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Coordination Guidelines for the Secretariats of HCCH, UNCITRAL, and UNIDROIT

I. Objectives

1. These Coordination Guidelines aim to define the procedures for the tripartite coordination of the secretariats of:

- The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH);
- The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL); and
- The Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT).

2. The respective mandates and work programmes of the HCCH, UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT have regularly given rise to close cooperation between them. The purpose of the HCCH is “to work for the progressive unification of the rules of private international law”.¹ The mandate of UNCITRAL is set forth in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution [2205\(XXI\)](#) of 17 December 1966.² The purposes of UNIDROIT are “to examine ways of harmonising and coordinating the private law of States and of groups of States, and to prepare gradually for the adoption by the various States of uniform rules of private law”.³

3. Bearing in mind the Exchange of Letters constituting an Arrangement between the United Nations with, respectively, the HCCH in 1958, and UNIDROIT in 1959, and the subsequent establishment of UNCITRAL in 1966, this tripartite cooperation is facilitated by the somewhat overlapping membership of the three institutions and regular exchanges between the three secretariats.

4. These Coordination Guidelines are intended to:

(a) Facilitate and strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the three secretariats, in particular as regards future work, in order to avoid undesirable overlap between work programmes, inefficient use of resources, and possible risks of inconsistency and fragmentation;

¹ Statute of the HCCH, Art. 1, online at www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/full-text.

² Online at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/005/08/IMG/NR000508.pdf?OpenElement>.

³ Statute of UNIDROIT, Art. 1, online at www.unidroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/statute.pdf.



(b) Implement procedures between the three secretariats to better coordinate operational processes and outputs; and

(c) Provide a mechanism for transparent exchange of information and plans to allow accurate reporting by the respective secretariats to their governing bodies about the status of work, work plans and resources to be invested by each institution in cooperating and coordinating with the other two institutions.

5. These Coordination Guidelines are intended to be implemented with flexibility where necessary for the effective operation of each of the three institutions and their respective secretariats.

II. Current Coordination Practice

6. The leadership of the three secretariats regularly participates in the meetings of the governing bodies of the other institutions. They also meet yearly for tripartite coordination meetings (hosted in hybrid format by the secretariats on a rotating basis). In addition, they assess the need to meet online before March (*i.e.*, before the first governance meeting⁴ of the calendar year, the meeting of the HCCH's Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP)), and once more after July or August (*i.e.*, after the last governance meeting of the calendar year, the meeting of UNCITRAL's Commission).

7. Staff members of the secretariats (and occasionally external experts representing a secretariat) actively participate in technical meetings of the other institutions, contributing with their expertise to products of those institutions. Occasionally, the cooperation between the institutions has led to joint projects, including normative (legislative) work, as well as networks with other partners (*i.e.*, the Joint Network for Coordinating and Supporting Secured Transactions Reform⁵).

III. Substantive Work Programme

8. Recognizing that the governing bodies of each institution decide on the work programme of that institution, that there is a need to facilitate coordination and collaboration among the work programmes, and that there is value in coordinating the support to be provided by the respective secretariats, each secretariat will endeavour:

(a) Not later than 60 days ahead of the meeting or, if such information becomes available later than 60 days ahead of the meeting, as soon as possible after it becomes available, of respectively, the CGAP of the HCCH, the Commission of

⁴ The work of each of the institutions includes various types of meetings. For the purposes of these Coordination Guidelines, the meetings include:

- Governance meetings, which refer to the meetings of the governing bodies, at which decisions are taken by the Members of the relevant institution in relation to the overall work programme and governance of that institution. For the HCCH, this refers to the meeting of the Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP); for UNCITRAL, this refers to the meeting of the Commission; for UNIDROIT, this refers to the meetings of the Governing Council and the General Assembly; and
- Technical meetings, which refer to meetings held in the framework of projects undertaken by each of the institutions (or jointly by two or all three of the institutions), the agenda of which focuses on the substantive aspects of the fulfilment of each institution's normative work programme. For example, for the HCCH, this includes colloquia, conferences, and meetings of Experts' Groups, Working Groups and Special Commissions; for UNCITRAL, this includes colloquia, conferences, working group and expert group meetings; for UNIDROIT, this includes colloquia, conferences and the meetings of Working Groups and subgroups of the Working Groups. No decisions pertaining to the overall work programme and governance of each institution are taken at technical meetings. Groups that are established at each institution that focus on the substantive aspects of the fulfilment of that institution's work are referred to in this document as "technical groups".

