



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

23rd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE)
UNECA Office for Eastern Africa

Information Note for International Participants to ICSOE 2019

The 23rd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Office for Eastern Africa will be hosted in **Asmara, the State of Eritrea** on **05-07 November 2019**.

The Government of the State of Eritrea and ECA Office for Eastern Africa wish to extend a warm welcome to all participants. The theme for the meeting is: ***Leveraging New Opportunities for Regional Integration in Eastern Africa***.

Please read the following information carefully as you plan your travel to Asmara.

1. Meeting Venue

The meeting venue will be the Asmara Palace Hotel, Asmara, Eritrea.

2. Arrival and Departure Dates

Sponsored international participants will arrive in Asmara on Monday 04 November 2019 and depart on Friday 08 November 2019. Self-sponsored participants are encouraged to travel on the same dates. UNECA Secretariat requests that self-sponsored participants provide by email their specific arrival and departure details in advance by Thursday 24 October 2019 to immaculee.kawera@un.org and rachel.kabibi@un.org for coordination of airport shuttles.

3. Visa and Immigration Requirements

Entry visas are required for all nationalities, including UNLP Holders - except for Ethiopian and Ugandan citizens travelling on their national passports.

Obtaining a Visa

However, for this specific meeting the Government of the State of Eritrea will arrange for visas on arrival at Asmara International Airport. Therefore, participants must provide the UNECA Secretariat with a copy



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of their national passport including: full names, passport number, date of issue and expiry date, place and date of birth and nationality, at least three weeks before date of travel.

Once clearance for visa on arrival has been obtained, a copy of the visa permission document will be emailed to participants and must be presented to the airline authorities at the airports of departure and transit. The printed copy must be carried when traveling, and formalities will then be completed at Asmara International Airport on arrival.

Holders of UN, AU and other Laissez-Passer should also be in possession of a valid national passport. Passports should at least be valid for six months. Upon arrival participants will be required to fill in an immigration form to be presented together with their passport and visa permission document.

Please note that it is advisable to carry Yellow Fever card with you and in the event you are coming from or passed through a country endemic to Yellow Fever.

4. Arrival at the Airport

Asmara International Airport is a small and clean airport. It is located less than 2 kilometers (one mile) from the meeting venue. Airport shuttles will be provided from the Airport to the Asmara Palace Hotel where all sponsored international participants have been booked.

For sponsored participants, please promptly communicate any changes of your date and time of arrival in Asmara to Ms. Mekdes Asmare Workneh, whose email address is: asmare.uneca@un.org

5. Departure

Delegates departing from Asmara International Airport will be required to go through security checkpoints, check-in and immigration counters. Airport shuttles will be provided from the Asmara Palace Hotel to the Airport.

Visitors are not allowed to carry more than 1000 Nakfa when exiting Eritrea.

6. Accommodation details

UNECA has made block bookings and will cover the cost of hotel rooms for sponsored participants at the Asmara Palace Hotel. All other incidental costs will be at the expense of the participants - i.e. telephone, room service, mini-bar, laundry, other meals (including dinner); these must pay directly to the hotel before departure. Lunch will be served for all meeting participants during the course of the conference (i.e. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday).

The duration of accommodation for sponsored participants will depend on the authorized itinerary of the ticket issued by UNECA. For participants who wish to arrive earlier and/or stay at the hotel longer than



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their authorized itinerary, they will personally settle the hotel expenses for the extra days. UNECA will not pay for stay that exceeds the days of the authorized ticket.

For self-sponsored participants, the ICSOE Secretariat has negotiated a preferential rate of 90 USD per night (bed and breakfast) for a standard room at the Asmara Palace Hotel.

Should non-sponsored participants wish to stay at other hotels, they are kindly requested to be responsible for all arrangements and inform UNECA Secretariat accordingly.

7. Registration

Participants will be required to register and obtain identification badges prior to the start of the Conference. Registration desks will be set at the meeting venue]. For security reasons, identification badges should be worn by all participants at all times, during the meeting as well as during official social functions around the ICSOE. Participants are kindly requested to bring along their invitation letters and personal identification document (i.e. passport) when registering and obtaining the identification badges.

