

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING TO ATTEND SPECIAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

1. Special conventions are being planned for 2020 in eight locations around the world. The last page of these instructions shows the cities and countries where conventions will be held.

2. If after reading these instructions completely you are interested in applying to be a delegate to one of the special conventions, you should complete the application provided by the congregation secretary and submit it to your Congregation Service Committee **no later than Friday, November 1, 2019.**

3. **Official Website:** The official website for the 2020 special conventions is **jwevent.org**. This site will provide basic information for each convention city and will be used to gather information from delegates to assist with planning activities. Potential applicants are welcome to view the website for helpful information. Later on, selected delegates will use their e-mail address and a password to gain further access to the website, where information on hotel accommodations, delegate activities, transportation, and other subjects can be found.

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

4. Each person wishing to apply as a delegate to a special or an international convention must meet the following requirements:

- (1) Be an exemplary publisher.—*od* chap. 6 par. 9.
- (2) Be in good health and can travel without the physical assistance of others. They should not be dependent on a wheelchair, an auxiliary oxygen supply, or a similar

health-related device. They should not have problems standing and walking for long periods of time.

(3) Be one of the following:

- Nineteen years of age or older (as of January 1, 2020) and serve as an elder or a ministerial servant or serve in some form of full-time service. The baptized mates of such ones may also apply.
- Baptized for 20 years or longer (as of January 1, 2020). The baptized mates of such ones may also apply.
- A baptized or unbaptized minor child between the ages of 12 (as of January 1, 2020) and 19 years who is still living at home. Such an individual may accompany his baptized parent(s) who is approved as a delegate. (Do not apply if your child will not be at least 12 years old on January 1, 2020. You may apply in a future year.) Adult children, whether living at home or not, must qualify as delegates on their own.

(4) Be willing to stay in the convention city for a minimum of seven nights, following the accommodation guidelines set out later in these instructions.

5. By submitting an application to attend a special or an international convention, you are agreeing to these applicant requirements. Please do not ask for exceptions to these requirements. If you do not meet these requirements, please do not to apply.

EXPLANATION OF APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

6. Applicants must be exemplary in every respect, including dress and grooming. (2 Cor. 6:3, 4a; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Particularly when serving as a delegate to a special or an international convention, dress and grooming should reflect the decency and dignity that befit servants of Jehovah God. (*od* pp. 125-126; *km* 3/08 p. 3) Blue jeans, spandex outerwear, or other tight-fitting clothing should not be worn during the duration of your trip. It has been reported that some delegates have arrived at the destination airport in hoodies, sweat pants, and other undignified attire. From the time you leave your home for the convention until you return, delegates and minor children should be very conscious of their attire and how it appears to others. Because you represent Jehovah and his organization throughout your trip, you are expected to comply with these standards for dress and grooming while traveling, attending the convention, associating with the local brothers, and sightseeing.

7. Please review the article "Special Conventions Honor Jehovah," in the November 1990 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, pages 7-8, paragraphs 1-5, and the brochure *Dress & Grooming for Visitors Touring Bethel*, available from the congregation secretary.

8. Do not apply to be a delegate if you have serious health problems, are unable to stand or walk for long periods, require the use of a wheelchair, or have other mobility issues. Often the tours and activities arranged by the host branches involve long periods of walking and standing, which has seriously taxed the energy and stamina of some delegates. Depending on the location and time of year, this can be combined with higher temperatures. In the past, applications have been received from individuals with severe obesity or with sight limitations that are not corrected by glasses. Long trips under difficult physical conditions could prove harmful to some people's health and could adversely impact the activities of other delegates. All applicants are encouraged to give serious and prayerful consideration to their health limitations and personal safety before applying to become a delegate. Deaf publishers may apply if they have a hearing applicant in their group who can communicate with the deaf publisher.

9. Please note: If the congregation elders determine that a publisher has lost his exemplary status, that person will no longer qualify to participate as a delegate to a special or an international convention. If this change of status occurs after one has entered into a business agreement with a travel agency, an airline, or a hotel, the individual is still responsible to pay any and all expenses due (for example, cancellation fees or unused airline tickets) right up to the time the person is scheduled to depart. The individual will be fully responsible for any financial loss associated with his disqualification as a delegate.

10. If a special or an international convention will be held in the applicant's home country, it is expected that the applicant is applying to attend a convention in a country other than his own. Before applying, potential applicants must consider the total cost of their trip and plan accordingly. Delegates are required to stay in the convention city for a minimum of seven nights in hotels arranged by the host branch. Hotel accommodations, food for the entire trip, reimbursement to the organization for the cost of branch-planned activities, and other expenses can easily cost over USD 2,000 for two people, and that does not include airfare or other transportation costs for travel to and from the convention city. A family emergency or another type of unforeseen circumstance has caused delegates to have to cancel their travel at the last minute and incur a considerable expense. A health emergency in a foreign land can be difficult to manage without adequate insurance. Therefore, consideration should be given to obtaining health and travel insurance.

