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EXECUTIVE HANDBOOK FOR MEMBER STATES ON CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS AT HEADQUARTERS

Organization of conferences and meetings

2017

**Office of the Assistant Secretary General
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MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

I am immensely gratified to present the Executive Handbook for Member States on Conferences and Meetings at Headquarters, a guide to the services offered by the Department of Conferences and Meetings Management (**DCMM**). **DCMM**'s mission is to deliver efficient logistical and language services needed for successfully holding OAS meetings and conferences at headquarters.

Through its careful management of OAS meetings, **DCMM** helps to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between member states, OAS political organs, and institutions of the inter-American system, in line with the mandate enshrined in Article 1 of the OAS Charter to achieve an order of

peace and justice among member states, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary General relies on **DCMM** to provide member states, the specialized organizations, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system, and the General Secretariat's various subsidiary bodies, with technological infrastructure and conference services of the highest quality.

My hope is that this handbook will prove indispensable for preparing and holding meetings, so that member states can take the necessary decisions and steps to address the challenges and opportunities that arise in our Hemisphere. I would also like to wish all delegates a successful tour of duty and reiterate my team's full commitment to continue supporting and collaborating with every delegation in their important work for the benefit of our region.

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is primarily intended as a practical, user-friendly guide for delegates and OAS staff members on organizing meetings at OAS headquarters. It also seeks to better cater to delegates' needs by offering guidance for permanent missions and other areas on OAS practices, procedures, minimum requirements, and the services and facilities that the OAS provides for meetings. We hope that member states will find that this Handbook facilitates their coordination with the relevant General Secretariat offices for staging meetings and conferences.

The Handbook also briefly outlines the different steps that holding a conference or meeting at headquarters entails. It aims to simplify conference and meeting organization by providing those concerned with the information they need in that regard. To that end, the Handbook provides concise information on available logistical and language

services for conferences. It also lists some of the Organization's most important or typical meetings and events, as well as available technological resources. The handbook also includes the main conference service costs, in addition to different types of rooms, their capacity, and possible set-up options.

|| BACKGROUND AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

Under Article 112.d of the Organization's Charter, the OAS General Secretariat's (GS/OAS) functions are to "provide ... adequate secretariat services for the General Assembly and the other organs, and carry out their directives and assignments." The article goes on say that the GS/OAS should, "to the extent of its ability, provide services for the other meetings of the Organization."

The GS/OAS performs these tasks by relying on different departments, including the Department of Conferences and Meetings Management (**DCMM**), which is responsible for providing a range of services, including managing and organizing the logistics of most OAS meetings; language services; and technical and specialized coordination and administrative services for conferences and meetings at headquarters and in member states. **DCMM** also prepares technical information and budget

estimates for planning, scheduling, and organizing the Organization's meetings and conferences.

As noted above, to facilitate conferences and meetings, other GS/OAS departments and offices also provide complementary and specialized services within their respective areas of competence.

As regards substantive aspects of meetings or conferences, the GS/OAS technical areas, as well as the Secretariat to the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Permanent Council, and Subsidiary Organs, are responsible for setting the basic objectives and providing advice on the appropriate policy and procedural aspects, in keeping with their areas of competence. They are also responsible for extending the relevant invitations to all participants and for coordinating preparations and logistics with **DCMM**.

This Handbook covers only procedures, protocols, and tasks related to meetings that **DCMM** organizes at headquarters.



CONFERENCE AND MEETING SERVICES AT HEADQUARTERS

1.Types of conferences and meetings at headquarters

Meetings differ by category and requirements. Examples of these meetings are:

- General Assembly (GA)
- Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
- Meetings of the Permanent Council and of its committees and working groups
- Preparatory Committee of the GA
- Meetings of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)

- Protocolary meetings
- Meetings of the OAS secretariats
- Meetings of the specialized agencies, organizations, and conferences
- Meetings of subregional organizations

2. Conferences and meetings management and organization

DCMM provides the following services for conferences and meetings held at OAS headquarters:

A. Conferences and meetings management and organization services, which include:

- managing and updating the calendar of requests for services and room reservations;
- preparing host agreements, memorandums of understanding, and budget estimates; and
- planning, organizing, and coordinating logistical and technical services.

B. Language services, which include:

- interpretation;
- document translation; and
- document review.

C. Document printing services, which include:

- printing;
- photocopying;
- graphic design; and
- electronic document distribution for some technical areas.



