Annex 1

Proposed organization of work for the twelfth session of the Working Group on International Cooperation (25-26 March 2021) in view of COVID-19 restrictions

I. Hybrid Meeting

In light of the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the twelfth session of the Working Group on International Cooperation, scheduled for 25 to 26 March 2021, cannot be held in its usual in-person format.

Whilst the Austrian authorities have cancelled all events, essential official meetings are exempt. This means that in-person meetings should only be held if necessary to maintain official activities that cannot be postponed or held virtually. In cases in-person meetings are being held, a minimum of 2-meter distance between participants in the meeting room and other preventive and health measures, such as the use of FFP2 masks, will have to be strictly adhered to.

To enable the Working Group on International Cooperation to carry out its work in line with the above measures, the hybrid meeting format, as explained below, was approved by the extended Bureau on an exceptional basis.

1. Physical presence and remote connections

The largest available room in the Vienna International Centre (VIC) on 25-26 March 2021 is Board Room B/M1, which can accommodate 176[1] tables/seats (without advisor seats), whilst adhering to the required 2-meter distance between all seats.

The attendance record of previous meetings of the Working Group on International Cooperation[2] shows that, on average, 77 Member State delegations (Parties and Signatories) sent one or several delegates to participate in the meeting. This means that the available room size will be adequate to provide Member State delegations with the opportunity to decide, **on a voluntary basis**, to designate a maximum of **1 delegate per delegation to be physically present at the meeting**.

All other delegates, including delegates from international organizations, will be connected remotely through the online interpretation platform Interprefy. **Up to 4 links/connections will be available to each Member State delegation and up to 2 links/connections to each international organization delegation.** All links have speaking and listening functions.

The Chair, Tom Burrows (United States), will chair the meeting remotely through a separate link/connection.

[1] At the time of the first distribution of this document, only 96 seats were available. The secretariat has since merged conference rooms to provide for more delegates.

[2] 2020 (virtual meeting): 79 Parties and 1 Signatory; 2019 (no meeting); 2018: 72 Parties and 1 Signatory; 2017: 85 Parties and 1 Signatory; 2015: 67 Parties and 1 Signatory.

Meeting times

As Member States will recall, the hybrid meeting format entails a reduction of each morning and afternoon meeting from 3 to 2 hours. The morning meetings will be held from 12:00 to 14:00 hrs. and the afternoon meetings from 16:00 to 18:00 hrs., local Vienna time. This scheduling takes into account participants from other time zones, including the Chair of the meeting, who will chair the meeting remotely.

2. Documentation

Pre-session documents will be issued electronically. In-session documents (i.e. the parts of the report for adoption) will also be made available electronically and in hard copy for those delegates who would be physically present during the meeting. The revised organizational arrangements and proposed schedule of work of the meetings will be reflected in the final reports of the meeting and will be posted on the webpage of the Working Group upon approval by the extended Bureau.

3. Preparation and adoption of the summary of deliberations

The summary of deliberations will be prepared by the Secretariat after the session in close coordination with the Chair. **The summary of deliberations will not be subject to negotiations and adoption and will instead be a summary by the Chair**. This will be reflected accordingly in the final report on the 12th session of the Working Group.

The above approach follows the past practice of some Working Groups of UNTOC COP including the previous meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperation (7-8 July 2020). It accommodates the limited timeframe, leaving more time for the discussion of recommendations, considering that the working group will, inter alia, revisit the discussion points for future consideration from the eleventh session of the Working Group on International Cooperation to make recommendations for consideration and endorsement by the Conference.

4. Preparation and adoption of the recommendations

The hybrid meeting format will enable the Working Group to discuss the topics in the agenda and agree upon the outcome of the meeting as described in the annotated provisional agenda of the meeting as appears below.

Owing to the reasons indicated above and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible for the Working Group to negotiate and adopt the recommendations on the two substantive agenda topics of its eleventh session (joints investigations; and use of special investigative techniques) for endorsement by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session in October 2020. Thus, the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group at its eleventh meeting, proposed that the discussion to finalize and adopt recommendations – based on the discussion points for future consideration resulting from the eleventh session of the Working Group –continue at the Working Group's twelfth session, with a view to submitting those recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session (October 2022) for endorsement.

Against this background, the discussion points on the aforementioned substantive agenda topics, as reflected in the report of the eleventh session of the Working Group, together with the comments

of States parties on the outcome of the eleventh session of the Working Group on International Cooperation (Vienna, 7–8 July 2020) (CTOC/COP/2020/CRP.4) are brought to the attention of participants in the twelfth session for further discussion and finalization (agenda item 2 of the meeting).

In addition, the Working Group will also have an opportunity to revisit and enrich discussion points relating to agenda item 3 of the twelfth session (which had also resulted from the eleventh session) and adopt them as recommendations with a view to bringing them to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh session for endorsement. For this purpose, any relevant feedback amending the existing discussion points and/or adding recommendations for adoption will be drafted by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and presented by the Chair as soon as possible after the discussion on agenda item 3 of the meeting is completed.

Panellists and all speakers are requested to clearly and explicitly state that they are making a recommendation for inclusion in the report when doing so. The panellists on agenda item 3 are invited to include their recommendations in their presentations, which will be submitted in advance and published on the website of the relevant meeting, unless advised otherwise.

5. Statements

Owing to time constraints, no **general statements** will be made during the meeting, in order to facilitate free flow of discussion and exchange of ideas. Instead, delegates who would like to make general statements are invited to send those in written format, which will be made available on the public website of the meeting, unless such delegations instruct otherwise.

Other statements made during the meeting will be subject to a maximum duration of **3 minutes**.

The maximum duration of **panellists presentations** will be communicated by the secretariat directly to the panellists.

Annex

Proposed organization of work

Date and time	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
Thursday, 25 March		
12 noon – 2 p.m.	1 (a)	Opening of the meeting
	1 (b)	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
	2	Finalization and adoption of the recommendations resulting from the eleventh meeting of the Working Group (7-8 July 2020) on the following issues: (a) The use and role of joint investigative bodies in combating transnational organized crime; (b) International cooperation involving special investigative techniques
4 – 6 p.m.	2	Finalization and adoption of the recommendations resulting from the eleventh meeting of the Working Group (7-8 July 2020) (*continued*)
Friday, 26 March		
12 noon – 2 p.m.	3	The impact of COVID-19 in the field of international cooperation in criminal matters: a one-year overview
4 – 6 p.m.	4	Other matters
	5	Adoption of the report

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