11. The situations listed above highlight the wisdom of Jesus' advice to "calculate the expense." (Luke 14:28) Delegates should not expect local Witnesses to sponsor their visit; nor should delegates make unreasonable demands on their brothers in other countries. If a potential applicant cannot fully care for the expense of his travel and arrangements, he should not apply.

12. Single persons may apply if they either have prearranged a roommate of the same gender or if they agree to pay for a single-occupancy hotel room. The branch offices involved will not be making arrangements for two single delegates to share a room. Individuals who are engaged and will be married before the convention can apply as a group, similar to a married couple.

13. Non-Witnesses cannot be invited to travel with or otherwise accompany a delegate to a special or an international convention.

14. If a potential applicant does not speak English or the primary language of the host branch, the convention program and activities for the delegates might not be presented in a language he understands. At least one person in his group should speak enough English (or the primary language of the host branch) to assist with interpreting for the group. Because delegates travel to special and international conventions to experience the warmth and love of the brotherhood, it is not required that each applicant be fluent in English or the local language(s).

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

15. If more than one member of a family is applying, a separate application is needed for each person in the family. Once your application has been completed, please submit it to the Congregation Service Committee for review. Upon approval, the secretary will use your information as a basis for completing an electronic application on jw.org. Once the application has been electronically entered, an automated e-mail message will be sent to the applicant for him to verify the submitted e-mail address. If your e-mail address changes at any time, inform the secretary so that he can update it on jw.org.

16. **Application Due Date:** Please submit the hard-copy application to the Congregation Service Committee **as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, November 1, 2019.**

17. **Travel Groups:** Effort will be made to accommodate the requests of those who wish to attend the same convention with family members or friends. However, the size of the group will be limited to no more than **eight** persons. One member of the group should be designated to serve as the group contact before applications are submitted. Generally, a brother will serve as the contact. However, if a group is made up of sisters only, one of them may act as the group contact. To be linked together, every applicant must use the same travel group identification (group ID).

18. To obtain a group ID, the group contact must provide his e-mail address to the secretary, who will obtain a unique group ID from jw.org and provide it to the group contact. The group contact must provide the group ID to the other members in his group so that they can include it on their respective applications. Using the same group ID is the only way to link applicants wishing to travel together, including friends and family members (even a marriage mate and others in the same household). All members in a group must stay in the same hotel and have the same preferences for activities.

19. You may invite someone to join your travel group if he is from another congregation and he meets the requirements mentioned under "Applicant Requirements." However, the person you invite must be from your country or your branch territory.

DELEGATE SELECTION

20. After receiving all of the applications, the applicants' branch office will select the delegates to the special or international conventions. Please do not contact the branch office to determine if you or another person has been selected. If the secretary can see that the "Status Summary" on jw.org indicates "Applied," the person has not yet been selected. Selected delegates will be notified, and more information relative to the specific convention for which the person has been approved will be provided, including the specific dates. When a delegate is selected, his contact information will be sent to the host branch office.

21. Selected delegates should make their hotel arrangements within 30 days after their selection. If a delegate has not confirmed within 60 days, their application will likely be canceled. Many brothers and sisters are interested in becoming delegates to special and international conventions, and the host branches must have their full allotment of delegates to continue their planning and arrangements.

22. Selected delegates confirm their plans in one of the following ways:

- (1) Reserving hotel accommodations
- (2) Purchasing airline tickets

23. When a selected delegate has done one of these two things, he should immediately update the "My Trip" page on the jwevent.org website with this information. He should also inform the congregation secretary, who will update his delegate status as "Confirmed" on the jw.org website. Delegates who have confirmed their travel plans should submit their preferences for sharing in activities with the local brothers on the jwevent.org website. The earlier the delegate confirms his plans, the more likely it will be that the host branch can arrange the various activities according to the delegate's preferences.

24. If you find that you are no longer in a position to attend the convention, please immediately update the “My Trip” page on the jwevent.org website and inform the secretary that you are canceling so that he may update your official status on jw.org.

ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE

25. **Paperwork and Documentation:** In addition to a passport, some countries require that you have a visa or other documentation in order to enter the country. The delegate is responsible to determine what legal documentation is needed and to obtain it personally. To avoid immigration problems, the delegate or a traveling companion must know the travel requirements regarding the entire trip.

26. Please be sure that your durable power of attorney (DPA) card is up-to-date and on your person at all times during your trip. In rare cases, delegates have become ill and required hospitalization while in the convention city. The host branch will provide delegates with a local telephone number to be used in the event of an emergency. Brothers from the branch will involve the local Hospital Liaison Committee if needed.

27. **Air Travel:** After being selected, a delegate can choose either to (1) contact a travel agency of his choice to acquire airline tickets or (2) make his own flight arrangements into and out of the convention city.

28. **Hotel Accommodations:** A selected delegate is required to make his own reservations directly with one of the hotels listed on the jwevent.org website. Delegates should not use third-party booking sites to make their hotel reservations. Travel agencies should not be involved in securing hotel rooms in the convention city for the days immediately before, during, or after the convention dates. Host branches have arranged transportation for the delegates to and from branch-planned activities and the three-day convention. For this to work smoothly for thousands of delegates and local brothers assisting as guides, hotels have been contracted for delegate accommodation and to serve as transportation pickup and drop-off locations. Therefore, all delegates are required to use only the hotels on the approved list provided on the jwevent.org website.