A. Conferences and meetings management and organization services

GS/OAS has an automated conferences and meetings scheduling system: the OAS Calendar (OASCAL). **DCMM's** Conference Section manages and updates this system, which handles room reservations and specifies what services

are needed based on the requests made by the areas of the GS/OAS, technical secretariats, and delegations at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The system provides at-a-glance information about room availability, to facilitate booking and planning. Room reservation and service requests should be done through the OASCAL system. For additional assistance, please contact Maria Margarita Alvarez at the Conference Section (mmalvarez@oas.org or 202-370-0842).

It is important to note that submitting requests and reservations through OASCAL does not automatically guarantee their approval. The Conference Section sends a confirmation or denial of the request via OASCAL in order to avoid double bookings and accommodate member states' priorities.

Once a meeting or conference is confirmed, **DCMM** assigns a conference specialist, who should be treated as the only point of contact for requesting delegations or areas. The conference specialist will assist with determining services needs and with advising, budgeting, planning, organizing, coordinating, and managing the logistical,

administrative, and technical aspects of the meeting or conference before, during, and after the event.

The assigned conference specialist will also be responsible for organizing the services offered by **DCMM** with other areas of the GS/OAS, and will be exclusively in charge of coordinating all **DCMM** services. When necessary, the conference specialist will also prepare budget estimates for different GS/OAS areas and for organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system wishing to use OAS facilities for meetings or conferences.

In the case of conferences and meetings that require the hiring of external services providers (interpreters, translators, room assistants, etc.), the event organizers (member states, GS/OAS, or organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system) must confirm the meeting with the designated conference specialist at least 48 hours in advance on the day before the meeting.

Logistical and technical services provided by **DCMM** include:

Logistical and Technical Services

1. Room set-up

2. Audio system

- Microphone system
- Lapel microphones
- Wireless microphones

3. Audio recording¹

4. Interpretation and Translation

- Hiring and assignment of interpreters
- Internal or external document translation
- Hiring and assignment of translators (per day or per word)

¹ All meetings of the Permanent Council and of its committees, preparatory meetings, and ministerial meetings are recorded. Audio files are available to authorized GS/OAS staff and to all delegates. Other meetings are always recorded when so requested by the Committee Secretary or technical area.

5. Interpretation system

- Installation of interpretation system
- Installation and configuration of floor request system

6. Computer hardware and audiovisual equipment

- Projectors
- Laptops/PCs
- Printers
- Projector screens
- Widescreen TVs

7. Hiring and assignment of room staff

- Room assistants
- Control operators

8. Materials

- Coffee and tea service
- Notepads and pencils
- Nameplates or plaques

9. Videoconference service



B. Language services

The **DCMM** Language Section manages the interpretation, translation, and document review services. Language Section staff are not authorized to accept requests for such services directly from delegations or GS/OAS technical secretariats. All such requests must be channeled through the electronic Intelligent Document Management System (IDMS) or OASCAL.

Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation is provided in the four official languages of the OAS (Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese) at most meetings (General Assembly, Meeting of Consultation, Permanent Council, General Assembly or Permanent Council committees, etc.). At technical or working group meetings it is usually only provided in two or three languages, depending on the specific needs of the meeting.

Depending on the type of interpretation needed (multilingual or bidirectional), interpreters may work in six- or four-hour shifts per day. Shifts start to run from the time for which the interpreters were booked. A six-hour shift is divided into two three-hour segments. A six-hour shift is followed by a 30-minute grace period.

If a shift goes beyond four hours straight without a rest for the interpreters, it incurs overtime, which must be paid. Four-hour shifts apply to bidirectional interpreting with a 30-minute grace period. If a meeting runs beyond the times indicated above (including the grace period), the area requesting the service must authorize the hiring of an additional team of interpreters or the payment for overtime, as indicated in the table below:

Interpretation type	Interpreters per booth	Shift: \$550	Half-shift: \$275	Extra shift: \$550
Multilingual interpretation 4 languages	8 interpreters (2 interpreters per booth)	6:30 hours	Up to 2 hours	> 2:00 hours
Bidirectional interpretation 2 languages	2 interpreters	4:30 hours	Up to 2 hours	> 2:00 hours

Translation

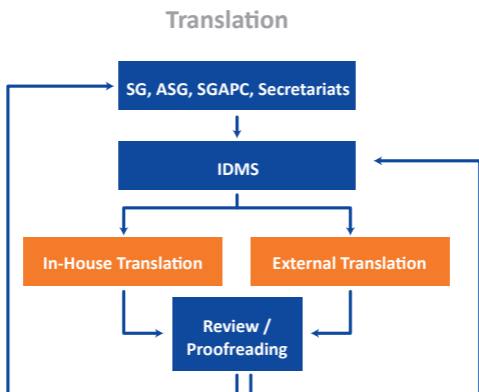
Delegations wishing to submit documents for consideration at a meeting or conference should send them sufficiently in advance of the meeting to the Secretary General, the Secretariat of the respective Council, or the technical secretariat of the meeting. These areas are responsible for initiating the translation process for those documents through the IDMS. The delivery deadline for a translation depends on the number of words, the languages involved, and the complexity of the subject matter, among other factors. A professional translator produces approximately 2,500 words per day on average.

