



Finance Committee

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Report on standards of accommodation for air travel for 2025

Standards of accommodation for air travel

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present document is submitted to the Finance Committee in accordance with its decision contained in its report ([ISBA/29/A/9-ISBA/29/C/20](#)), in which it requested the Secretary-General to issue as an annex to the current and all future budget proposals a report on the standards of accommodation for air travel, in line with the corresponding report published by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.¹
2. During the thirtieth session of the Finance Committee, in July 2025, a report on standards of accommodation for air travel ([ISBA/30/FC/2](#)) was presented to the Committee. The report included detailed costs of all air travel by members of the secretariat during the 2023–2024 budget period and the class of travel used.
3. The secretariat proposes that the report on the standards of accommodation for air travel be produced on a yearly basis. This is based on the fact that a biennial reporting cycle would not align with the budget request cycle, as the report prepared during the year in which a budget proposal is reviewed by the Finance Committee would only partially cover the preceding budgetary period, leaving a portion of the second year unreported. The present report therefore covers the year 2025 only.
4. International travel is an essential element of the delivery of the Authority's mandate, reflecting the nature of its work and the operational reality of being headquartered on an island with limited direct air connections to key destinations. The present report provides a summary of the travel policy of the Authority and a breakdown of the costs of air travel in 2025 in the following categories:
 - (a) Travel on mission by staff members;
 - (b) Entitlement travel by staff members and their eligible family members;
 - (c) Travel supported by the voluntary trust funds of the Authority;

* [ISBA/31/FC/L.1](#).

¹ The corresponding reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations are issued every two years, the most recent being [A/79/628](#).



(d) Travel of consultants and individual contractors, interns or persons on secondment to the secretariat, members of advisory committees or delegates of member States to workshops, events and other activities of the Authority.

I. Travel policy of the Authority

5. The standards of accommodation for air travel by staff members of the Secretariat is governed by the Authority's administrative instruction [ISBA/ST/AI/2020/6](#). In establishing its travel policy, the Authority has considered its own operational situation and specificities, while aligning, where appropriate, with the principles applied by the United Nations. In this regard, the Authority applies a dual threshold for business class travel, whereby business class is authorized when the duration of a single-leg journey is 9 hours or longer, or when the duration of a multi-leg journey exceeds 11 hours, including scheduled stops to change planes. Travel that is externally funded or undertaken for purposes of training is required to be in economy class regardless of the duration of the journey, unless the sponsor provides for a higher class of travel.

6. With respect to entitlement travel, the Authority offers a 75 per cent lump-sum option for staff members travelling on home leave, family visit, education grant travel or travel on assignment, repatriation or separation from service, in line with the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). It should be noted that, in this regard, the Authority's lump-sum policy is less advantageous to staff than that applied by the United Nations, reflecting the Authority's commitment to cost-consciousness in the management of its travel expenditure.

7. The standard of accommodation for air travel by consultants and individual contractors, interns or persons on secondment to the secretariat, members of advisory committees or subsidiary organs of the Authority, or delegates of member States to participate in the workshops and meetings of the Authority is economy class, irrespective of the duration of the journey. Exceptions to this policy may be made on medical grounds or owing to the seniority of the traveller concerned, except in the case of travel supported by a trust fund, in which case no allowance is made for exceptions (see [ISBA/ST/AI/2020/6](#), sect. 15).

II. Procurement of travel services

8. Since 2020, the Authority has procured air travel services through Travel Edge, an internationally recognized global travel agency selected on the basis of cost-effectiveness and quality of service. The use of a globally operating agency, rather than a local provider, reflects the international nature of the Authority's travel requirements and the limited capacity of the local Jamaican travel market to service routes of the complexity and volume required. The agency provides dedicated support, competitive fare options, ticket tracking and refund management, after-hours emergency assistance and a 45-day credit facility.

9. The Authority also makes use of self-ticketing and online ticket purchases where it can be demonstrated that these are more cost-effective than purchase through the approved travel agent.

