



General Assembly

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High-level Political Conference for the Purpose of Signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption

(Merida, Mexico, 9-11 December 2003)

Information for participants

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Background	1-2	3
II. Date and venue	3	3
III. National Organizing Committee	4-10	3
IV. Opening of the Conference and seating arrangements.	11-13	4
V. Organization of work	14-17	4
A. Signature of the United Nations Convention against Corruption	14	4
B. Statements	15-16	5
C. List of speakers.	17	5
VI. Side events	18-19	5
VII. Participation	20-22	6
VIII. Registration of participants	23-28	6
A. Credentials of representatives	23-25	6
B. Registration and grounds passes	26-28	7
IX. Official languages and documentation	29-31	7
X. Information and the media.	32-38	7
XI. Visa requirements	39-43	9



XII.	Customs facilities	44	10
XIII.	Welcome arrangements	45-49	10
XIV.	Hotel reservations	50-56	11
XV.	Services	57-63	12
	A. Conference centre	57-58	12
	B. Transport	59-61	12
	C. Security	62	12
	D. Medical facilities	63	12

Annexes

I.	Form for notification of a delegation coordinator		13
II.	Model of full powers (to be signed by the head of State or Government or the minister for foreign affairs)		14
III.	Hotel reservation form		15

I. Background

1. In its resolution 55/61 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly recognized that an effective international legal instrument against corruption, independent of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (resolution 55/25, annex I), was desirable; and decided to establish an ad hoc committee for the negotiation of such an instrument in Vienna at the headquarters of the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (now the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). The text of the United Nations Convention against Corruption was negotiated during seven sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Negotiation of a Convention against Corruption, held between 21 January 2002 and 1 October 2003. The Convention as approved by the Ad Hoc Committee was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/4 of 31 October 2003.
2. In its resolution 57/169 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly accepted the offer of the Government of Mexico to host a high-level political conference in Merida for the purpose of signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption; and invited all States to be represented at the Conference at the highest possible levels of government.

II. Date and venue

3. The High-level Political Conference for the Purpose of Signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption will be held in Merida, Mexico, from 9 to 11 December 2003. The meetings will be held at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI, Calle 60 Norte No. 299-E, Ex-Cordemex, Col. Revolución, C.P. 97118, Merida, Yucatan.

III. National Organizing Committee

4. A national organizing committee has been established to provide participants with assistance regarding the preparation and logistical aspects of the Conference.
5. The contact details for the National Organizing Committee are as follows:
Comité Organizador Mexicano
World Trade Center
Montecito No. 38, Piso 32, Oficina 1
Col. Nápoles, Delg. Benito Juárez
C.P. 03810
Mexico D.F.
Telephone: + (52)(55) 5488-28-60
Internet: www.comormex.org/onumerida
E-mail: onumerida@comormex.org
6. During the Conference, the National Organizing Committee will have offices at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI.

7. Delegations may wish to appoint a delegation coordinator to maintain liaison with the National Organizing Committee for logistical matters relating to the Conference.
8. Delegation coordinators will be provided with appropriate access codes for making hotel reservations for their delegation electronically.
9. Delegations wishing to appoint a delegation coordinator are requested to send his or her details to the National Organizing Committee, not later than 21 November, to the following electronic mail (e-mail) address: aahuactzin@comormex.org using the form attached as annex I.
10. Where no e-mail is available, information should be sent by facsimile to the following number: + (52)(55) 5488-28-54.

IV. Opening of the Conference and seating arrangements

11. The formal opening of the High-level Political Conference will take place on Tuesday, 9 December 2003, at 10 a.m., in the Plenary Hall of the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI. Delegates are requested to take their seats by 9.45 a.m. The programme of meetings, giving details about the daily activities and other relevant information, will be announced at the Conference in advance of such meetings.
12. The first plenary meeting of the Conference, on Tuesday, 9 December 2003, will be devoted to the opening ceremony and the consideration of organizational matters, such as the rules of procedure and the election of officers. It is standard practice at United Nations conferences hosted by a Member State to elect a representative of the host country President of the Conference. At the second and subsequent plenary meetings, government representatives will address the Conference.
13. At the opening of the Conference and at subsequent sessions, the delegation of each State will be assigned at least four seats, two at the table plus two in the row behind. Specifically identified seating facilities will be available for other participants in the Conference.

