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**Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention**

**Twenty-third session**

Panama City, 1–5 December 2025

## **Information for participants**

### **Note by the secretariat**

The twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 23) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), hereinafter referred to as “the conference”, will be held from 1–5 December 2025 in Panama City, Panama. The present document contains general information which may be helpful to participants. Additional information will be provided in due course on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Secretariat**

The secretariat of the UNCCD is headed by the Executive Secretary, Ms. Yasmine Fouad, and based in Bonn, Germany, at:

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification  
Langer Eugen  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Tel.: +49 228 815 2800  
Fax: +49 228 815 2898/99  
Email: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int)

### **2. Host country authorities**

The Government of Panama has established a national planning committee in charge of preparations for CRIC 23. For additional information, participants may contact:

Mr. Ricardo Herrera  
CRIC 23 National Coordinator  
Ministry of Environment  
Calle Diego Domínguez, Edificio 804, Albrook, Ancón,  
Panama City, Panama  
Tel.: +507 500-0855  
E-mail: [rherrera@miambiente.gob.pa](mailto:rherrera@miambiente.gob.pa)

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<sup>1</sup> Please check the following link: <https://www.unccd.int/cric23>.



### 3. Venue of the conference

The CRIC will convene its twenty-third session from 1 to 5 December 2025 at the Panama Convention Center in Panama City, Panama, at the following address:

Calle General Juan D. Perón, Amador,  
Panama City, Panama  
Tel.: + 507 308-8888  
Email: [ventas@panamaconventions.com](mailto:ventas@panamaconventions.com)  
Website: <https://panamaconventions.com/en/>

Consultations of affected country Parties of the Convention's Regional Implementation Annexes for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe will be convened on 30 November 2025 at the Panama Convention Center in preparation for CRIC 23.

In addition to the Plenary Hall, meeting rooms will be made available at the Panama Convention Center, without interpretation services, for informal meetings. Arrangements for such meetings should be made with the secretariat.<sup>2</sup>

Working hours for official meetings will normally be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

### 4. Admittance to the session

The provisions governing the Conference of the Parties (COP) apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of its subsidiary bodies. Participation in the conference is therefore open to Party delegations, United Nations specialized agencies and observers in accordance with the provisions of the UNCCD and the rules of procedure of the COP.<sup>3</sup>

Party delegations do not need to present credentials since the CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology are subsidiary bodies of the COP. However, an official list of delegation members should be forwarded to the UNCCD secretariat before the conference session for registration and security purposes. Observers already accredited to previous sessions of the COP should also comply with this requirement.

Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, that has not yet obtained observer status may be admitted to the conference upon the submission of an official request to the UNCCD secretariat, pending the decision on its accreditation as an observer by the COP at its next ordinary session. This request should state the competence or qualification of the body or agency in matters covered by the UNCCD.

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<sup>2</sup> Please consult the Official Journal of the session for relevant contacts.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with article 36, paragraph 2 of the Convention, for each State or regional economic integration organization which ratifies, accepts, approves, or accedes to the Convention after the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention enters into force on the 90th day after the date of deposit by such State or regional economic integration organization of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Consequently, the Parties at the opening of the conference on 1 December 2025 will be the States and regional economic integration organizations having deposited their instruments by 2 September 2025. States that deposited their instruments after 2 September 2025 but by 6 September 2025 will become Parties during the session. States that deposited their instruments after 6 September 2025 will not become Parties until after the session is closed but may participate in the session as observers. Intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, and business and industry entities that were accredited at the 16th session of the COP are listed in document ICCD/COP(16)/14. Relevant information on the status of ratifications is available on the UNCCD website: <https://www.unccd.int/convention/ratification>.

