World Health Assembly Official Side events 18-22 May 2026

SIDE-EVENTS – GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATIONS

Background

The Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly will be convened in Geneva from 18-23 May 2026. Due to ongoing renovations at the Palais des Nations, the Health Assembly will be co-located at the Palais and at the WHO Headquarters. The WHO Secretariat invited Member States, Observers and non-State actors in Official Relations with the WHO, to submit proposals to organize a limited number of Official Side Events during the Health Assembly.

Format

The Official Side Events will take place from Monday 18 May - Friday 22 May 2026 at the World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva.

To ensure a balanced and equitable distribution of events, more than 60 slots are attributed among Member States, Observers and non-State Actors, depending on room availability and confirmations.

Scheduled time slots are:

- Lunchtime: 13:00-14:20
- Evening: 18:00-19:30

All side events held at the Palais des Nations are in-person only (no virtual speakers or panelists, no remote active participation). Events scheduled at the WHO Headquarters may include a virtual component, if requested and paid for by the organizer.

Side events may be conducted in any of the six official WHO languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese). Additional languages may be considered, if available. Interpretation may only be organized through the Secretariat and it will be paid for by side event organizers (more information on cost-recovery further below).

Cost-recovery mechanism for side events

Cost-recovery mechanism for side events WHO will recover from the organizers the following costs incurred in the context of the organization and hosting of side events:

Mandatory fees:

- A standard processing fee of CHF 500 will apply to each selected event.
- Room costs for events may range from CHF 1500 to CHF 2500 at the WHO Headquarters and from CHF 3000 at the Palais des Nations and will depend on the size of the room. This rate will include the costs of the room, audiovisual support, shuttle services from WHO to the Palais des Nations, and a package of special badges. Details are provided in the application form.

Optional fees (upon expression of interest in the application form):

- Hybrid events may be held at the WHO Headquarters for a package fee of CHF 600 (i.e. zoom connection and integrated captioning).
- Interpretation fees are detailed in the application form.

- Webstreaming is available for a package fee of CHF 1000. A player will be provided to the organizer ahead of the event for live webstreaming on their platform. It will not be played on the WHO website. A recording of the event will be sent to the organizer after the event. Webstreaming will only be available at the WHO Headquarters.
- Catering is a supplemental service to be arranged separately with the catering agency, upon confirmation of an event slot.

The services of a **photographer** may be made available on a first-come first-served basis for a standard fee of CHF 200. The photographer will be allocated for a thirty-minute slot.

- Once an application has been accepted by the Secretariat, an invoice will be issued as soon as possible to the event organizer, requesting confirmation and advance payment of the full package fee to WHO within a given time window. Considering capacity constraints at the WHO Secretariat, the process to issue the invoices will be gradual.

- **Cost-sharing** is possible among co-organizers. Whilst bills can be split, WHO Secretariat should be informed prior to establishing the invoice, and it can be split among a maximum of two entities. Further splitting shall be managed among co-organizers. This is outlined in the application form, and once the organizers sign it, they are confirming that this is also their understanding. WHO is unable to process payments by credit card.

Selection and confirmation process

- Following the selection of the proposals, the Secretariat assigns a meeting room and a timeslot for each approved event, looking for a thematic and regional balance. The Secretariat does not engage in swapping slots. Nonetheless, organizers of different events interested in swapping slots may contact the Secretariat to confirm that a swapping arrangement is acceptable, copying the organizers of both events once mutual agreement is reached. Of note, it may not be possible to swap events with interpretation slots. This should be done at the latest by Friday 1 May 2026. In such a case, the Secretariat will update the schedule.
- The selected Official Side Events will be listed on the GBS webpage and included in the official schedule of events for the World Health Assembly that will be posted on the Governing Bodies website (in English only).
- Interpretation slots are confirmed by the Secretariat after confirmation by the organizers of their intention to agreement to take the event date and slot.
- Continued interest in holding an Official Side Event is required after receiving the invoice by paying the required fee within five working days and confirming in writing to sarkisr@who.int that the payment has been made. If not done, the Secretariat may reallocate the slot to another event.

Role played by WHO

The WHO Secretariat is not a co-organizer of Official Side Events. However, if requested by Member States and pending the availability of capacity, the Secretariat provides technical or scientific advice relating to the area of focus of the event.