8. Security

The Government of the State of Eritrea is dedicated to ensuring the utmost safety and security for all participants. Therefore, we ask for your understanding and compliance with the various security measures, which will be in place.

Asmara is a peaceful and relatively secure from crime incidents. Organized and armed crimes including, street robbery, abuses, and social violence, pick-pocketing, snatching at traffic lights, vehicle hijacking, drug use, and car and residential break-in are extremely rare in Asmara. People are generally friendly to foreigners and visitors are not bothered by locals in the streets of Asmara.

The authorities will ensure that all precautionary measures are taken for delegates' safety and security. Still, participants should take sensible precautions. Delegates should avoid walking very late at night, especially alone and off the main city roads.

9. Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA)

To facilitate DSA/Per diem payment, sponsored international participants are required to bring their original passports and to show them in order collecting the DSA/ Per diem on Wednesday 06 November



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2019, at the meeting venue.

10. Documents and Languages

Participants will be issued with copies of the 23rd ICSOE documents at the time of registration. Documents can also be downloaded from <https://www.uneca.org/ea-icsoe23>

Participants are advised to consult the Secretariat on any matters pertaining to the issuance or distribution of documents.

The working language in the meeting is English only.

Elsewhere in the country, the national languages in Eritrea are Tigrinya and Arabic, which along with English are also the official working languages. A number of other local languages are also spoken. English and Italian are widely understood across the city.

11. Health and healthcare Requirements

First Aid services will be available at the meeting venue. If you are on prescription medication, please ensure you have an adequate supply to last the duration of your stay and a copy of your prescription(s).

It is advisable to carry Yellow Fever card with you and in the event you are coming from or passed through a country endemic to Yellow Fever. If you have travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the past one month, please let the authorities at the airport know for their follow up (due to the current Ebola outbreak in the Goma region). Asmara is Malaria free; however, in the event any trip is organized outside Asmara to other towns, participants should take malaria precautions.

12. Weather and Climate

Asmara is known for its lovely climate. There is very little humidity in the air so the biggest variations in temperatures occur between night and day, or whether one is standing in the sun or in the shade, not between seasons. Thus temperature varies greatly between day and night. Mornings are generally cool, midday can be warm but the temperature falls again in the evening and at night, especially during the rainy season and during the winter. The average high temperature in November is 22°C, and the average low temperature is 8°C. It is, therefore, advisable to have a selection of clothes suited to varying temperatures, including light clothing, sweaters and jackets for the evenings.



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13. General information

Time zone

Eritrea is in the time zone of (GMT+3) all year round.

City overview

Located on a highland plateau (over 2,000 m above sea level) in the middle of Eritrea is the capital of the country and also the most populous city of Eritrea. Asmara is an exceptional example of a colonial planned city, with many well-preserved buildings from the Italian occupation. In 2017, the city was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a result. Its urban layout is based mainly on an orthogonal grid that later integrated elements of a radial system.

Communications

Eritrea's country code is +291. As is in most places, telephone charges from your hotel room can be very high. Foreign mobile phones will not work for phone calls or SMS, as other countries' sim cards are not recognized in Eritrea. Please also note that SIM cards are not easily available in Eritrea. There is also no Internet Roaming available outside the hotel WiFi. WiFi is available in the meeting venue, but the speed of internet is expected to be too slow for downloading documents.

Currency

The local currency is Nakfa. The exchange rate is at 1.00 USD = 15 Nakfa. Foreign currency should only be exchanged through banks and authorized forex bureaus. USD is the easiest currency to exchange.

Electricity

Electricity in Eritrea is 220-240 Volts. If you have a device that does not accept this voltage, you will need a voltage converter. Plugs have two round pins. Participants are kindly advised to carry a multiple travel adaptor or purchase one locally.

Payment methods

Eritrea is a cash-based country. No ATM machine services exist in Eritrea. Credit cards are not used in banking transactions in Eritrea, nor are they generally accepted in Eritrean hotels. Participants are therefore strictly advised to carry enough cash for their accommodation and food for their stay.

Transportation

Transport arrangements have been made and participants will be picked up from and dropped to Asmara International Airport. The conference programme includes a City Tour on Day 3, for which transportation arrangements have been made by the host country.