## 5. Registration

Registration of participants to CRIC 23 will consist of the following steps:

### Submission of request for registration online

A registration page has been designed to accommodate the participants' registration requests to CRIC 23. They are invited to pre-register from 15 September 2025 at the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/unccd-cric23>.<sup>4</sup>

In order to facilitate verification of requests for registration at the conference, all participants are required to upload a copy of their national passport and an official nomination letter<sup>5</sup> confirming their capacity to attend the CRIC 23 session.

Participants are also required to upload a standard passport photo in order to accelerate on-site registration and badge collection.

### Confirmation and validation e-mail

Once the request for online registration has been cleared, the UNCCD secretariat will validate and send a confirmation of pre-registration for CRIC 23 to the participants by e-mail.<sup>6</sup>

### On-site registration

Once pre-registration is approved, delegates will be able to finalize their registration on-site and collect their badges at the Panama Convention Center. Participants are to present their passport, including their pre-registration QR code, to the secretariat for badge issuance. The registration desk will be open at the following times:

- Friday 28 November to Sunday 30 November from 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday 1 December to Friday 5 December from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Participants are requested to wear their issued identity badges at all times in order to gain access to the conference centre.

## 6. How to reach the conference venue

### Arrival at Tocumen International Airport

Panama City is a well-connected global hub, making it accessible from virtually any region in the world. Panama City's primary international gateway is Tocumen International Airport (PTY), located about 24 kilometres (km) (15 miles (mi)) from downtown. Major airlines – such as Copa Airlines, American Airlines, Delta and United – operate direct or one-stop flights from numerous regions:

- **From North America:**
  - **Miami:** Around 3 hours by air.
  - **New York City:** Approximately 5 hours.
  - **Los Angeles:** Typically 6–7 hours, usually via a connecting hub.
- **From Europe:**
  - Cities like Amsterdam, London and Madrid often have connecting flights to Panama. Expect journeys of around 10–11 hours depending on the route.

<sup>4</sup> Link will be active only at the opening of registration (15 September 2025).

<sup>5</sup> In the event that one official nomination letter covers several participants, the same letter may be uploaded for every person mentioned in the document.

<sup>6</sup> Participants are kindly requested to submit their personal email address for registration purposes.

- **From Latin America:**
  - Direct or short connecting flights are common from countries near Panama, often taking between 1 and 3 hours.
- **From Africa:**
  1. Travel through a major African hub such as: Johannesburg’s O.R. Tambo International Airport (JNB), Cape Town International Airport (CPT), Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (NBO), Cairo International Airport (CAI) or Casablanca’s Mohammed V International Airport (CMN);
  2. Take a connecting flight via a major transit city, for example in Europe (Amsterdam, Madrid or Paris), the Middle East (Doha or Istanbul), or North America (Miami or New York).
  - Overall flight times, including layovers, are typically around 32 hours or more, depending on the specific route.

**How to reach the Panama City centre from Tocumen International Airport**

Taking the Metro from Tocumen International Airport to Panama City centre is both economical and efficient. Take Line 2 towards San Miguelito, where you can transfer to Line 1 to reach several stops in in the heart of the city.

The cost for a Metro journey from the airport on Line 2 is around USD 0.50. A Metro card can be bought from the ticket machines inside the station for about USD 2.00. Once purchased, it can be recharged with the needed fare. Alternatively, contactless debit or credit cards can be used (or mobile devices with Apple Pay/Google Pay) at the turnstiles to pay the fare. Operating hours for the Metro are: Weekdays (5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.); Saturdays (5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.); and Sundays and Holidays (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.).

The public bus service, often referred to as MiBus, connects both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 with various stops in Panama City. The bus stops at Terminal 1 are near Door 2 and at Terminal 2 near Door 18. The bus operates on a flat fare of around USD 0.25 per ride. A prepaid card (such as a Metrobus or RapiPass card) is needed to board (to be purchased from vendors either inside the terminal or at nearby Metro stations), which usually costs around USD 2.00 when purchasing it for the first time.

The bus route to the city centre is marked as E489. The bus service runs from early in the morning – around 4:00–5:00 a.m. – to late in the evening (up to 11:00 p.m. on most days).