The WHO Secretariat cannot be involved in financing the organization of side events either at the Palais or outside of the Palais des Nations nor pay for travel expenses of speakers invited to side events.

Responsibilities for Side Event organizers

Side Event organizers are responsible for covering the fee for the room, additional services and interpretation, which is payable to the WHO Secretariat, and excludes catering.

- After confirmation of the event and payment of the fee, the organizers may get in touch with the catering services if they require catering services for their event.
- If your event is located at WHO Headquarters, please arrange directly with restaurant.WHO@sv-group.ch or by phone +41 75 432 01 24 or +41 79 568 16 27.
- For events located at the Palais des Nations, organizers should contact directly Eldora, the catering company at UNOG, by email at onu@eldora.ch or by phone at +41 22 917 56 19.
- The use of external catering services is not supported by WHO. The access to UNOG for any external caterer will have to be organized directly by the organizers with UNOG security. In such circumstances, organizers will be responsible for the set-up of the catering and ensure cleaning afterwards.
- All interpretation services at the WHA Side Events will be provided by WHO. It will not be possible to cancel interpretation services past confirmation: based on the request made in the application forms, WHO has booked interpretation teams and will be incurring the costs in case of cancellation.
- The Side Event co-organizers' responsibilities include – but are not limited to – the invitation and travel arrangements for speakers including visa and security clearance, as needed; the "run of show", checking the registration status of speakers and ensuring the moderation of the session/event, including strict time management.
- It is the responsibility of organizers to ensure that events start and end on time.
- Side Event organizers are responsible for promoting their events through their respective online and social media channels.
- It is the responsibility of the organizers of Side Events to ensure that all organizers, speakers, attendees and supporting staff are duly registered to attend the World Health Assembly.
- The WHO Secretariat will be in touch to provide a form to be informed of room set-up wishes of the organizers (e.g. nameplates). Organizers will be requested to provide their response to this form, otherwise the Secretariat will not be in a position to prepare at the last minute.
- Side Event organizers are not permitted to set up displays or put posters on meeting room walls during the event or at any other time during the Health Assembly to avoid removal and loss of their materials. **Roll-up banners and flyers may be made available by the organizers and should be removed promptly at the end of the event.**

Outreach

- The list of Official Side Events will include the titles, organizing partners, brief description, focal point details and webpage link for each event, as well as the room. It will be updated until Tuesday 12 May 2026. During the Health Assembly, the list of official meetings of the WHA78 will publish the title, organizing partners and room for the event. Organizers are welcome to set up an event webpage where interested participants find more information regarding their event. It is the responsibility of the organizers to provide additional information on their own webpage.
- Organizers of Official Side Events may refer to WHA79 for outreach purposes. **They may use the official WHA79 Official Side Event header/banner that is provided by the WHO Secretariat on invitation letters and documentation relating to the side event. However, WHO is not a co-organizer of Official Side Events and is not involved in the financing of such side events.**
- **Other side events (held in offsite locations) will not be included in the list of official meetings.** Organizers of such events are welcome to contact available platforms to advertise their events.

Guide for Delegates

You can find more information on the WHA Guide for delegates: Guide for delegates to the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly

Registration for side event participation

- Access to side events is in principle on a first come first served basis upon entrance in the room.

Types of registration

1. **WHA-registered participants (already accredited)**

- **Entities invited to the Health Assembly include Member States, Observers, United Nations and other IGOs in Official Relations with the WHO,** non-State actors in Official Relations with the WHO.
- All delegates registered for the Health Assembly will receive a badge granting them access to UNOG and WHO premises during the official event dates, from May 18-23, 2026.
- These badges allow holders to attend all side events on both campuses, unless organizers have indicated that this is an invitation-only event.

2. **Non-WHA participants (e.g. external guests, speakers without an accreditation)**

- The Secretariat will be able to accommodate a limited number of additional participants per event from organizations that are not invited to the Health Assembly through special badges:
    - Up to 30 for small room events (70-110 participants)
    - Up to 40 for medium room events (160-170 participants)
    - Up to 50 for large room events (250 participants +)

How to obtain badge for non-WHA participants aka special guests?