10. Given the relatively small overall volume of the Authority's travel compared with that of larger international organizations, the Authority cannot negotiate airline discount agreements or benefit from volume-based fare reductions. This is a structural constraint inherent to the size and nature of the Authority's operations rather than a reflection of travel management practices.

11. An important factor in maintaining cost-effectiveness is the advance purchase of tickets. To promote greater cost-effectiveness, the Secretary-General issued an instruction in 2021 requiring that the purchase of tickets should be finalized not less than 16 calendar days in advance of the commencement of official travel. The relevant head of office will be required to provide justification for all official travel arrangements that could not be finalized 16 calendar days in advance of the commencement of travel. This is done by adding an explanatory note in the travel authorization form upon submission. Furthermore, any changes to an approved travel authorization require justification and certification by the relevant head of office or the Director of the Office for Administrative Services, which is done by email.

III. Breakdown of costs of air travel in 2025

12. The present section provides an analysis of the costs of air travel in 2025, by category.

A. Travel on mission by staff members

13. In 2025, the Secretary-General and staff members made a total of 65 trips on official travel related to mandate implementation, including travel to workshops and meetings, at a total cost of \$335,130 (cost of tickets only, not including daily subsistence allowance). Of these trips, 28 were in economy class and 37 were in business class. No exceptions to the policy were authorized. There were a few voluntary downgrades to economy or premium economy class, mainly due to flight availability for a required date and destination.² A breakdown of mission travel by class of travel appears in annex I, table 1.

B. Entitlement travel by staff members and their eligible family members

14. Entitlement travel refers to travel by staff members and their eligible family members on home leave, family visit, education grant travel or travel on assignment, repatriation or separation from service. Some forms of entitlement travel (education grant travel) are exclusively in economy class, regardless of the duration.

15. In 2025, the Secretary-General and staff members made a total of 42 trips on entitlement travel at a total cost of \$230,543 (cost of tickets only, not including daily subsistence allowance). Of these trips, 8 were in economy class and 34 in business class. No exceptions to the policy were authorized. In 19 cases (roughly 45 per cent), the lump-sum option was chosen by the staff member. A breakdown of entitlement travel by class of travel appears in annex I, table 2.

C. Travel of consultants and individual contractors, interns or persons on secondment to the secretariat, members of advisory committees or delegates of member States

16. This category mainly covers travel of experts and delegates to workshops, seminars and meetings organized by the Authority, including events organized with project or extrabudgetary funding administered by the Authority. As a rule, all such travel is in economy class. In 2025, a total of 44 experts were funded to participate in

² In paragraph 4.9 of administrative instruction [ISBA/ST/AI/2020/6](#), an incentive is provided to staff members to voluntarily downgrade from business class in return for more generous rest stopover allowances.

workshops and other events. Total expenditure related to tickets purchased for these trips was \$93,840. A breakdown of travel in this category appears in annex I, table 3.

D. Travel supported by the voluntary trust funds of the Authority

17. In accordance with the respective terms of reference of the voluntary trust funds administered by the Authority,³ eligible members of the Council, the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission may request financial support to participate in meetings of the Authority. In 2025, a total of 35 air tickets were funded from the voluntary trust funds, with a total expenditure of \$63,452. Following the established policies, all travel was in economy class. A breakdown of the nationalities of the individuals funded, by session, and the total number of trips appears in annex II, tables 1 to 4.

IV. Observations and recommendations

18. Given the location of the Authority's headquarters, very few of the destinations to which staff are required to travel fall under the dual threshold established for business class travel, except for travel to United Nations Headquarters in New York. For example, any travel routed through either the United States of America or Europe to onward destinations automatically generates a business class fare entitlement.

19. Some of the key considerations emerging from the present report are as follows:

(a) For cost reasons, the secretariat does not participate in the United Nations Umoja enterprise resource planning tool, and the secretariat's enterprise resource planning tool does not include a module for travel (again, for cost reasons). Consequently, all travel must be processed manually, which is time-consuming and time-intensive;

(b) Limited competition in the Jamaican travel market, the small size of the Authority's travel business and monopolies or near monopolies on key routes mean that it is very difficult to secure volume discounts or special fares;

(c) There has been a very large increase in the cost of air tickets over the past years, and this shows little sign of slowing down;

(d) The combination of limited route competition, the Authority's island location and the sharp increase in ticket prices in recent years has significantly reduced the financial attractiveness of the lump-sum option for entitlement travel for staff members;

(e) Adoption of the single threshold for business class as recommended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations may potentially simplify administration but would likely produce limited, if any, overall savings in travel costs.