Taxis are also readily available outside the airport. A ride to the city centre typically costs around USD 25.00– USD 30.00 and takes 20–30 minutes depending on traffic.

A UNCCD CRIC 23 information desk will be set up at the arrivals area of the Tocumen International Airport for conference participants.

**How to reach the Panama Convention Center**

The Panama Convention Center, located around the Amador Causeway area, can be reached by taking an official airport taxi or using a rideshare app (like Uber) from the official taxi stand outside the arrivals area. The ride generally takes about 25–35 minutes (depending on traffic) and costs around USD 30–35.

Several city bus routes connect areas in the city centre and the Amador Causeway area. Please refer to the information below on local transportation in Panama City.

The Panama Convention Center may be also reached via the Metro, although it might not be completely direct. Panama Metro’s Line 1 heads toward the Ancón area and brings you close to the Convention Center. Once you disembark at the station nearest to Ancón, a short walk or possible transfer to a connecting bus or shuttle will get you to the venue.

## Local transportation in Panama City

### *Metro<sup>7</sup> and Metrobus*

The Metro system,<sup>8</sup> launched in 2014, is one of the fastest, most affordable, and reliable ways to traverse the city. With fares around USD 0.35 per ride and frequent trains connecting major districts, the Metro helps you bypass city congestion with ease.

Complementing the Metro is the Metrobus network. These modern, air-conditioned buses cost about USD 0.25 per ride and serve extensive routes throughout the city. Many Metrobus routes converge at key transit hubs, making transfers simple once you have a rechargeable transport card.

### *Taxis and ridesharing*

Taxis are readily available throughout Panama City and may be a convenient option for short trips or when traveling with luggage. However, as they do not use meters, it is advisable to agree on the fare in advance. Typically, short rides cost between USD 1.00 and USD 5.00.

For enhanced safety, reliability, and ease of use, participants are encouraged to consider app-based ridesharing services such as Uber. These platforms provide upfront pricing, GPS tracking, driver identification, and electronic payment, features that contribute to a more secure and predictable transportation experience. Ridesharing services have become a preferred option for many visitors in Panama City.

## 7. Press centre/information for the media

The accreditation procedure and requirements for journalists and representatives of media organizations differ from those for other participants. Online registration for representatives from the media will be available from 15 September 2025 at the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/unccd-cric23><sup>9</sup> (click on “Media Registration”). After this date, on-site registration will take place at the Accreditation and Registration Centre at the Panama Convention Center during official registration hours. Journalists and representatives of media organizations will need to upload the following information to receive accreditation:

- One recent passport-sized photograph;
- A valid press card;
- A copy (picture and signature pages) of the national passport (for foreign journalists) or national identity card (for local applicants);
- A letter of introduction on an official letterhead from the bureau chief, media house or publisher. Freelance journalists must submit a letter from the media organization assigning them to cover the conference.

Journalists are advised to refer to the press kit provided on the CRIC 23 media webpage<sup>10</sup> for all other relevant issues, updates or changes to any requirements, and more information on visa applications.

For media-related issues, including inquiries about accreditation or coverage of the event, please contact:

<sup>7</sup> Please check the following link: <https://www.elmetrodepanama.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> Please check the Metro Line map for Panama City at the following link: <https://www.metrolinemap.com/metro/panama-city/>.

<sup>9</sup> Link will be active only at the opening of registration on 15 September 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Please check the link: <https://www.unccd.int/cric23/media>.

Ms. Fragkiska Megaloudi  
Tel.: +49 228 815 2859  
Email: [press@unccd.int](mailto:press@unccd.int)  
Fax: +49 228 815 2898/99

For media-related issues outside the conference venue, please contact:

Ms. Carol Simon  
Communications Coordinator for CRIC 23  
Ministry of Environment of Panama  
Email: [csimon@miambiente.gob.pa](mailto:csimon@miambiente.gob.pa)  
Tel.: +507 500-0855 ext. 6207

The conditions mentioned above apply to both local and foreign applicants. Applicants in need of a visa are advised to apply for accreditation early. Pre-registration or early registration are recommended for anyone assigned to cover the opening session. After the conference opens, journalists may experience delays during on-site registration.