V. Organization of work

A. Signature of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

14. Heads of State or Government and ministers for foreign affairs are recognized as authorized to sign the United Nations Convention against Corruption without having to present full powers. Any other official wishing to sign must first present full powers, issued by the head of State or Government or by the minister for foreign affairs of the State concerned, naming the official and the Convention to be signed and duly authorizing the official to sign the instrument (see attached form in annex II). The full powers for the signature of the Convention in Merida shall be submitted to the Legal Officer representing the depositary at the Conference, who will be available from 8 December 2003 until the closure of the Conference.

B. Statements

15. Statements made by representatives during the plenary sessions will be limited to 7 minutes.

16. Delegations wishing to have their statements circulated to all participants are requested to provide a minimum of 300 copies to the Secretariat, for circulation in the languages and quantities received. It is strongly recommended that sufficient quantities be made available at the Conference venue by delegations. Commercial photocopying services for the use of delegations will be available at the Conference venue.

C. List of speakers

17. A list of speakers for the plenary session will be opened at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (contact person: Dimitri Vlassis, Secretary of the Conference, Vienna International Centre, Room E-1221; telephone: + (43)(1) 26060-4534 or -4281, facsimile: + (43)(1) 26060-5841 or -6711) as at 24 November 2003. The list of speakers will be closed in Merida at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 10 December 2003, upon approval of the President and the bureau of the Conference.

VI. Side events

18. To provide an opportunity for delegations to discuss matters related to the Convention, in particular follow-up activities to ensure its effective implementation, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/169, the Government of Mexico, assisted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, will organize the following side events in the Salon Mérida at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI:

(a) Round Table 1: “Preventive Measures against Corruption: the Role of the Private and Public Sectors”, scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 9 December, from 3 to 6 p.m.;

(b) Round Table 2: “The Role of Civil Society and the Media in Building a Culture against Corruption”, scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 10 December, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.;

(c) Round Table 3: “Legislative Measures to Implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption”, scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 10 December, from 3 to 6 p.m.;

(d) Round Table 4: “Measures to Fight Corruption in International Financial Systems”, scheduled to be held on Thursday, 11 December, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

19. In addition, a programme of social and cultural events will be organized in connection with the Conference.

VII. Participation

20. The following categories of participants will take part in the Conference:
- (a) Representatives of States, officially designated by their Government, whose credentials are to be issued by the head of State or Government or by the minister for foreign affairs;
 - (b) Observers designated by departments, offices, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system;
 - (c) Observers designated by organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in its sessions and work;
 - (d) Observers designated by regional intergovernmental organizations and other interested international bodies;
 - (e) Observers designated by non-governmental organizations that participated actively in the Ad Hoc Committee for the Negotiation of a Convention against Corruption, with due regard to the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, section VII, of 25 July 1996, and, in particular, to the relevance of their activities to the work of the Conference;
 - (f) Observers from the private sector invited to participate in the Conference;
 - (g) Experts invited to the Conference in their individual capacity.
21. The public meetings at the Conference will be open to members of the media accredited with the United Nations.
22. The United Nations will allow access to the Conference premises to distinguished participants invited by the Government of Mexico to attend the Conference.

VIII. Registration of participants

A. Credentials of representatives

23. The credentials (full name, title, address and facsimile) of representatives and the names of members of each delegation participating in the Conference should be submitted either to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime not less than one week before the opening of the Conference (2 December 2003) or to the Secretary of the Conference in Merida between 8 and 11 December 2003.
24. The contact address for the Director-General is:
- Antonio Maria Costa,
Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
c/o Dimitri Vlassis,
Secretary of the Conference
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Facsimile: + (43)(1) 26060-5841 or -6711

25. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna will examine the credentials of representatives participating in the Conference and report thereon to the Conference.

B. Registration and grounds passes

26. Admission to the Conference premises will require the presentation of grounds passes. For reasons of security, grounds passes must be worn at all times while on the Conference premises. All participants are therefore required to register in the Conference registration area located at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI (west entrance).