29. Delegates should not make personal arrangements to stay with family or friends in the convention city. Delegates should not change their accommodations if later they are offered a personal arrangement. Even if a delegate feels that he can find a less expensive room or a private-home accommodation on his own, he should abide by the accommodation arrangements made by the host branch. Otherwise, he should not apply.

30. The hotels contracted by the host branch are of good quality, and the negotiated room rates are based on a specific number of rooms being filled in these hotels. Since most of the convention cities are tourist destinations and the hotels have high occupancies, the pricing of some hotels may be higher than at regional conventions in your home country.

31. **Special Rooming:** The purpose of special rooming is to provide more affordable accommodations for delegates (1) who have been in special full-time service for many years or (2) who are longtime faithful Witnesses who desire to attend a special or an international convention but are not in a financial position to cover all the costs. Special rooming accommodations are arranged in the private homes of local brothers and are available for a maximum of seven nights in the convention city.

32. If an applicant meets one of these two qualifications for special rooming, he should inform the elders that a private-home accommodation with the local brothers would make the difference for him and his mate, if married. (Other members of his travel group must

qualify on their own merit to receive special rooming. Otherwise, the group may need to be split.)

33. There is no guarantee that special rooming will be available. Each guest branch is allotted a specific number of special rooming accommodations that they can assign, so special rooming accommodations are limited. The delegate's branch will notify him if he has been selected for special rooming. When the available private-home accommodations are filled, no further special rooming accommodations will be available and delegates will need either to (1) reserve and pay for a hotel room from the approved list or (2) cancel as a delegate. The delegate should not contact the host branch to request accommodation or special treatment.

34. Delegates accepting special rooming are responsible for their own transportation to and from their private-home accommodations and the convention and to and from any branch-arranged activities associated with the convention. If the convention provides bus or other transportation during the seven nights in the convention city, delegates accepting special rooming are responsible for the transportation to and from their private-home accommodations and the bus pickup and drop-off locations. (Pickup and drop-off locations are usually hotels where the majority of convention delegates are staying.)

35. If a delegate declines private-home accommodations and decides to use one of the approved hotels in the convention city, he should inform the branch office immediately, using the Convention & Assembly Desk inbox via jw.org so that the special rooming provision can be made available to others.

ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CONVENTION CITY

36. The emphasis is for the delegates not only to benefit from the spiritual association during the three-day convention but also to spend additional days with the local brothers before or after the convention. This is so that there may be "an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith." (Rom. 1:12) Arrangements for the days you are in the convention city before or after the convention should not be made by a travel agency. Instead, the host branch office will create an itinerary for the delegate after receiving his activity preferences on the jwevent.org website (for example, going in field service, attending gatherings with the local brothers, and visiting places of local interest together). This will require spending a minimum of seven nights in the convention city.

37. For several days before and after the convention, the host branch arranges for local brothers and sisters to greet and assist delegates arriving in and departing from the convention city. Typically, this takes place at an airport but may involve other places of arrival. Keep in mind that if you plan to arrive in the convention city earlier than one week before the convention or depart more than four or five days after the conclusion of the convention, local brothers may not be on hand to greet and assist you.

38. **Ground Transportation:** Although in some cases the host branch will arrange transportation from the airport to the delegates' hotels, the delegate is primarily responsible for transportation from the airport to his hotel. Usually there will be brothers at the airport to provide some direction. Regarding transportation to the convention site, if the hotel is not within walking distance, the host branch office will arrange for transportation to and from the facility during the three convention days. They will also arrange for transportation for the branch-planned activities before or after the convention dates. The jwevent.org website will show suggested contributions so that delegates can defray these expenses by using any contribution box at the convention.

39. **Food Arrangements:** In most cases the hotels will include a breakfast each day as part of the room rate. Under normal circumstances, the host branch will make arrangements with a vendor to provide delegates with a box lunch for the three days of the convention. In such cases, delegates can defray the expenses by using any contribution box at the convention. For the remainder of the time in the convention city, delegates should be prepared to make their own food arrangements.

40. **Association With Local Brothers:** In addition to the three convention days, the delegates are being encouraged to spend some time in association with the local brothers. As mentioned earlier, the association with local brothers might include sharing in the ministry, associating with them at gatherings, or visiting local places of interest together.

41. **Use of a Travel Agency for Auxiliary Tours:** A selected delegate may wish to use a travel agency to arrange a sightseeing tour before or after the minimum of seven days spent in the convention city.

2020 SPECIAL CONVENTION LOCATIONS

Convention City	Convention Dates	Earliest Date Selected Delegates Will Be Informed	Host Branch	Programme Language(s)
Asunción, Paraguay	August 28-30, 2020	November 26, 2019	Paraguay	English, Guaraní, Portuguese, Spanish (simultaneous interpretation into Paraguayan Sign Language)
Managua, Nicaragua	January 22-24, 2021	March 10, 2020	Central America	Spanish (simultaneous interpretation into English)