Additional information and any media updates on the convention and CRIC 23 will be available on the UNCCD media webpage: <https://www.unccd.int/cric23/media>.

## **8. Transportation**

As indicated in chapter 6 above, a UNCCD CRIC 23 information desk will be set up by the host country at the arrivals area of the Tocumen International Airport for further information on transportation services and costs.

## **9. Hotel accommodation**

Participants are responsible for arranging and covering the cost of their own accommodation. A list of recommended hotels by the Government of Panama for CRIC 23 participants will be published on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage as soon as it is confirmed.

Participants are strongly encouraged to book their stay at one of the recommended hotels, as they will offer the following benefits:

- Special rates for conference participants; and
- Enhanced security measures throughout the duration of the conference.

Participants are encouraged to book their accommodation as soon as the information is published on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.

## **10. Conference services and facilities at the venue**

Information on medical services and emergency numbers, postal, telephone, fax, photocopying and internet services, catering, cafeterias, bars, banking services, travel agencies and any other additional services available for participants will be published in the Official Journal of the session and on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.

### **Medical insurance**

While first aid and emergency response will be available at the conference venue, participants are strongly encouraged to obtain international medical travel insurance. This insurance should cover emergency care, hospitalization, and medical evacuation during their stay in Panama, as any medical expenses beyond first aid remain the responsibility of the individual participant.

### **Environmental sustainability**

In line with the commitment to environmental sustainability of both the Government of Panama and UNCCD, CRIC 23 will implement a series of eco-friendly measures at the conference venue.

Please note that the use of plastic containers, including single-use plastic water bottles, is strictly prohibited within the Panama Convention Center. In support of this policy, participants are kindly encouraged to:

- Make use of the designated recycling stations available throughout the venue;
- Bring a reusable water bottle; refill stations will be provided on-site;
- Minimize printed materials and opt for digital resources whenever possible.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping to make CRIC 23 a climate-conscious and low-impact event.

### **Paperless conference**

CRIC 23 will be paperless. Accordingly, official conference documents and its Official Journal will not be printed and distributed but made electronically available on the UNCCD website.

A print-on-demand documentation facility will be made available to participants for the duration of the conference.

## **11. Intervention at official meetings**

United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/248 on the pattern of conferences requests the Secretary-General to, *inter alia*, continue his efforts to ensure the highest quality of interpretation and translation services in all six official languages (see paragraph 93 of the resolution).

In the interests of ensuring that meetings run smoothly, participants are reminded of the need to maintain a normal speed when delivering speeches or making statements, allowing the required high-quality simultaneous interpretation services to be provided to the entire satisfaction of all participants.

## **12. Side events**

Participants who wish to organize side events during the conference are requested to apply to the secretariat using the following telephone, fax and/or email contacts:

Tel.: +49 228 815 2800  
 Fax: +49 228 815 2898/99  
 E-mail: [sideevent@unccd.int](mailto:sideevent@unccd.int)

The application form will be made available on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage and should be submitted before 15 September 2025.

Participants are advised that the secretariat is responsible only for room allocation. Time slots and rooms will be allocated according to availability on a first-come, first-served basis.

A list of services available on commercial basis from local providers such as simultaneous interpretation or catering services will be posted on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.

Participants are reminded that no side events may be organized during the CRIC 23 official working hours (see chapter 3 above).

A calendar of side events during CRIC 23 will be published in the Official Journal of the session and will also be available on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage. For any additional

information on side events, please refer to the guidelines posted on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.

