



## General Assembly

Twentieth session

Victoria Falls, Zambia/Zimbabwe, 24-29 August 2013

Provisional agenda item 5(II)(i)

A/20/5(II)(i)

Madrid, 11 June 2013

Original: English

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Part II: Administrative and statutory matters

##### (i) Guidelines for the selection of venues for General Assembly sessions

#### I. Background

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1. Article 8(2) of the Statutes provides that the meetings of the Assembly and 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 meetings outside Headquarters should be the exception, in the practice of the Organization, meetings have hardly ever taken place in Madrid. Out of the twenty 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-six regular Council sessions held to date, only twenty-seven have been held at the Headquarters of the Organization.
3. The Executive Council, through its decision 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 on the venue of the Executive Council and the General Assembly meetings and to submit them to the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council".
4. The Secretary-General submitted a report to the ninety-fourth session of the Executive Council (document CE/94/3(III)(d) rev.1) on the practice followed by the Organization in the selection of venues of Executive Council and General Assembly sessions together with a proposal for Guidelines for the selection of venues of the Governing Bodies of the Organization.
5. The Secretary-General reminded the Council that 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 Governing Bodies of UNWTO to "revisit the practice of holding its meetings outside Headquarters in the light of potential associated benefits and drawbacks".
6. The Executive Council, through decision 11 (XCIV) adopted at its ninety-fourth session in Campeche, Mexico, endorsed the procedure described in document CE/94/3 (III)(d) rev. 1 for the selection of the venue of Council meetings to be implemented as of 2014. The procedure is aimed at



ensuring that at least one meeting of the Council every other year takes place at Headquarters, taking into consideration “the need to balance the statutory requirements with the practice of the geographical rotation of meetings that has contributed to promote the role of tourism and of UNWTO around the world”.

7. Further, the Executive Council recommended to the General Assembly to continue observing the established practice of geographical rotation and to consider the proposals made by the Secretary-General in document CE/94/3(III)(d) for the selection of venues of the General Assembly meetings.

8. The proposal of the Secretary-General for the selection of venues of the General Assembly sessions, as approved by the Executive Council is reproduced in this document for the consideration of the Assembly.

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

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9. In 1995, the General Assembly adopted by virtue of resolution 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, while considering some desired changes and the recommendation of the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council to the Assembly, 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 shall receive the sponsorship of at least 10% 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 10% sponsorship.

- (f) From among the candidatures having received 10% 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 fifteen months 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.

10. 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 545(XVII) and by resolution 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 9 (b) and (c) above.

11. 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.

12. 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. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly**

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13. The General Assembly is requested:

- (a) To welcome the new procedure adopted by the Executive Council for the selection of venues for its meetings that will ensure a better compliance with statutory requirements;
- (b) To recognize that the practice of geographical rotation of meetings of the General Assembly that has been consistently applied by the Organization has contributed greatly to promote the role of tourism and of UNWTO around the world; and
- (c) To adopt the procedure described in the document for the selection of venues of the General Assembly meetings.