⁵ Online at <https://uncitral.un.org/en/content/joint-network-coordinating-and-supporting-secured-transactions-reforms>.

UNCITRAL, and the Governing Council of UNIDROIT, to inform the other two secretariats, in writing, about proposed future work being presented for approval to its respective governing body where such information is available;

(b) To submit to its respective governing body requests from the other two institutions for partnership in joint projects, prior to such work being initiated;

(c) To answer in writing comments or consultation requests received from the other two secretariats in relation to the information provided, especially as regards possible overlaps in current or planned work programmes;

(d) To consider proposals to undertake joint work, where work will benefit from collaboration between two or the three of the institutions;

(e) To exchange relevant (draft) documents in preparation of the respective governance meetings and technical meetings and, where appropriate, invite the other institutions to provide comments; and

(f) To invite, and where invited to actively participate in, governance meetings that are called to decide upon the upcoming work programme, in particular joint proposals, projects of an institution to which another institution is called to contribute with its expertise, projects that could fall under joint work, or any other matter that relates to cooperation between the institutions and coordination of their respective mandates and work programmes.

9. Where a technical group is formed that has a mandate that may be relevant to one or both of the other institutions, the secretariat will issue an invitation to the secretariat of the other institution(s) to join the technical group.

10. Where invited and subject to available resources, the secretariats will participate actively in relevant technical meetings.

IV. Meetings

A. Notice of meetings

11. Each secretariat will inform the other secretariats as soon as the dates of its governance meeting are confirmed. The meeting of the HCCH's CGAP is generally scheduled for the first full week of March each year, while the ordinary meeting of UNIDROIT's Governing Council generally takes place in May each year, and UNCITRAL's Commission meeting is generally scheduled for June or July. If one of the institutions envisages a change in the scheduled dates, the respective secretariat will inform the other secretariats as soon as reasonably possible. This does not apply to governance meetings that deal exclusively with internal matters unrelated to the other institutions.

12. To ensure the broadest possible participation of relevant delegates, experts and staff members of the other secretariats in technical meetings, where relevant, the three secretariats will coordinate the dates of those meetings as much as possible in advance. In particular, each secretariat will endeavour:

(a) To announce, as soon as reasonably practicable after the governance meeting, the confirmed dates of technical meetings for the year ahead; and

(b) To take into account, to the extent possible, the announced dates for the relevant meetings of the other two institutions when scheduling further meetings.

B. Participation in meetings

13. Subject to the applicable rules of each institution, the secretariats will provide for remote participation in their respective governance meetings and to enable staff members of the other secretariats to speak at such meetings.

14. The secretariats will provide for remote participation in technical meetings in order to save on travel costs.

15. When invited to technical meetings, each secretariat will participate in person or, if in-person participation is not possible, at least online. Where both (interactive) online and in-person participation are not possible, comments, could be transmitted ahead of the meeting to be read out at the meeting by the relevant secretariat. The other secretariats could also make arrangements for another in-person participant to act on their behalf.

16. Given the working relationship among the three institutions, the secretariats will consider making statements on behalf of the other secretariat(s) that cannot participate in meetings held by other institutions or in other fora. Feasibility of delivering joint or coordinated statements could also be considered where appropriate.

C. Recording of cooperation in documents of the governing bodies

17. The three secretariats will reflect any joint projects or cooperation of its institution with one or both of the other institutions in the Conclusions and Decisions of CGAP (HCCH), the Report of the Commission (UNCITRAL), and the Report of the Governing Council (UNIDROIT).

V. Agreement on and Review of the Guidelines

18. These Coordination Guidelines were agreed upon by the three secretariats on 15 July 2025, and will be submitted to their respective governance bodies for information.

19. The secretariats will review periodically these Coordination Guidelines, and adapt them when necessary.