### **13. Immigration formalities and customs regulations**

#### **Visa regulations**

As part of the special facilitation measures for CRIC 23, the Government of Panama has enabled an extraordinary visa application process exclusively for participants of the event. This process will be conducted entirely online through the official platform of the National Migration Service of Panama: <https://lara.migracion.gob.pa/>.

A quick guide with step-by-step instructions on how to apply will be published on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage as soon as possible.

Participants are encouraged to verify whether they require a visa, as Panama grants exemptions to citizens of certain countries and to holders of valid multiple-entry visas or residence permits from specific jurisdictions (including Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America). These must:

- Be valid for at least six (6) months upon entry into Panama;
- Be multiple-entry;
- Have been used at least once to enter the issuing country.

#### **Minimum requirements for visa applications:**

- A valid passport with at least six (6) months of validity;
- Copy of national ID or residency permit (if applicable);
- Round trip flight reservation;
- Hotel reservation;
- Recent passport-sized photograph;
- Invitation letter from the UNCCD secretariat;
- Completed visa application form (provided in the guide).

#### **Important information:**

The visa will be issued in electronic format and sent by email once approved.

Please note that all applications will undergo a mandatory background review by the Ministry of Public Security of Panama. As such, the issuance of the visa remains subject to this security clearance, and final approval cannot be confirmed until this process is completed.

The visa application platform will be available starting 25 August 2025, and participants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications no later than 15 November 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (Panama time).

While applications submitted after this deadline may still be reviewed, the Government of Panama cannot guarantee that visas requested beyond this date will be processed in time for the conference.

For any visa-related inquiries or assistance, please contact:

Ms. Claudia Carranza – [ccarranza@miambiente.gob.pa](mailto:ccarranza@miambiente.gob.pa)  
Ms. Fabiola Vega – [fvega@miambiente.gob.pa](mailto:fvega@miambiente.gob.pa)  
Mr. Ricardo Herrera – [rherrera@miambiente.gob.pa](mailto:rherrera@miambiente.gob.pa)

### **Customs regulations**

For detailed information on general customs procedures, participants can refer to the official website of the National Customs Authority of Panama (Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas) at the following link <https://www.ana.gob.pa>.

Travelers may also complete pre-arrival declarations of cash and valuables via: <https://declaraciondeviajero.ana.gob.pa/Declaracion>.

Under Panamanian law, any traveler entering or leaving the country with cash, travelers' checks, or other negotiable instruments totaling over USD 10,000 (or the equivalent in other currencies) must complete and declare this amount using the traveler's affidavit form. If carrying less than USD 10,000, there is no legal requirement to submit this declaration.

#### **For CRIC 23 participants:**

Before arrival, all participants must complete an official participant information form to be made available by the Government of Panama on the UNCCD CRIC 23 webpage.

This form is mandatory and will gather essential information, including planned customs entries (e.g. for professional equipment (e.g. cameras, audiovisual gear), printed promotional materials, or any other specialized items).

Declaring these items in advance will facilitate smoother customs processes upon arrival and help prevent any delays or confusion at the point of entry.

Participants should complete this form prior to traveling to Panama and keep a copy of the customs declaration (if any) for inspection upon arrival.

## **14. Safety and security recommendations**

In line with the United Nations Security Management System policies and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) protocols for special events, all United Nations personnel attending CRIC 23 are strongly advised to register their travel on the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) system and consult the UNDSS security clearance procedures prior to departure. All personnel should remain aware of their surroundings, avoid high-risk areas and adhere to guidance issued by the United Nations Designated Official and the Security Event Coordinator in Panama.

The UNDSS in Panama currently maintains a moderate security level (Level 2) for Panama City. While the city is generally safe for travelers, there are risks associated with petty crime, road safety, and protests. Participants are advised to avoid walking alone at night in unfamiliar areas, safeguard personal belongings, and use only registered transportation (hotel taxis or rideshare apps). Foreign visitors, including United Nations participants, should always carry a copy of their passport and official ID. In case of emergency, they should contact the local authorities at 911 or the UNDSS duty officer (details will be available at the conference venue and the United Nations information desk).