27. Registration will begin on Sunday, 7 December 2003, at 10 a.m., and the desk will remain open until 10 p.m. The registration desk will be open on Monday, 8 December, from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Tuesday, 9 December, and then from 8 a.m. on Tuesday, 9 December, to 6 p.m. on Thursday, 11 December.

28. To avoid long waiting periods upon registration on the morning of Tuesday, 9 December, participants are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity for advance registration on 7 and 8 December 2003.

IX. Official languages and documentation

29. The six official languages of the Conference are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Statements made in a language of the Conference during the meetings of the plenary will be interpreted into the other languages of the Conference. A representative may speak in a language other than the languages of the Conference if he or she informs the Secretariat beforehand and provides for interpretation into one of the official languages of the Conference. Official documents of the Conference will be made available in the six languages of the Conference.

30. For the side events to be held in parallel with the Conference, interpretation into and from English, French and Spanish will be provided.

31. The main document distribution counter will be located in the vicinity of the Plenary Hall. Each delegation will be assigned an individual box at the documents distribution counter in which all documents will be placed.

X. Information and the media

32. A dedicated web site will be developed to provide general information on the Conference. Documents for the Conference will be posted on the following web site: www.unodc.org/unodc/en/convention_corruption_merida.html

33. Daily press briefings by the spokesman for the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will be organized during the Conference. Media representatives who would like to cover the Conference may request additional information from either of the following:

Kemal Kurspahic,
Spokesman for the Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: + (43)(1) 26060-5629
Facsimile: + (43)(1) 26060 5931 or -5850
E-mail: kemal.kurspahic@unodc.org

or

Juan Miguel Diez
Telephone: + (52)(55) 52-63-97-27
E-mail: jmdiez@un.org.mx

or

Timothy Wall
Department of Public Information
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017
United States of America
Telephone: + (1)(212) 963 5851
Facsimile: + (1)(212) 963 1186
E-mail: wallt@un.org

34. An international press centre will be established on the Conference premises with the following facilities:

- (a) Press room;
- (b) Working areas with computer access;
- (c) Dial-up (laptop) connections;
- (d) Network (laptop) connections;
- (e) Printers;
- (f) Fax machines;
- (g) Photocopying services;
- (h) Closed-circuit television;
- (i) Briefing rooms;
- (j) Private working areas;
- (k) Signal distributor;
- (l) Areas for mobile units and broadcasting equipment.

35. Further enquiries regarding facilities for the press and other media should be addressed to:

Alejandro Rodríguez Barrera,
Gerente de Logística de Prensa
Comité Organizador Mexicano
Telephone: + (52)(55) 54-88-28-60 ext. 2505
Facsimile: + (52)(55) 54-88-28-55
E-mail: arodriguez@comormex.org

36. Members of the media wishing to cover the Conference should apply for accreditation to:

Abdellatif Kabbaj,
Chief of Media Accreditation
Department of Public Information
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017
United States of America
Telephone: + (1)(212) 963 6934
Facsimile: + (1)(212) 963 4642
E-mail: kabbaja@un.org

37. In order to reserve hotel rooms, members of the media should complete the reservation form on the National Organizing Committee's web site www.comormex.org/onumerida/prensaahospedaje.cfm using the access code RL7H42UMPW. The form will allow members of the press to book the desired number and type of rooms in their preferred category of hotel. The deadline for sending in the form to enable the National Organizing Committee to guarantee accommodation is 22 November 2003.

38. There will be a press accreditation counter at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI.

XI. Visa requirements

39. All delegates and participants in the High-level Political Conference for the Purpose of Signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption must have a valid passport and the requisite visa for their stay in Mexico. Delegates and participants will not need to have a visa stamped in their passport.

40. All delegates and participants must complete the necessary formalities in good time before the Conference with the diplomatic and consular missions of Mexico. The web site of the National Organizing Committee provides a directory of the missions.

