

Organization of work for the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (COP10) in a hybrid/in-person meeting format, in view of COVID-19 restrictions

Status: 8 September 2020

I. BACKGROUND

1. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (COP10) is scheduled to be held from 12 to 16 October 2020, in Vienna, Austria.
2. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, COP10 cannot be held in its usual total in-person format.
3. In this regard, consideration needs to be given to the exceptional circumstances posed by the pandemic, the high level of unpredictability as to how the situation will evolve in the coming months, the current health and safety measures, including travel restrictions and minimum distancing requirements, and the conference room capacities at the VIC. The present meeting format is not intended to set a precedent for any future meetings.
4. **In view of the above, the extended Bureau approved on 7 September 2020 via silence procedure the organizational arrangements for the holding of COP10 as outlined below.**

II. HYBRID/IN-PERSON MEETING FORMAT

A. Room size and seats available

5. Based on the minimum distancing requirements and the available rooms in the M Building of the VIC, four conference rooms will be joined in order to physically accommodate delegates as outlined below.
6. With this 4-room combination, there will be sufficient space to accommodate a maximum of **two delegates per State party, signatories and non-signatories, and one delegate per intergovernmental organization and non-governmental organization** as there would be 228¹ seats at the tables and 228 behind (advisor seat). This calculation is based on the number of delegations participating in the last sessions of the Conference which was lower than 200.

If the number of registered delegates to be physically present is higher than the number indicated above, then physical presence of intergovernmental organization and non-governmental organization will not be feasible.² To enable this registration process, the Secretariat will set an earlier deadline for the registration of delegates who wish to be physically present during the meetings and send out a Note Verbale in this regard.

¹ 228 is the updated number after a test of the conference room set-up.

² However, remote participation through an online interpretation platform will be available as outlined below.

7. All other participants will join remotely via an online interpretation platform.
8. The physical presence will be on a voluntary basis. Delegations will be kindly requested to carefully consider the health and safety requirements when deciding about the number of delegates to be physically present during the meetings of COP10. Delegates who are physically present at the meetings will be requested to adhere to **any additionally required health and safety measures** as communicated before the meetings (e.g. wearing of masks when entering the VIC).

B. Interpretation

9. In accordance with rules 34 and 35 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference, interpretation into the six official and working languages of the Conference will be provided through an online interpretation platform, e.g. Interprefy, which will enable the above-mentioned remote participation.

C. Speakers

10. The interpretation platform allows for an overall number of 300 speaker links and additional listener links. Owing to this limitation, **two speaker links will be available to each delegation of a State party, signatory and non-signatory and one speaker link to each delegation of an intergovernmental organization and non-governmental organization.** (This is independent of the delegates physically present in the meeting room).
11. This calculation is based on the number of registered delegations at COP8 and COP9. The remaining members of each delegation would receive listening links (without the possibility to speak). The speakers and listening slots are linked to the individual emails of the registered participants.
12. If the number of delegates participating in COP10 would result in a total of more than 300 speakers, the number of speaker links per delegation **will be reduced to one.**

D. Reduced meeting times and proposed schedule of meetings

13. Due to the hybrid format of the meeting, each morning and afternoon segment will need to be reduced from 3 to 2 hours. This means the combined meeting time of COP10 will be 20 hours, instead of 30 hours.
14. Morning meetings will be held from **12 pm to 2 pm and afternoon meetings from 4 pm to 6 pm, local time Vienna.** These times aim to accommodate remote participation of countries in the Asia Pacific region in the morning meetings and of countries in the Latin American region in the afternoon meetings.

E. Informal consultations on Conference resolutions/decisions

15. In accordance with Conference decision 6/3, the firm deadline for the submission of draft resolutions for consideration at the tenth session of the Conference would be Monday, 28 September 2020. However, States are urged to submit draft resolutions as early as possible to facilitate the consensus building process prior to COP10. **Without**

setting any precedent for future sessions, the deadline is therefore exceptionally moved to Monday, 21 September 2020.

