

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum: Rapporteur Guidelines

Supplies

- Always have two pens.
- Always have something to write on (i.e. small notepad, index cards).
- Laptops are not appropriate. Typing is distracting.
- Tape recorders are prohibited.

Preparation

- Review model session notes to understand what the final product should look like.
- Rapporteurs should arrive early (preferably 30 minutes in advance) and be familiar with the site and find a seat up front.
- Make sure panel organize/moderator know who you are and your role as a rapporteur.
- Know the agenda, participants, and panel “ground rules” for speakers and Questions and Answers beforehand. Collect speaker business cards in advance, if possible.
- Know the order of speakers beforehand.
- Coordinate with the panel moderator and information technology support staff to obtain copies of the materials (Power Point presentations, written speakers notes, background handouts) in advance – a flash drive may be required. Integrate these into the final notes as appropriate.
- Know the issues and acronyms.
- If you are unfamiliar with the issues, talk to subject experts at post before the meeting.
- Create your own abbreviations/shorthand (for titles, issues, programs, etc).

In the Meeting

- Focus on the major points versus attempting to write a “word for word” transcript.
- Meet any other rapporteurs in case you need to follow up later or want to compare points.
- Write down the names of the participants once, and then use initials.
- If you know the policy positions of the participants, write down points that are different or new.
- Quote only the most important points (i.e. if something is new, significant).
- Speak only when spoken to – do not ask questions to clarify the notes at the session.
- During Q&A, write down the country/organization of the speaker if they are asked to identify themselves.
- During Q&A, note the question asked, response, and who gave the response.

After the Meeting

- Review the meeting with the rapporteur coordinator, if possible.
- If you are not clear on a point, ask the rapporteur coordinator about it.
- Write up immediately afterward.