41. The diplomatic and consular missions of Mexico are authorized to issue documents for nationals of various States in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) Visa applications should be accompanied by a copy of the official invitation from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the letter sent by the respective Government to the United Nations confirming the delegation's participation or the letter to the Government of Mexico requesting issuance of the requisite documents for the members of the delegation of the requesting country; the

latter must indicate the names and type of passport of the members of the delegation attending the Conference from the country in question;

(b) Delegates and participants in the Conference will be granted “Distinguished Visitor” visa status, which will extend to the spouses and/or financial dependants of members of delegations. Visa documents, to be issued free of charge, will be valid for 20 days with multiple-entry and exit authorization during that period.

42. In countries where Mexico has no diplomatic or consular mission, visa applications may be handled through the mission to the United Nations of the country in question, to be forwarded to the applicants, thus obviating the need for the applicant to be physically present.

43. The requesting foreign diplomatic or consular mission or the United Nations Secretariat is therefore required to present in advance a letter of the appropriate type, indicating the names, nationality and ordinary passport numbers of the members of the delegation concerned, including those of any spouses or dependants accompanying delegates.

XII. Customs facilities

44. The Government of Mexico will provide all necessary facilities to permit, for a specified period, the duty-free import of all materials, goods, technical equipment and other supplies for accredited participants, officials of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and representatives of the media.

XIII. Welcome arrangements

45. The National Organizing Committee, through the Protocol and Dignitaries Coordination Office, will be responsible for welcoming heads of delegation of Member States at Merida Airport.

46. A shuttle service will be provided for heads of delegation between the airport and their hotel. In that connection, delegations are kindly requested to provide information on their arrival and departure to the National Organizing Committee. It would be appreciated if that information could be provided as early as possible to the following address:

Lorenzo Vignal,
Coordinador de Protocolo y Dignatarios
Comité Organizador Mexicano
Facsimile in Mexico City: + (52)(55) 54-88-28-58
E-mail: lvignal@comormex.org

47. Requests for access and facilities by welcoming parties of participating States for their head of delegation to be welcomed at Merida Airport must also be addressed to Mr. Vignal, who will liaise with the airport authorities to facilitate such access. Welcoming parties may comprise three persons at most.

48. Requests for facilities and courtesies for heads of delegation, or ministers who are not heads of delegation, in transit through Mexico City International Airport

should be submitted in the form of a note verbale addressed to the Protocol Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

49. For any head of delegation intending to travel to Merida by private aircraft, the date and time of arrival of the flight in question should be communicated to the Protocol and Dignitaries Coordination Office, independently of the appropriate formalities and authorizations to be completed and obtained via diplomatic channels through the Protocol Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

XIV. Hotel reservations

50. The National Organizing Committee has made a block reservation from 8 to 12 December 2003 of a sufficient number of hotel rooms to accommodate Conference participants at reduced rates. The block booking has been guaranteed until 22 November. After that date, rooms can be reserved subject to availability.

51. Hotel reservations should be requested only from the Office of the Coordinator of the National Organizing Committee. Participants are therefore invited to complete the attached hotel reservation form (annex III). Completed forms should be sent to the Office of the Coordinator of the National Organizing Committee (telephone: + (52)(55) 5488-28-60, ext. 2200; e-mail: reservasonu@comormex.org; facsimile (to be used only in *exceptional* circumstances, please): + (52)(55) 5488-28-71).

52. For electronic hotel reservations, the National Organizing Committee will provide delegation coordinators with a code for the delegation and the address of the web site containing a reservation form. Using that form, each delegation can request the desired number and type of rooms in the selected hotel category and forward the request to the National Organizing Committee.

53. The National Organizing Committee will handle delegations' requests and assign hotel accommodation taking account of the preferences stated in the reservation form transmitted by facsimile or by e-mail. All reservations will be processed within 72 hours of receipt of requests and the National Organizing Committee will send a reservation code within that time, together with details of requirements and mode of payment of a deposit.

54. In order to change or cancel reservations, delegations should inform the National Organizing Committee by facsimile or access the web site containing the reservation form, enter their delegation code and make the desired changes. Cancellation penalties may apply.

55. The names of persons for whom reservations are made may be changed up to seven days before the arrival date, provided that the original reservation dates are not changed.

56. The above-mentioned e-mail account (reservasonu@comormex.org) can also be used for any questions delegations might have regarding hotel accommodation.