16. Also in accordance with decision 6/3, informal pre-session consultations, without interpretation, will be held on Friday, 9 October 2020. The informals will take place in the plenary room of COP10 and will therefore also accommodate two delegates per State party, signatories and non-signatories. Remote participation could be accommodated (hybrid/in-person meeting format), but without interpretation, via MS Teams. The Secretariat would support the informals.
17. During COP10, States parties intending to table draft resolutions/decision will be responsible for the organization of the informal consultations as per usual practice. The Secretariat will support the informals as much as possible within its means.
18. To accommodate a large number of delegates, the plenary room of the Conference could be used for informal consultations when the COP is not in session (for instance in the morning or during lunch break). Conference room BR-A would also be available for separate informals. In addition, other smaller rooms could be utilized in case of need but only for informal consultations involving a limited number of participants to be physically present.
19. Also in light of the exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, States parties intending to table draft resolutions are encouraged to submit them as early as possible and to consider starting informal consultations in advance of the session. The Secretariat will support the informals as much as possible within its means. States parties which table resolutions are encouraged to coordinate among themselves and with the Secretariat on the schedule of informal consultations, in order to avoid, as much as possible, overlaps.

F. Committee of the Whole

20. The Conference of the Parties to UNTOC, in its [decision 5/2](#), established a Committee of the Whole to, inter alia, consider specific items of the agenda, as requested by the Conference, and submit its comments and recommendations, including draft resolutions and draft decisions, to the Conference for consideration.
21. Time for the consideration of draft resolutions and draft decisions by the Committee of the Whole will be required to discuss any resolutions which will be tabled.
22. As the Plenary will need to be suspended for the purpose of convening the Committee of the Whole (as per established practice), **deliberations under other agenda items will need to be reduced** as much as possible. It is therefore recommended that under agenda **items 2-8**, each State party and other speakers take the floor no more than once per agenda item, if possible, and that such interventions be limited strictly to **a maximum of three minutes** each. This means a maximum of one intervention **per agenda item** should be considered. Statements can also be uploaded on the website of the COP upon request.
23. **The Committee of the Whole (CoW) would therefore be allotted six hours. The CoW would allow for remote participation via Interprefy.** Please refer to the proposed amended timeline at the end of this document under organization of work.

G. Opening session

24. The organization of the opening session for COP10 was approved by the extended Bureau on 12 June 2020. However, in light of the ongoing health crisis, some modifications are required.
25. As approved by the extended Bureau, at the opening session, time will be allowed for opening statements by the outgoing President (who also presides over the election of the President and other Bureau members of the following session), the incoming President, and the Executive Director of UNODC (and any high-level speakers such as a Head of State, as applicable). Those statements will be made from the podium or through a remote speaker link, as applicable.
26. Also as approved by the extended Bureau, opening statements can be made by the Chairs of Regional Groups. However, those will need to be made **from the floor** and not as previously agreed from the lectern next to the podium, due to health and safety considerations. Alternatively, those statements would be made through a remote speaker link, as applicable.
27. Given the overall reduction of interpretation time for COP10, a strict time limit of **5 minutes** will be allotted to each speaker during the opening session.

H. Reduced item 1 (f), entitled “General discussion”

28. The provisional agenda of the Conference allows time for other statements under sub-item 1 (f), entitled “General discussion”. Due to the high number of statements which are normally made by delegations under this agenda item, it regularly ends in the afternoon of day 2. At COP9, for example, agenda item 1 (f) closed on Tuesday afternoon. This means that agenda item 1, including its sub-items, required a total of 10 hours of meeting time. This scenario will not be feasible at COP10, given the reduced interpretation time available.
29. Due to the exceptional circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, limitations on this item will be required to allow for time for meetings of the Committee of the Whole as outlined above. **The time for statements is thus strictly limited to three minutes, per past practice.** The statements would be made from the floor (or via the interpretation platform). Delegations could also use the option of sending pre-recorded videos (also limited to 3 minutes) of their statements for the “General discussion”. These video statements must be submitted to the Secretariat **by Monday, 5 October 2020** at the latest. The delegate delivering the video statement will need to be a registered participant. Statements can also be uploaded on the website of the COP upon request.

