

# **Guidelines for the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations at sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption<sup>1</sup>**

Non-governmental organizations and their representatives are encouraged to liaise with the Secretariat during sessions on matters or concerns related to their participation.

For further information on these guidelines or on observer participation at sessions please contact:

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## **Introduction**

In line with Article 63 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (hereinafter referred to as UNCAC), “a Conference of the States Parties to the Convention is hereby established to improve the capacity of and cooperation between States Parties to achieve the objectives set forth in this Convention and to promote and review its implementation.” According to Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC (hereinafter referred to as UNCAC COSP) “relevant non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may apply to the bureau for observer status, which should be accorded unless otherwise decided by the Conference”. It further states that “other relevant non-governmental organizations may also apply to the bureau for observer status. The Secretariat shall circulate a list of such organizations with sufficient information at least thirty days prior to the Conference. If there is no objection to a non-governmental organization, observer status should be accorded unless otherwise decided by the Conference. If there is an objection, the matter will be referred to the Conference for a decision. The admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure adopted by the Conference of the States Parties.”

To encourage the effective and harmonious participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the process, the Secretariat has prepared the following guidelines on rules and conduct during attendance at sessions of the UNCAC COSP in whatever premises used for such sessions (hereinafter referred to as venues). These guidelines are not exhaustive but seek to provide information reflecting current practice regarding attendance of observers at sessions of the UNCAC COSP. They are in line with those governing NGO participation at sessions of other bodies in the United Nations system.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines shall apply mutatis mutandis to sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Any infringement of these guidelines would normally be resolved following consultations between the Secretariat and the responsible organizations and individuals.

## **A. Registration**

1. An invitation to non-governmental observers<sup>2</sup> will be sent by the Secretariat. Response to the invitation, in the form of an official letter on the letterhead of the organization with the names of their delegates, must be sent to UNODC Civil Society Team (hereinafter referred to as UNODC CST) at [ngo.unit@unodc.org](mailto:ngo.unit@unodc.org) with a copy to the Secretariat at [uncac.cop@unodc.org](mailto:uncac.cop@unodc.org).

2. Non-governmental observers pre-registering should ensure that the information on the composition of their delegation includes the individual e-mail address of each representative. Providing the individual e-mail addresses will ensure that each representative receives an automatic e-mail response confirming his or her registration. The automatic e-mail response will also contain a link enabling each representative to upload a photograph. Please note that only if both requirements are met (the provision of an e-mail address and the uploading of a photograph) can security passes be issued and made available at the registration area. The individual e-mail address of the representatives should be submitted to the Secretariat within the indicated deadline. Representatives who do not complete the pre-registration procedure must follow the normal procedure of having a photograph taken and the security pass issued upon their arrival at the Convention Center.

3. All other participants must register at the registration area located at the Convention Center.

4. As part of the high-level security arrangements, all participants are required to present their invitations or official communications identifying them as delegates, together with their passports or other official photograph-bearing identity documents, at the entrance before proceeding to the registration area in the Convention Center to register and obtain their security passes for the session. All persons and their bags and briefcases will be screened at the entrance of the conference center.

5. Registration will begin on Saturday before the Conference. On that day and on Sunday, the registration desk will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. From Monday to Wednesday during the Conference, the registration desk will be open from 8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. On Thursday and Friday during the Conference, the registration desk will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Given the large number of participants expected, delegates arriving before the opening of the session are encouraged to register as early as possible.

## **B. Access and security**

1. Only representatives whose names have been communicated to the Secretariat through the designated contact points of NGOs admitted to sessions of the UNCAC COSP, in accordance with Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the Convention, shall be registered and receive a badge.

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<sup>2</sup> Representatives of non-governmental organizations admitted to sessions of the Conference of the Parties will hereinafter be referred to as non-governmental observers.