XV. Services

A. Conference centre

57. The Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI, situated in the north of Merida, has premises of over 20,000 square metres in a single building.

58. The Conference centre is equipped with all the telecommunications and electronic facilities necessary for the event. During the Conference the full range of amenities and services required by Conference participants will also be available, including a cafeteria, a medical service, an exchange bureau, cash dispensers, a messenger service, a travel agency, general information desks and a commercial photocopying service.

B. Transport

59. During the Conference the National Organizing Committee will provide a special shuttle bus service free of charge for accredited participants. The shuttle buses will run between the airport and the official hotels and also between the official hotels and the Centro de Convenciones.

60. The free transport service will operate daily from 8 to 12 December between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., with a schedule providing the frequency of buses necessary to meet participants' needs.

61. Details of the routes and schedules of the shuttle bus service will be provided in due course.

C. Security

62. During the Conference, the Mexican authorities will provide police protection and security outside the Conference premises, including at the airport, hotels and social events. The United Nations Security and Safety Service will be responsible for security within the Conference premises. Specific requests regarding security arrangements on the Conference premises and related matters should be addressed to:

Chief, United Nations Security and Safety Service
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: + (43)(1) 26060-3901
Facsimile: + (43)(1) 26060-5834.

D. Medical facilities

63. The Government of Mexico will provide medical facilities for first aid and emergencies at the Centro de Convenciones Mérida Siglo XXI.

Annex I

Form for notification of a delegation coordinator

Delegation coordinator

The following information should be sent by 21 November 2003 by e-mail (aahuactzin@comormex.org) or, in exceptional circumstances, by facsimile (+ (52) (55) 5488-28-54):

1. State: _____

2. Delegation coordinator:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Telephone: _____ Facsimile: _____

E-mail: _____ Signature: _____

3. Members of the delegation:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

4. Observers:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Annex II

Model of full powers (to be signed by the head of State or Government or the minister for foreign affairs)

Full powers

I, [name and title of the minister for foreign affairs, head of Government or head of State],

HEREBY AUTHORIZE, [name and title], to [sign^a/ratify/denounce/effect the following declaration in respect of] the [title and date of treaty, convention, agreement, etc.] on behalf of the Government of [name of State].

Done at [place] on [date].

[Signature]

^a Subject to the provisions of the instrument concerned, one of the following alternatives is to be chosen: [subject to ratification] or [without reservation as to ratification]. Reservations made upon signature must be authorized by the full powers granted to the signatory.

Annex III

Hotel reservation form

Participant					
Surname		First name		Title	
Street		Zip code	City	Country	
Institution					
Phone		E-mail		Facsimile (to be used only in exceptional circumstances, please)	
Accompanying persons					
Name		Relation		Name	
Name		Relation		Name	
Please reserve a hotel room for the above _____ persons:					
Date of arrival: _____		Time of arrival: _____		Flight number: _____	
Date of departure: _____		Time of departure: _____		Flight number: _____	
Commercial flight <input type="checkbox"/>			Private flight <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please mark the price range of your choice. Please note that these prices are subject to change for reservations received after 22 November 2003. (Prices are in United States dollars, per room per night, including taxes, gratuities for porters and room staff and breakfast.)					
<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Special category</i>	<i>Gran Turismo and 5-star superior</i>	<i>5-star and 4-star superior</i>	<i>4-star and 3-star superior</i>	<i>3-star</i>
Single	-	144	138	96	63
Double	-	159	153	107	74
Suite	275	-	-	-	-
Other requests _____					
Signature _____					

Notes:

- Hotel reservations should be requested only from the Office of the Coordinator of the National Organizing Committee. Please send this form, with all the details requested, by 22 November 2003, by e-mail: reservasonu@comormex.org or, in exceptional circumstances, by facsimile + (52)(55) 5488-28-71.
- The Office of the Coordinator of the National Organizing Committee will inform you of the name and address of the hotel booked for you. (Confirmation will be sent by e-mail; facsimile will be used only in exceptional circumstances.) At that time, in accordance with the payment instructions indicated, advance payment of an amount equivalent to one night's stay will be required. Please note that cancellation penalties may apply. Participants must settle their final bill before leaving the hotel.