- A link for special guest badges will be distributed to organizers in May for their distribution to expected participants **upon reception of the list of participants** requesting such badges (see below for further details).
- Organizers may generate their own internal registration system for purposes of assessing participation to assess catering fees, but this registration will not grant access to the Palais des Nations or WHO.
- **Organizers must share with the WHO Secretariat, as soon as possible and at the latest 3 working days before the side event date a participant list for the special badges, which includes both organizers, panelists and participants who are otherwise not registered for the WHA**.
- The WHO Secretariat will only approve those on the list. The Secretariat will not be in a position to handle multiple updates of each list.
- **Names of special guests should be entered as they appear on the passport or Official ID document. The list should be in Excel format and include the following information:**

Side event title, date, time and location:

Participant Firstname	Participant lastname	Email address	Organization	Title	Capacity/role (e.g. panelist)
1.					
2.					

Who is responsible for managing the participant list and badges?

- The Secretariat is not responsible for checking whether the participants already have a badge for the WHA, and it is not in a position to accommodate more participants than are on the list.
- All co-organizers of a given event must agree among themselves on the distribution of the badges prior to sharing their list with the WHO Secretariat.

What must participants do when registering as "special guests"?

- Side event participants will be requested to select "**special guest"**, and then "**side event**" and to indicate the side event they will participate in. Participants may only select one event.

What is a special badge valid for?

- The special badge is valid for attending **your specific side event** and cannot be used to enter official Assembly sessions (such as the Plenary or Committees). **It is valid only on the day of the event.**

Where and when can special badges be collected?

- Please note that those that were granted special badges will be able to collect their badges from the Distribution Desk in the main lobby of WHO headquarters.
- **All special badges must be collected at WHO HQ on the day of the side event, regardless of whether the side event is taking place at WHO or UNOG**.
- Kindly note that it will **not** be possible to retrieve the badge for a given side event on the days preceding the event.
- Special badges for side events commencing at 13:00 will be available for collection from 10:00 each morning. For side events commencing at 18:00, badges will be available for collection from 15:00. Your adherence to these schedules is imperative. How much time should participants plan for arrival and access?

How much time should participants plan for arrival and access?

- **Please allow at least ten minutes to collect the badge** and another five minutes to go through the security checks at WHO, as well as the time to take the shuttle to UNOG and go through security if the event you are attending is located there.
- Please note that the shuttle for side event participants at UNOG will stop at the Pregny Gate for participants to go through security checks and that sufficient time must be planned to do this.

Access to the Palais des Nations and WHO Headquarters

Please find the link to a map of the Palais des Nations/UNOG premises, which provides practical information, including details on accessibility: https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/practical-information/map

Please note that access to UNOG is via the Pregny Gate only (8-10 avenue de la Paix). Information on the exact location of Rooms is available on the UNOG website. From WHO you can walk to UNOG (10 minutes walking distance) or take a shuttle that will be available between the 2 campuses.

The **shuttle service** will be non-stop between WHO and UNOG premises from 07:30 until the end of the evening side events daily. Shuttles will depart from both stops (WHO and Palais des Nations) at a maximum interval of 5 minutes. The travel time between the two campuses will not exceed 5 minutes.

A map of shuttle services is available here.

Availability of the room before the event: the room will be accessible one hour before your event begins.

Information about room set-up at the Palais des Nations

- Rooms are available 60 minutes before the start of the event.
- Standard room setup: rooms are not equipped with a lectern. Rooms have a head table of varying capacity (7 to 9) behind table and a second row of back seats. Rooms usually have a head table set up on a raised stage facing the audience.
- What equipment is included? All the tables are equipped with integrated table microphones, and there are no roaming microphones available. Rooms are equipped with projection equipment (beamer and screen) for videos and PowerPoint presentations as well as a computer to show presentations. The projection ratio of the conference screen is 9:16. There is a small screen in front of the head table where the content (PPT, etc.) being played on the large screen can be seen.
- Wi-Fi: free UNOG public Wi-Fi is provided on the UNOG campus. Free public Wi-Fi is also available at the WHO.
- Technical support: There will be an audio/sound technician available for technical support. The team in charge of logistics provides nameplates. There is no speech timing service.
- The meeting room is equipped to display video statements. In order to ensure a successful presentation, we would greatly appreciate it if you could share the videos in advance of your side event. This will allow us to conduct a test.

