

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Checklist for Organising Side Events at UN

This document provides guidance and a checklist on the preparation and delivery for Side Events, including a Q&A, at the Human Rights Council.

Before the side-event

Communications and publicity

- ☐ Share event on website, Facebook, social media and email other NGOs and delegations (if wanted).
- ☐ Make sure around 50 copies of your organization recent publications are enough and ready to be distributed at the event.
- ☐ Make sure camera, video camera and stuff to webcast is ready and charged to use.
- ☐ Check with fundraising department on donor specific requirements, if applicable.

Preparation

- ☐ **Room**
 - A person responsible should book the room directly with the UN unless a co-sponsor does it.
- ☐ **Food and Beverages**
 - If required, fill the catering form (depending if breakfast, lunch, just tea/coffee, desserts) and send it to onu@dsr.ch once the **person responsible for the event has signed it**.
 - Ask the finance department for the money in advance so it can be prepared. The service must be paid in cash.
- ☐ **Interpretation**
 - Find (2) interpreters per language, if possible.
 - When possible contact them by phone instead of by emails.
 - Email interpreters as much information about the event as possible (e-flyer, statements, reports, previously prepared questions, etc.).
- ☐ **For the panel**
 - Prepare name cards of the panelists, including the chairperson (name and organization of all). Print them in glossy/tick paper, landscape oriented A4.
 - Print (5) attendance lists.
 - Print some “reserved” signs to block seats and enable webcasting.

The day of the side-event

- ☐ Pick up cash from your finance department before leaving the office and then take the money to the “delegates lounge” or to “the Serpentine”, depending on the building where the event is held. Always ask for the receipt and keep it.
- ☐ Be at the room at least 30 minutes before the event to do the setting up.

- ☐ **Uncover the food and beverages once it is delivered so guests can take food before the event.**
- ☐ Prepare your organisation banners in both sides of the panel and poster outside of the room if needed.
- ☐ Arrange the panel with name cards, bottles of water and cups, pen and paper for each speaker.
- ☐ Arrange your organisation publications in the table outside the room and welcome guests to take them.
- ☐ Put reserved signs in the seats that should be blocked for webcasting purposes.
- ☐ Place attendance lists in every row so guests can sign in during the event (if possible).
- ☐ **Share the hashtag of the side-event so guests can tweet about it.**
- ☐ Make sure someone is tweeting from your organisation, notes are taken and event webcasted if possible.
- ☐ **Take photographs** of the event, if possible at least one of every panelist and the audience, but make sure you announce to the audience that you're recording/documenting the event, and give people the possibility to contact you if there are any privacy or security concern.

After the side-event

- ☐ Thank panelists and do proper acknowledgments.
- ☐ Collect the attendance lists and bring them to the office.
- ☐ Bring back to the office all the publications left, the banners and other organisation equipment.

Additional Q&A

How do I go about booking a room?

If you want to organise the event in your own name you need to request a room through OHCHR.

A few weeks (8-10 weeks) before a given session of the Human Rights Council, the generic page for NGO participation¹ is updated so that the link to the form in the [NGOREG](#) platform is relevant to the session.² Once the link is live, there is usually a 2-3 week window within which NGOs in consultative Status with ECOSOC can request rooms, which will be allocated by the civil society section in OHCHR.

Note that demand for rooms usually exceeds available rooms by a factor 5-10, and thus doing a joint request with other (well-known) NGOs and having important speakers such as Special Procedures mandate holders confirmed will help you get a better slot.

If you would like to organise an event which includes a State as a co-sponsor, you may ask its permanent mission in Geneva to book the room, which is easier and usually faces fewer constraints in terms of the availability, but the event will be officially 'organised' by the State in question.

How do we book catering ? - i.e. is this only possible from the canteen/cafe or from an outside caterer?

Check above: Preparation- Food and Beverages section.

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NgoParticipation.aspx>

² You may already look at the form for previous session before the next session form is live, so as to see what information you should provide. Note that even if some speakers or co-sponsoring organisations are to be confirmed you can request a room.

Unfortunately, the catering has to be ordered with the UN catering company, no external companies are allowed to provide service in the UN and one cannot bring food/beverages from outside.

Is tea/coffee included in a room booking, or would we need to arrange this separately?

Check above: Preparation- Food and Beverages section. Nothing is included with the booking of the room; beverages have to be ordered separately to the UN catering company.

Is audio/visual equipment provided in the room or would this need to be arranged separately?

Check above: Communications and publicity.

Most rooms have screens and projector available for use, so just a laptop is needed in order to make a power point or Prezi presentation for instance; one just has to make sure he/she knows how to use the equipment beforehand or get some help from UN staff. Webcasting and photography have to be arranged separately by the organiser, and should be announced to the OHCHR when booking the room.

What is the best way to send out invites and who should we invite (i.e. NGOs, diplomats etc)?

Check above: Communications and publicity.

ISHR recommends:

- 1** Doing a digital invitation and sending it to a contact list (which should include fellow NGOs, missions, diplomats, donors, etc....) two weeks in advance and then sending a reminder 2-3 days before the event.
- 2** Publishing the event in a webpage, social media or in the newsletter if the organisation has one.
- 3** Printing handouts of the invitation and give them around during Council period (around the coffee places, in interactions with diplomats etc.). Note that handing out information (and displaying information) in the Human Rights Council plenary is not allowed, although you may always hand a diplomat an invitation when asked.