The decision as to whether a document will be translated internally at GS/OAS or outsourced to external translators hired for that purpose will depend on the availability of GS/OAS staff.

Official documents for meetings of the Permanent Council and its committees are distributed in the Organization's four official languages. Original documents submitted in one of these four languages will be translated into the other three languages, unless otherwise specified. When documents are submitted in more than one language, the areas or

delegations must specify which is to be considered the original language. Working Group documents are submitted in two languages (English and Spanish) and will be translated and published in the four languages for the Committees' or the Permanent Council's use.

Delegations wishing to submit documents or texts for translation should send a digital version in Word format to the relevant committee secretary or technical secretariat. As noted above, delegations should submit documents for translation in good time. The following flowchart describes the translation process once a document has been submitted.



SGAPC: Secretariat to the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Permanent Council, and Subsidiary Organs



C. Document printing services

The **DCMM** Documents Section is the area responsible for graphic design, reproduction, and printing of documents for GS/OAS meetings and conferences, especially the General Assembly, Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and meetings of the Permanent Council and its committees and of other OAS bodies. The Documents Section also distributes documents electronically for some areas, such as CIFTA, CICTE, and MESICIC, among others. The Section also has a team of professional graphic designers and state-of-the-art technology for all types of printing jobs.

Delegations or OAS technical secretariats should request these services through the conference specialist assigned to the meeting.

3. Costs of conference and meeting services

The costs of **DCMM** services at one-, two-, and three-day meetings, as stipulated in resolution CP/RES. 982 (1797/11), are shown below:

Budget models 4 languages	Actual maximum costs CP/RES. 982
Headquarters	
1-day meeting	\$18,685
2-day meeting	\$33,558
3-day meeting	\$48,379
Away from headquarters	
1-day meeting	\$16,485
2-day meeting	\$29,158
3-day meeting	\$41,779






The costs for each service are shown below:
(Prices as of February 2018)

DCMM services	Cost
Multilingual Interpretation (per interpreter – 6 hours)	\$550.00
Bidirectional interpretation (per interpreter – 4 hours)	\$550.00
Document translation per day (per translator– 8 hours)	\$450.00
Document translation (per word)	\$0.19
Document review (per word)	\$0.095
Accreditation Supervisor (per day)	\$130.00 - \$200.00
Room assistants (per day)	\$130.00 - \$200.00
Control Operators (per day)	\$130.00 - \$200.00
Personnel overtime OAS/IBS (per hour)	\$38.00

4. Conference rooms

GS/OAS has the following rooms and types of set-up for the management and logistical organization of meetings and conferences:

Room Set-ups and Capacity of OAS/GS Conference and Meeting Rooms²

	U-Shape 	Boardroom 	Classroom 	Banquet / Reception 	Theater 
Main Building (MNB)					
Hall of the Americas	300	300	250	250	350
Guerrero Room	N/A	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Columbus Room	N/A	65	N/A	N/A	N/A
Miranda Room	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Simon Bolivar Room	200	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Martin Room	55	65	40	40	40
General Services Building (GSB)					
Padilha Vidal Room <small>(Can be divided in two areas)</small>	150	150	75	75	200
Gabriela Mistral Room	60	60	35	N/A	40
Ruben Dario Room	150	150	75	75	200
Sir Arthur Lewis Room-TL-76 <small>(exclusively for videoconference)</small>	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	50
Other building					
Art Museum of the Americas	N/A	40	N/A	75	N/A

² Food is not allowed in any of the conference rooms except the Hall of the Americas.

IV OTHER SERVICES

GS/OAS provides other meeting-related services, including:

Webcast

The Department of Press and Communications provides (live or on-demand) audio and video broadcasting service over the Internet for all Permanent Council and CIDI meetings, the Meeting of Consultation, and protocolary meetings.

Document distribution

The Office of the Secretariat to the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Permanent Council, and Subsidiary Organs distributes the documents for those meetings daily in electronic format.

V SECURITY

Each GS/OAS building has security services that support meetings with participant access control. All meeting participants and members of permanent missions and observer missions to the OAS are required to carry an ID card, which is issued by the Security Office located in the General Services Building (GSB).

Meetings and conferences running beyond 6:00 p.m. will incur additional charges for services such as security, air conditioning, electricity, etc.

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