More information about UNOG rooms can be found at https://www.ungeneva.org/en/meetings-events/rooms

Information about room set-up at WHO and access instructions

The EB Room and Salle A-B-C-D are located in the WHO HQ main building (Building A). From the main entrance, participants can take the main lifts; Salle A-B-C-D are located immediately adjacent to the lifts. To proceed to the EB Room, you need to walk past the lifts and go downstairs past the cafeteria and then downstairs again on your left.
Garden room T is located on the mezzanine floor of building B. Access to the room: the room is expected to be available 60 minutes before your event start time.

Room capacity:

- Salle A-B-C-D have 48 seats behind tables and 46 backseats, for a total of 94 seats each.
- EB room has 229 seats on the floor and 100 seats in the galleries.
- Garden T room has 58 seats at table and 10 backseats, for a total of 68 seats.

Room equipment at WHO:

- The chair and the speaker usually sit behind the table that is located on the Jura side on the map
- Microphones are available on the tables.
- The room is equipped with two led screens that are available to display any content (slide or video).
- The rooms are not equipped with a lectern with a microphone.
- Participants seating at the table have access to microphones. A roving microphone can be made available for participants on the backseats.
- The room is fully equipped with a camera tracking system allowing both hybrid modality and webstreaming.
- In terms of technology, rooms A-B-C-D are equipped with the latest state of the art A/V systems, with automated camera tracking and 2 large led screens.

Room access and late start

Room XVI will be used as overflow during the plenary sessions. Other rooms that are scheduled to be empty prior to a given side event may be assigned to a drafting group during the course of the Health Assembly. Room availability 60 minutes before the event does not mean that the room will be empty for this entire duration. However, during the time that the room is accessible for the organizer prior to the event, the organizer may enter the room and initiate the set-up. Please note that the room will be prepared by the usher in the half hour before the event starts.

Possible delays: the plenary is scheduled to end 30 minutes before the side events start. Should the plenary incur any delays, this might impact the start of the side event occurring in this room. In such a case, additional time would be granted at the end of the time scheduled for the side event in order to allow the side event to run for the planned duration.

Photographer services

If you have booked this service, the photographer will join your event for a duration sufficient to make a series of quality shots of the event that will be available in the WHO multimedia library. The photographer will focus on providing quality broad angle shots of the event, close shots of the panel, and close shots of the officials that are part of the panel. Regarding the distribution of the photos, the WHO Secretariat will make its best effort to provide the link to the pictures as soon as possible considering the large number of events running simultaneously and the need to select and upload the pictures. Photos of the side events will be available at this **link**. The photos are downloadable without registration.

Hybrid modality and webstreaming

What is the difference between the webstreaming service and the hybrid modality?

Webstreaming provides a live broadcast of your event over the internet, allowing your audience to watch and listen without any ability for remote intervention. Hybrid meetings allow remote participation, including the ability to speak during the event for people that are not physically present in the room.

What is included in the hybrid meeting fee?

The hybrid meeting fee includes connecting the room to a Zoom link, which can be created by either WHO or yourself. It costs CHF 600. WHO can create the zoom link (in meeting or webinar mode), or you can use your own zoom link. In either case, a WHO A/V technician will be present in the room to assist the organizer with the connections.

Whenever interpretation is requested, WHO will create the zoom link to ensure smooth integration into the Zoom session.

Please note that the CHF 600 charge covers the A/V support for your event and will apply whether you use your own link or a WHO-provided Zoom link.

There are two options:

- Standard Meeting: All virtual participants can speak and share content.
- Webinar**:** Only designated panelists can speak and share content; attendees are view-only by default (unless unmuted by the host).

If the organizers requests the zoom option, then the Zoom link can be created after payment of the invoice.

What is the organizer responsible for to ensure a smooth hybrid meeting?

The organizer will be responsible to ensure the dissemination of the zoom link to its virtual participants and panelists to allow for remote participation. The organizer will also be responsible for moderation on zoom.

What is the process for managing virtual access and online participant registration for a hybrid meeting?