³ The relevant funds are the voluntary trust fund to support the participation of members of the Council from developing States in the meetings of the Council (see [ISBA/23/A/13](#) and [ISBA/27/A/8-ISBA/27/C/36](#)) and the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of members of the Legal and Technical Commission from developing countries and members of the Finance Committee from developing countries in the meetings of the Commission and the Committee (see [ISBA/23/A/12](#)).

Annex I

Travel on mission, entitlement travel and travel of experts

Table 1
Travel on mission, 2025

<i>Class of travel</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Cost in United States dollars</i>
Economy class	28	43 096
Business class	37	292 034
Total	65	335 130

Table 2
Entitlement travel, 2025

<i>Class of travel</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Cost in United States dollars</i>
Standard travel entitlement		
Economy class	7	6 352
Business class	16	127 170
Lump-sum option		
Economy class	1	557
Business class	18	96 464
Total	42	230 543

Table 3
Travel of experts, 2025

<i>Class of travel</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Cost in United States dollars</i>
Economy class	44	93 840
Business class	–	–
Total	44	93 840

Annex II

Travel supported by the voluntary trust funds

Table 1
Meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission, 2025

No.	Meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission		Number of trips	Thirtieth session,	Thirtieth session,
	Requesting country	Route of travel		part I	part II
			Ticket cost in economy class (United States dollars)		
1	Trinidad and Tobago	POS-KIN-POS	2	505	977
2	Nigeria	LON-KIN-LON	2	1 115	1 394
3	Argentina	EZE-KIN-EZE	2	2 061	2 300
4	Kenya	NBO-KIN-NBO	2	1 973	2 439
5	Mexico	BER-KIN-BER	2	2 037	2 785
6	Ghana	DSA and TE Only	1	1 789	
7	Cameroon	NSI-KIN-NSI	2	979	2 019
8	Dominican Republic	SDQ-KIN-SDQ	2	752	940
9	Uganda	EBB-KIN-EBB	1	2 239	
10	Philippines	MNL-KIN-MNL	2	3 163	2 983
11	Indonesia	CGK-KIN-CGK	2	2 482	2 612
12	United Republic of Tanzania	MBI-KIN-MBI	1	–	3 072
13	Togo	LFW-KIN-LFW	2	1 727	2 146
Total			23	20 822	23 667

Table 2
Meetings of the Council, 2025

No.	Meetings of the Council		Number of trips	Thirtieth session,	Thirtieth session,
	Requesting country	Route of travel		part I	part II
			Ticket cost in economy class (United States dollars)		
1	Argentina	EZE-KIN-EZE	2	1 720	2 273
2	Lesotho	MSU-MBJ-MSU	1	3 671	
3	Uganda	JFK-KIN-JFK	2	688	908
4	United Republic of Tanzania	JFK-KIN-JFK	2	818	698
5	Fiji	SUV-KIN-SUV	1	2 695	
Total			8	9 593	3 879

Table 3
Meetings of the Finance Committee, 2025

<i>Meetings of the Finance Committee</i>				<i>Thirtieth session, part II</i>
<i>No.</i>	<i>Requesting country</i>	<i>Route of travel</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Ticket cost in economy class (United States dollars)</i>
1	Brazil	GRU-KIN-GRU	1	1 041
2	Ghana	ACC-KIN-ACC	1	2 879
3	Nauru	JFK-KIN-JFK	1	808
4	Uganda	JFK-KIN-JFK	1	763
Total			4	5 491

Table 4
Total travel supported by the voluntary trust funds, 2025

	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Ticket cost in economy class (United States dollars)</i>
Legal and Technical Commission	23	44 489
Council	8	13 472
Finance Committee	4	5 491
Total	35	63 452