. Granting sponsorship does not mean a commitment by the State to vote for such candidature. Consequently, a Member may sponsor several candidatures.
- (d) The Secretariat has developed a template agreement for the hosting of an Executive Council meeting (attached as Annex II of this document) that establishes the standard requirements of the Organization in terms of Privileges and Immunities, logistical arrangements and security, among others. These conditions are primarily determined by Article 32 of the Statutes, by the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations of 1947 and its Annex XVIII, adopted by the seventeenth General Assembly through resolution A/RES/545(XVII) and by resolution A/RES/136(V) of the fifth General Assembly of the Organization.
- (e) Candidates to host the meetings shall comply with the policy and requirements of the United Nations for the hosting of UN events outside Headquarters.
- (f) Before the Executive Council adopts the decision concerning the place of its next session, the States concerned shall undertake in writing to observe the standard requirements mentioned and the terms and conditions of the template agreement for the host of an Executive Council meeting mentioned above.
- (g) One month before the Executive Council session that is required to determine the venues of its forthcoming sessions, the Secretary-General will transmit to the Member States of the Executive Council the list of candidatures having received at least 25% sponsorship.
- (h) From among the candidatures having received 25% sponsorship the Executive Council will designate the host State of its next meeting and will assign the venues of the other meetings of the Executive Council up to the next General Assembly in the order that it will determine, taking into account the principle of regional geographic rotation.

- (i) All the conditions to be met for holding a Council session will be the subject of an agreement between the government of the host State and the Organization, which will spell out the commitments of the State and be accompanied by a set of standard requirements as provided for in the template agreement accepted by the candidate in accordance with (d) above.
- (j) The final date for the signature of the agreement between the parties is fixed at ninety days before the opening of the session in question.
- (k) Once this time-limit has passed, the candidate will lose the right of holding the meeting and the meeting of the Executive Council will take place at the Headquarters of the Organization.

15. There is no doubt that hosting meetings of the Executive Council outside Headquarters contributes to achieving international recognition of tourism and to a greater visibility of the Organization worldwide. However, this practice needs to be balanced with the requirements of Article 8(2) of the Statutes. In particular, the Secretary-General considers that when elections to recommend a nominee for the post of Secretary-General are to take place during the meeting of the Council, it should be held at the Headquarters of the Organization, in order to enhance the transparency and neutrality of the process.

16. In addition to the procedure described above, the Secretary-General proposes that when the Council meets to recommend to the General Assembly a nominee for appointment to the post of Secretary-General, the meeting of the Executive Council shall take place at the Headquarters of the Organization.

IV. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

17. The Executive Council is requested:
- (a) To take note of the report of the Secretary-General;
 - (b) To consider the need to balance the statutory requirements with a practice of geographical rotation that has contributed to promote the role of tourism and of the Organization around the world;
 - (c) To adopt the procedure described in this document for the selection of the venue of the Council meetings when the meeting does not take place at the Headquarters of the Organization; and
 - (d) To recommend to the General Assembly to continue applying the procedure described in this document for the selection of the venue of the Assembly meetings when the meeting does not take place at the Headquarters of the Organization.