

Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU meetings¹

Approved in April 1999 and amended in April 2003, May 2006, April 2009, October 2014, March 2018 and March 2023.

1. International organizations that can be invited as observers to IPU meetings are understood to include: (a) organizations of the United Nations system and related organizations; (b) regional, subregional and geopolitical parliamentary assemblies or associations; (c) worldwide non-governmental organizations; (d) international political party federations; and (e) organizations with which the IPU shares general objectives and has established a close and mutually beneficial working relationship (other partner organizations, including organizations holding permanent observer status with the UN General Assembly).
2. Observer status may be granted only to those organizations whose general objectives, principles and values are shared by the IPU. Permanent observer status may only be granted at the recommendation of the IPU Executive Committee, upon a careful examination of the structure, funding, mission statement, programme of work and track record of the organization concerned.
3. There shall be a distinction between those observers invited on a regular basis (permanent observers) and others invited on a "one-off" basis in the light of the items placed on the agenda of an Assembly. Permanent observer status will be reserved for parliamentary organizations, in line with IPU's commitment to foster inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, as well as for those partner organizations with which the IPU works closely and on a regular basis.
4. Observers will be expected to pay a modest registration fee, to be determined by the Executive Committee, for participation in IPU Assemblies. The United Nations and related organizations, as well as observers contributing directly to the programme of the Assembly, will be exempt from such fees.
5. Observers will be entitled to register a maximum of two delegates to Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. However, each programme and organ of the United Nations will normally be allowed to send one delegate. Seating arrangements at Assemblies will be made accordingly.
6. Observers will be entitled to register one speaker in plenary debates of the IPU Assembly and its Standing Committees. However, each programme and organ of the United Nations will be allowed to register one speaker each.
7. Observers will not enjoy the right of reply or the right to raise points of order.
8. In the General Debate of the Assembly, the speaking time of observers will be limited to three minutes. Some flexibility will be shown to executive heads of organizations within the United Nations system who wish to address the IPU.
9. Observers will not enjoy voting rights and the right to submit candidatures.
10. Representatives of international organizations having particular expertise in a subject considered by the Assembly may be invited by the Presidents of Standing Committees, with the authorization of the Committee, to be present in an advisory capacity to provide technical advice, if need be, during the work of a drafting committee.

¹ In these Modalities, whenever the words "delegate" and "representative" are used, they should be construed as referring to both women and men.

11. Observers cannot present draft resolutions or amendments. They may, however, make information available according to modalities established by the Secretary General.
12. International organizations having special competence in an item placed on the Assembly agenda may be invited by the Secretary General to provide an information document on the item.
13. Observers may be invited by the IPU President to address the Governing Council in exceptional circumstances only.
14. An evaluation of the situation of observers will be made every four years. Such a periodic review will be undertaken by the Executive Committee on a dual basis: (i) a factual note by the IPU Secretariat on the actual participation of each observer in the period under review, and (ii) the views of the observers themselves regarding their interest in being represented at IPU meeting.