## **15. General information about the conference venue**

### **Panama**

Panama is a vibrant country located at the southern end of Central America, forming a strategic bridge between North and South America. Its position on the Isthmus of Panama makes it a critical gateway for international maritime trade, as embodied by the world-famous Panama Canal.

Panama's modern cities, especially Panama City, boast a lively cosmopolitan atmosphere alongside historic neighbourhoods, making the country both a cultural mosaic and a dynamic economic hub.

Beyond its urban centres, Panama is celebrated for its rich natural beauty. Its tropical rainforests, expansive coastlines along both the Caribbean and Pacific, and more than 1,600 islands offer a haven for biodiversity and an array of outdoor adventures.

### **Information about Panama City**

Founded on 15 August 1519 by the Spanish conquistador Pedro Arias Dávila, Panama City, known locally as Ciudad de Panamá, stands as the dynamic capital of Panama and a bustling gateway between the Atlantic and Pacific. This city uniquely marries history and modernity, with its well-preserved colonial quarter, Casco Viejo, nestled alongside a striking skyline of contemporary high-rises. Panama City is renowned for its cultural diversity, dynamic business environment, and significant historical landmarks.

The city proper is home to approximately 1,086,990 residents as of 2023, while the wider metropolitan area boasts around 2,100,189 people, marking it as a significant urban centre in Central America. The core city covers about 2,082 square km (804 square mi), and the metropolitan area extends to roughly 2,560.8 square km (988.7 square mi), facilitating a diverse urban and suburban blend.

### **Tourism**

General information about Panama is available online at: <https://www.tourismpanama.com/>.

### **Currency**

The national currency in Panama is the Panamanian balboa (as **PAB or B/**).

USD 1 = 1 PAB B/.

EUR 1 = 1.17 PAB B/. (as at 22 July 2025)

In Panama, one can pay in balboa and United States dollars (USD) interchangeably. However, Panama does not print its own paper currency, so all paper money in circulation is USD. Balboa exists primarily in coin form, and both balboa and USD are used frequently.

Payments with international credit cards (Visa and Mastercard) are widely accepted in hotels, large restaurants, supermarkets and major retailers. American Express is accepted in some hotels, but is not widely used elsewhere.

Many smaller businesses, street vendors, and taxis only accept cash, so it is always good to carry some small bills.

Money can be retrieved from the ATMs using international debit/credit cards in airports, hotels and other tourist facilities throughout the country. Most ATMs accept Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus, and Plus networks. Even though Panama uses USD, some banks may charge foreign transaction fees when using a credit card.

### **Climate**

In December, Panama City experiences warm and humid tropical weather, as the rainy season gradually comes to an end. Precipitation averages around 116 millimetres over approximately 14 days, with a 48 per cent chance of rain, meaning that occasional showers remain likely throughout the month.

Daytime temperatures typically range from 24 °C to 30 °C (75 °F to 86 °F), with some fluctuation depending on the time of day. December also offers generous daylight, with an average of 11 hours and 36 minutes per day. Around the beginning of the month, sunrise is at approximately 6:17 a.m. and sunset at 5:55 p.m., shifting slightly later toward the end of the month.

### **Recommended attire**

Participants are encouraged to pack light and breathable clothing appropriate for a warm tropical climate. Due to the possibility of rain, it is also advisable to carry a small umbrella or light rain jacket for short commutes between venues.

**Electricity**

Panama uses 110–120 volts with a frequency of 60 hertz, like the United States. The country uses Type A and Type B sockets, which are the same as those in North America.

An adaptor to connect appliances and/or a transformer may be needed.

**Local time**

Panama City follows Eastern Standard Time (EST), which is Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) –5 hours. The country does not observe daylight saving time, so the time remains consistent throughout the year.

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