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To: Union member countries

For information to:

Designated operators

Restricted unions

Berne, 12 July 2021

Reference: 2101(DPRM.URS)1101

Subject: 27th UPU Congress – Registration information and procedures and anticipated consequences of the potential adoption of certain Congress proposals concerning remote participation and accreditation of Union member country delegations

Dear Sir/Madam,

Through circular letter 2102(DPRM.URS)1066 of 7 June 2021, you were informed of the procedures for procuring the necessary powers (delegates' credentials) for taking part in the 27th UPU Congress, including, as appropriate, the right to speak, vote and sign the Acts of the Union.

By means of circular letter 2150(DPRM.URS)1080 of 17 June 2021, the International Bureau (IB) also informed you that it has now secured the required Internet-based voting platform to be used for the 27th Congress, subject to the necessary Congress decision that would allow remote participation by Union member countries.

This circular letter provides additional information on the procedures for registration, as well as the anticipated consequences of the potential adoption by Congress, at its first plenary session, of certain proposals to amend or suspend the Rules of Procedure of Congresses (RoPC) with regard to the remote participation and accreditation of Union member country delegations. For more detailed information, please see Council of Administration (CA) document CA 2021.1–Doc 12c.

Registration of Congress participants

The Event Management Platform (EMP) for the registration of all Congress participants can be accessed at events.upu.int. Further instructions on registering on the EMP are provided on the dedicated Congress page of the UPU website at www.upu.int/en/Universal-Postal-Union/About-UPU/Bodies/Congress.

Union member countries that have not previously notified the contact details of an “accreditor”, i.e. the focal point designated by a Union member country for the purposes of registration of their delegates (not to be confused with the relevant government official duly authorized to sign the credentials instrument on behalf of a Union member country) are required to complete the form in Annex 1 and return it to the IB by e-mail (CA.secretariat@upu.int) or fax (+41 31 350 31 10) **by 19 July 2021 at the latest**.

It should also be noted that UPU member countries that have previously notified the IB of the contact details of an “accreditor” for the approval of their delegate registrations for meetings of the Council of Administration and/or Postal Operations Council are not required to complete the form in Annex 1, since the IB will assume that such individuals remain the “accreditors” of these member countries; accordingly, the EMP will automatically contact these persons to seek their approval for the registration of the Congress delegates from these member countries.

However, member countries whose accreditor contact details have changed are kindly requested to inform the IB by completing the form in Annex 1 and returning it by e-mail (CA.secretariat@upu.int) or fax (+41 31 350 31 10) **by 19 July 2021 at the latest**.

Please also note that, specifically for the purposes of the 27th Congress, such “accreditors” are expected to validate the delegate registrations referred to above in strict accordance with articles 2 and 3 of the RoPC.

Visas

Delegates requiring a visa to enter Cote d'Ivoire are invited to refer to the host country's Congress web page at upuabidjan2020.gouv.ci.

Importance of registering all Union member country delegates with credentials

Please note that the authorization of individual UPU member country delegates to take part in the 27th Congress, i.e. to speak, vote and/or sign the Acts of the Union at Congress, whether through the electronic platform or in person (also bearing in mind the CA proposal 19.3.1 mentioned below), will be based on their respective powers as outlined in the credentials instrument of their member country, which must be deposited in due and proper form at the opening of Congress (or as soon as possible thereafter).

It is therefore imperative that **all** Union member country delegates expected to take part in the 27th Congress, i.e. speak, vote and/or sign the Acts of the Union (including heads of delegation, deputy heads of delegation, other delegates and attached officials) be duly accredited and listed in the relevant credentials instrument to be deposited with the Credentials Committee and its secretariat by the member country concerned.

Critically, access to voting through the electronic platform will be made available only to those delegates entitled to vote on behalf of a Union member country.

In addition, the planned training workshops on the electronic voting platform will be accessible only to those delegates who are so accredited and registered for the Congress.

Number of Union member country delegates and observer representatives at Congress

There will be no specific proposal seeking to legally limit the number of member country delegates and observer representatives in attendance at Congress.

Nevertheless, a number of logistical/health constraints may apply at Congress depending on the actual pandemic situation at the time (potentially including social distancing and other measures).

Accordingly, given current meeting hall configurations, this means that the number of physical seats available to each member country and observer will be subject to physical limitations, currently defined as two delegates per member country and one delegate per observer in the plenary hall.

There will be secondary rooms made available for seating delegates attending in person, but these will likewise be subject to the applicable logistical/health constraints in place at the time of Congress.