The organizer is expected to manage the participant's registration and virtual access. WHO can create the event in Zoom according to the organizer's specifications and will share the link with the organizers in advance of the meeting who shall disseminate it.

What is included in the webstreaming fee?

The webstreaming fee is an additional CHF 1000. If you select the webstreaming option, WHO will provide the organizer with a player code that can be embedded on any website. An unlimited number of virtual participants can watch the event live via this link, but they will not have the ability to interact remotely.

How can you disseminate the webstreaming player?

For the webstreaming, you will receive few days before the start of your meeting the player code that you can embed on your website or the website of your choice. We do not provide a direct link. If you wish to send out invitations now, you can share the link to the webpage where the player will be embedded.

Will you receive a recording of your meeting?

You will receive a recording of the session whether you select the webstreaming or the zoom option.

What is the capacity for virtual attendance?

For hybrid events, it depends on how the organizer wishes to set up the Zoom meeting. 1) Standard meeting: up to 500 participants can potentially speak and share contents; 2) Webinar mode: only designated panelists can make interventions and share content, all other attendees are view-only by default (unless unmuted by the host).

For webstreaming, it is unlimited.

Interpretation:

Taking the floor in a multilingual virtual or hybrid meeting requires specific equipment and conduct:

o Use a soundproof and echo-free room with all windows and doors closed, put your mobile phone on silent mode
o Use a standalone multidirectional microphone, rather than the built-in microphone of your computer, and avoid AirPods
o Speak clearly, into the microphone, at a natural moderate pace (110 words/minute)
o Switch your camera on when speaking
o Send all written contributions (speeches, presentations, etc.) in advance to your meeting organizer
o Avoid any background music in pre-recorded video presentations, and send video scripts to the meeting organizer
o Use an ethernet (land wire) connection, not Wi-Fi
o Use a high-quality PC or Laptop, not a mobile phone or tablet
o Apply hi-fi mode and original-sound audio settings on Zoom

Please note that interpretation will be interrupted should the sound quality not be fit for interpretation.

Receptions and catering:

For receptions, ordering of catering is required at the latest five working days prior to the day of the event. The event organizer will be invoiced directly by the WHO caterer. A lobby area is available at the entrance of the different rooms for hosting receptions right after your event. Please note that food and beverages, other than water, are not permitted in the meeting rooms.

Checklist for the preparation of your event

- **April 2026:** within five working days of the reception of the **invoice**: final confirmation of the side event slot by paying the invoice.
- **May 2026:** upon sending the list of participants requiring special guest badges, you will receive a link for registration. Please ensure the registration of your speakers, co-organizers and attendees well ahead of your event. They should be registered **by 13 May 2026 at the latest for Monday events (or three working days before the date of your event).** Those granted special badges must retrieve them at WHO Headquarters before proceeding to the Palais. These badges will be valid for side events only.
- Although organizers are free to organize their registration links to better plan the participation in their events, kindly note that this registration **will not replace the special guest badges to access the building.**
- Of note, delegates from Member States, non-State actors in official relations with WHO and UN agencies who hold a World Health Assembly badge **should not register for special guest badges.**
- Please submit any update on information to be added to the side events list by 8 May 2026. Only minor changes should be made to the proposal once the selection process is complete and successful applicants notified.
- A form will be made available in early May to share your requirements regarding the event set-up.
- Please send background documents, presentations, lists of participants and statements to interpret@who.int 24 hours before the side-event (or at the latest 2 hours in advance), indicating the date, time and name of your event.
- Once WHA starts, please check the list of WHA79 meetings and the WHA app for any updates.
- **Please ensure to start and finish your event on time:** the room may be booked right after for another event, and technicians are booked only for the time slot allocated.

Event wrap-up:

Should organizers wish to issue a report of their side event and use the WHA79 Official Side Events header, kindly add the following text as a disclaimer:

"This is a report of an Official Side Event, which took place on the sidelines of the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly. It is not an official Health Assembly report and does not necessarily represent the decisions or policies of WHO."

Further information

Please visit the Governing Bodies website for access to the outcomes of the process: WHO | Governance

For any queries on side event matters that are not addressed in the Side Event Guidelines, please consult the WHO Secretariat at: hqgoverningbodies@who.int