2. Badges issued at registration shall be worn visibly at all times in the conference center during the session.
3. Participants shall be prepared to verify their identity upon the request of United Nations officials or security staff.
4. Representatives shall normally be at least 18 years of age. Younger representatives may be registered at the discretion of the Secretariat.
5. The security of the venues for sessions and meetings of the UNCAC COSP is the responsibility of the Secretariat. The Secretariat encourages non-governmental organizations and their representatives to liaise with UNODC CST during sessions on matters or concerns related to their participation.
6. The Secretariat welcomes the full support of participants in maintaining an ambience conducive to open and fruitful dialogue between Parties and observers.

### **C. NGO facilities and briefing**

1. An NGO Lounge equipped with a PC, Internet connection, Wi-Fi and a projector for PowerPoint presentations will be provided to non-governmental observers. The lounge is a place where NGOs can work, meet each other or relax. As it is intended as a common room for all NGOs attending UNCAC COSP, it cannot be used for private meetings.

### **D. Etiquette and safety**

1. Non-governmental observers admitted to sessions of the Conference of the States Parties shall cooperate with and comply with requests and instructions from United Nations officials and security staff regarding the use of facilities and access to and conduct within the venues.
2. No participant shall harass or threaten any other participant.
3. Interfering with the movement of participants at any time or location within the venues is not permitted.
4. The flags and any officially recognized symbols of the United Nations and of its Member States shall not be treated with disrespect.

### **E. Officers of the Conference<sup>3</sup>**

1. At the opening of each session, a President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur shall be elected from among the representatives of the States Parties that are present at the session.

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<sup>3</sup> Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

2. The President, the Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur shall serve as the officers of the session.

## F. Participation

1. The participation of non-governmental observers in the proceedings of meetings is governed by rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the States Parties. In this context, meetings designated as CLOSED are not open to observers.

2. As per rule 17, par. 3. “without taking part in the adoption of decisions on substantive and procedural matters, whether by consensus or by vote, at the Conference, such non-governmental organizations may:

(a) Attend plenary meetings of the Conference;

(b) Upon the invitation of the President and subject to the approval of the Conference, make oral statements or provide written reports at such meetings through a limited number of representatives on questions relating to their activities; and

(c) Receive the documents of the Conference”.

3. Make a written statement

As per Rule 17, par. 3 (b), “without taking part in the adoption of decisions on substantive and procedural matters, whether by consensus or by vote, at the Conference, such non-governmental organizations may upon the invitation of the President and subject to the approval of the Conference, (...) provide written reports<sup>4</sup> at such meetings through a limited number of representatives on questions relating to their activities”. The length of the statement should be in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 1996/31<sup>5</sup>. It must be written in one of the official languages of the UN and prepared in time for clearance by the Secretariat. Consideration must be given to any comments made by the Secretariat before the final version is submitted. The final version of the statement should be submitted at least ten days before the Conference to ensure that it can be made available on the website of the Conference before the beginning of the session. It is the responsibility of the non-governmental observers to provide hard copies of the documents they wish to distribute and bring them on the first day of the session in the required number of copies<sup>6</sup>. Statements should be sent for clearance to the Secretariat at [uncac.cop@unodc.org](mailto:uncac.cop@unodc.org) at the latest ten days before the start of the Conference to ensure timely processing. Statements are distributed in the original submitted language. If statements are submitted in more than one language, the translations must not differ in content from the original and must be of good quality. Poor translations cannot be accepted for distribution.

4. Make an oral statement

As per Rule 17, par. 3 (b), “without taking part in the adoption of decisions on substantive and procedural matters, whether by consensus or by vote, at the Conference, such non-governmental organizations may upon the invitation of the President and subject to the approval of the Conference,

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<sup>4</sup> The Secretariat is under no obligation to translate reports submitted by non-governmental organizations into the official languages of the United Nations.

<sup>5</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, paragraph 37 (d) and (e), limits the written statements by organizations in consultative status to 2,000 (general consultative status) or 1,500 (special consultative status) words per document including footnotes.