Potential implementation of hybrid (physical and remote) attendance at the 27th Congress

Article 101.1 of the General Regulations states that “the representatives of member countries shall meet in Congress not later than four years after the end of the year during which the preceding Congress took place”. Moreover, article 101.3 provides for the designation of the country “in which the next Congress will be held”. In other words, and similarly to what is currently provided for in the same General Regulations for the convening of council sessions, the current UPU legal framework precludes the holding of purely “virtual” meetings of Congress.¹

Nonetheless, Congress may agree to adjust the RoPC in order to allow for its proceedings to take place in a “hybrid” form which would combine the requirement for physical convening of the Congress with the exceptional possibility of remote participation by representatives of Union member countries and observers (similar to what has been adopted for the two UPU councils since October 2020).

¹ The legal constraints referred to herein were previously acknowledged by Istanbul Congress resolution C 18/2016 (concerning the possibility of broadcasting council sessions).

However, it must be stressed that, *prior* to the implementation of any such hybrid solution, Congress itself is required to convene physically in order to consider and, as the case may be, adopt the necessary adjustments to the RoPC with a view to allowing Congress to continue its activities in a hybrid manner. A list of these amendments will soon be published as part of the agenda of the first Congress plenary session scheduled for 9 August 2021.

Bearing the above information in mind, should they wish to vote on the first day of Congress, or to allow for the possibility that Congress does not approve the changes to the RoPC necessary to allow for hybrid attendance, Union member countries are strongly urged to consider including in their credentials instruments diplomats (or other government officials) stationed in the host country of the Congress, so that these delegates may also exercise the right to speak and to vote on behalf of their respective countries.

Alternatively, Union member countries may arrange for a proxy to be lodged with another member country physically attending the 27th Congress (please see circular letter 2102(DPRM.URS)1066 of 7 June 2021). It must be borne in mind that, as per article 3.4 of the RoPC, proxies are subject to the same formal requirements as are applied to credentials instruments.

Noteworthy changes in the event that the 27th Congress approves CA proposal 19.3.1

In addition to the possibility of hybrid participation, Congress will consider a CA proposal which will change the effects of delegates' credentials lacking due and proper form at the beginning of Congress. At the 2020.1 CA session, the CA endorsed the submission of Congress proposal 19.3.1, whereby article 3 of the RoPC would be amended with a view to further rationalizing and streamlining the accreditation procedures for Congress, particularly to allow the submission of credentials by electronic means, and also to remove the exceptional possibility (currently provided in article 3.3 of the RoPC) for delegates to take part in Congress (i.e. to speak and/or vote) without proper credentials.

If this proposal is approved by Congress at its physical meeting on the first day of Congress, the submission by electronic means of credentials and proxies drawn up in due and proper form will be permitted; at the same time, from that moment onwards (as decided by Congress), **delegations without proper credentials will not be able to vote at Congress until their respective credentials are provided in due and proper form.**

Accordingly, it is imperative that Union member countries submit their draft credentials instruments to the IB for confirmation that the instruments are correctly prepared as soon as possible, with a view to having the finalized and executed instruments physically deposited in original form at the opening of Congress (or, alternatively, provided to the IB **no later than 4 August 2021**; please contact the Credentials Committee secretariat at credentials@upu.int to discuss this option).

The IB will continue to work closely with the Ivorian Government to help ensure the success of the 27th Congress.

Yours faithfully,



Bishar A. Hussein
Director General



27th CONGRESS

Form to be completed by the relevant government entity of the UPU member country concerned (e.g. ministry, department, embassy or permanent mission to the United Nations and other international organizations, etc.) **if they have not previously notified** the contact details of an accreditor for the purposes of the approval of their delegates seeking to register on the Event Management Platform (EMP) for Congress. Please also complete this form **if the contact details of the member country accreditor have changed**.

Please return the completed form to the International Bureau by e-mail (ca.secretariat@upu.int) or fax (+41 31 350 31 10) **by 19 July 2021 at the latest**.

Full name and title of person completing this form		<input type="checkbox"/> Ms	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr
Full name of entity			
Position/title			
Address			
Tel.		Fax	
E-mail			
Date		Signature	

Focal point (ministry, regulator, designated operator, head office of observers, etc.) responsible for notifying the International Bureau of delegates' names in advance of each Congress, CA and POC session:

Full name and title of individual		<input type="checkbox"/> Ms	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr
Full name of accreditor entity			
Address			
Tel.		Fax	
E-mail			