<sup>6</sup> CAC/COSP/2013/INF.1

make oral statements (...) at such meetings through a limited number of representatives on questions relating to their activities". Non-governmental observers may make an oral statement during the Plenary<sup>7</sup> upon request to the Secretariat. Requests should be coursed through the conference officer<sup>8</sup>, who would revert to them with the Secretariat's decision. Non-governmental observer speakers are called after the list of Member States and intergovernmental organisation speakers has been exhausted and there is no guarantee that they will be called because of time constraints during the session. It is the responsibility of the NGO to follow up with the speaker's list and make sure they are available at the right time. A written copy of the statement should be provided in advance so that the interpreters have the text before them. Additional copies of the statement might be needed in order to make them available at the distribution tables.

#### 5. Hold a side event

Side events are meetings, presentations or panel discussions on topics relevant to the work of UNCAC COSP but outside the formal agenda of the Conference. They may be organised by Member States, intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations. The events organised by NGOs should be coordinated two months prior to the conference with the UNODC CST and can be held in the NGO Lounge.

Non-governmental observers will need to provide their own publicity material and make it available to delegates.

#### 6. Provide publications

There is a designated area for Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to display their documents, following clearance by the Secretariat.

UNODC CST shall make available two tables for non-governmental observers attending the UNCAC COSP to display their publications. The team needs to be informed in advance whether materials will be displayed so that space can be efficiently managed. Publications and publicity material cannot be distributed to Member States in the rooms used by the Conference for the Plenary sessions.

## **G. Information materials**

1. Only United Nations officials may distribute materials in official meeting rooms.
2. Posters may be displayed only at designated locations, and only with prior permission from the Secretariat. The posting of notices for authorized events does not require prior permission from the Secretariat, provided that they are posted only in designated locations.
3. Documents may be displayed at the designated locations, provided that they are cleared by the Secretariat, there is enough space and they are relevant to the meetings. Documents for display should be clearly marked with the name of the responsible organization. Should you plan to ship material to

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<sup>7</sup> Agenda item 1 (f) entitled "General Discussion"

<sup>8</sup> The conference officer sits at the front of the Plenary room immediately next to the podium (where the President and Rapporteur are sitting).

the conference venue, it is recommended that the material is made available to the Secretariat at least ten days before the Conference starts to ensure timely clearance.

4. Other materials relevant to the meetings may be distributed at appropriate locations following clearance by the Secretariat.

5. Non-governmental observers shall refrain from using the UNCAC COSP venues for unauthorized demonstrations, and when distributing written materials shall respect other participants' social, cultural, religious or other opinions and refrain from personal attacks.

## **H. Practical information for participants**

1. Kindly refer to the Conference website, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/CAC-COSP/>, where all relevant information for participants (including the final list of recommended hotels) and provisional agenda and annotations can be found.

## ANNEX I. SPECIFIC INFORMATION RELATED TO UNCAC COSP6

In addition to the above mentioned general information relating to UNCAC COSP, refer below to specific information related to the sixth session of the Conference, which will be held in Saint Petersburg, Russia, from 2 to 6 November 2015 (hereinafter referred to as UNCAC COSP6).

For further information on these guidelines or on observer participation at sessions please also contact:

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### A. Registration

1. According to Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure for the UNCAC COSP, “relevant non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may apply to the bureau for observer status, which should be accorded unless otherwise decided by the Conference”.
2. According to the same rule “other relevant non-governmental organizations may also apply to the bureau for observer status. The Secretariat shall circulate a list of such organizations with sufficient information at least thirty days prior to the Conference”. Following a call for applications sent on 6 July, a list of relevant NGOs, which expressed interest in participating to the Conference, was circulated to States Parties for clearance.
3. Response to the invitation sent to NGOs, in the form of an official letter on the letterhead of the organization with the names of their delegates, must be sent to UNODC Civil Society Team (hereinafter referred to as UNODC CST) at [ngo.unit@unodc.org](mailto:ngo.unit@unodc.org) with a copy to the Secretariat at [uncac.cop@unodc.org](mailto:uncac.cop@unodc.org).
4. Non-governmental observers pre-registering should ensure that the information on the composition of their delegation includes the individual e-mail address of each representative. Providing the individual e-mail addresses will ensure that each representative receives an automatic e-mail response confirming his or her registration. The automatic e-mail response will also contain a link enabling each representative to upload a photograph. Please note that only if both requirements are met (the provision of an e-mail address and the uploading of a photograph) can security passes be issued and made available at the registration area.
5. Representatives who do not complete the pre-registration procedure must follow the normal procedure of having a photograph taken and the security pass issued upon their arrival at the Lenexpo Exhibition Complex, Saint Petersburg, Russia.
6. As part of the high-level security arrangements, all participants are required to present their invitations or official communications identifying them as delegates, together with their passports or other official photograph-bearing identity documents, at the entrance before proceeding to the registration area in the Lenexpo Exhibition Complex to register and obtain their security passes for the

session. All persons and their bags and briefcases will be screened at the entrance of the conference center.

7. Registration will begin on Saturday, 31 October 2015; on that day and on Sunday, 1 November, the registration desk will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. From Monday, 2 November, to Wednesday, 4 November, the registration desk will be open from 8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. On Thursday, 5 November, and Friday, 6 November, the registration desk will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Given the large number of participants expected, delegates arriving before the opening of the session are encouraged to register as early as possible.

8. Non-governmental observers attending the NGO Briefing session on Sunday, 1 November, are invited to inform the UNODC CST as early as possible in order to ensure that they have a valid badge for that day.

### **C. NGO facilities and briefing**

1. An NGO briefing session will be held on Sunday, 1 November 2015. The aim of the briefing is to inform NGO representatives about the rules of procedure, agenda and items to be discussed at the different sessions of the Conference, as well as how to get involved. The session will take place at the NGO Lounge.

2. There will also be a listing of side events for the day and of NGOs intending to make oral statement during particular agenda items.

### **E. Officers of the Conference<sup>9</sup>**

1. The President and the Secretariat will have offices at the venue of the Conference.

### **F. Participation**

1. Make a written submission

Statements should be sent for clearance to the Secretariat of the Conference at [uncac.cop@unodc.org](mailto:uncac.cop@unodc.org) at the latest by 23 October 2015 to ensure timely processing.

2. Make an oral statement

As a general guide, statements should be:

- (a) short, lasting no more than 3 minutes;
- (b) linked to a specific agenda item;
- (c) offer information drawn from the organisation's experience;
- (d) identify specific areas of concern and how these might be addressed;

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<sup>9</sup> Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

- (e) avoid focussing any adverse comments on a single Member State, drawing examples – positive and negative – from different countries;
- (f) keep to the text which has been submitted to the translators through the Secretariat;
- (g) be diplomatic in wording without compromising the message to be delivered.

## **G. Information materials**

1. Documents may be displayed at the designated locations, provided that they are cleared by the Secretariat, there is enough space and they are relevant to the meetings. Documents for display should be clearly marked with the name of the responsible organization. Should you plan to ship material to the conference venue, it is recommended that the material is made available to the Secretariat at the latest by 23 October 2015 to ensure timely clearance.

## **H. Practical information for participants**

1. Kindly refer to the Conference website, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/CAC-COSP-session6.html>, where all relevant information for participants (including the final list of recommended hotels) and provisional agenda and annotations can be found.

2. Pursuant to the host country agreement signed by the United Nations and the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the arrangements for the session, all delegates designated to the Conference will not be charged a visa fee.<sup>10</sup> Additional information regarding visa requirements is available at the host country UNCAC COSP website: <http://www.uncorruption.ru/en/forparticipants/visa/application/>.

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Information for participants, par. 44.