I. Registration

30. Each delegation is requested to clearly inform the Secretariat which delegates would be physically present at COP10, which delegates would receive the speaker links on Interprefy and which the listener links, as per the specifications contained in the Note Verbale sent to Member States with symbol CU 2020/338(A)/DTA/OCB/CSS and in the letter sent to organizations with symbol CU 2020/338(C)/DTA/OCB/CSS.

J. Documentation

31. In its efforts to reduce expenditure and limit environmental impact, the Secretariat has started to increase digitization of conference materials and publications. This practice will be continued in this meeting format. Pre-session documents of the meetings will be issued electronically.
32. In-session documentation (i.e. the parts of the report for adoption) will also be made available in paper form to delegates who are physically present. In addition, it will be made available electronically and will be shared through the Official Documentation System (ODS), with the link provided in the interpretation platform during the meeting. The revised organizational arrangements and schedule of work of the meeting will be reflected in the final report of the meeting.

K. Adoption of resolutions/decisions and the report of the meeting

33. Given that all States parties, signatories and non-signatories will have the equal possibility of physically attending COP10, COP will adopt resolutions and decisions, as well as the report on its meeting, in-session and as per usual practice.
34. The only change in this regard, in view of the reduced number of hours, is that the summary of deliberations will be a **summary of deliberations by the Rapporteur of the Conference**. It and will be prepared post-session and will not be the subject of negotiations. The report of the meeting will clearly indicate that the summary is not negotiated and not adopted by the Conference, and that it is a summary by the Rapporteur.

L. Side Events:

35. As agreed by the extended Bureau of the Conference, all side events will be held in a virtual format.
36. After the application period has expired (14 August), the COP Secretariat will prepare a programme of side events, subject to the approval of the executive management of UNODC and the endorsement of the extended Bureau of the Conference.
37. The final programme of side events will be communicated one month prior to the first day of the Conference. It will also be circulated electronically to all Permanent Missions and will be available on the Conference website shortly before the tenth session.
38. The organizers of the side events will be responsible for choosing the application/platform to be used for the event (e.g. MS Teams, Webex), setting up the event, granting access and organizing it. The Secretariat can provide information and advice on how to do this, upon request.

M. Exhibitions:

39. No exhibitions will be held at the VIC premises during COP10, as agreed by the extended Bureau of the Conference.

Proposed organization of work

<i>Date/time</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
Monday, 12 October		
12 p.m.-2 p.m.	1 (a)	Opening of the session
	1 (b)	Election of officers
	1 (c)	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
	1 (d)	Participation
	1 (e)	Adoption of the report of the Bureau on credentials
	1 (f)	General discussion
4-6 p.m.	1 (f)	General discussion
Tuesday, 13 October		
12 p.m.-2 p.m.	2	Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto
	2 (a)	Organized Crime Convention
	2 (b)	Trafficking in Persons Protocol
4-6 p.m.	2 (c)	Smuggling of Migrants Protocol
	2 (d)	Firearms Protocol
Wednesday, 14 October		
12 p.m.-2 p.m.	3	Other serious crimes, as defined in the Convention, including new forms and dimensions of transnational organized crime
4-6 p.m.	4	International cooperation, with particular emphasis on extradition, mutual legal assistance and international cooperation for the purpose of confiscation, and the establishment and strengthening of central authorities
	5	Technical assistance
Thursday, 15 October		
12 p.m.-2 p.m.		Committee of the Whole
4-6 p.m.		Committee of the Whole
Friday, 16 October		
12 p.m.-2 p.m.		Committee of the Whole
4-6 p.m.	6	Financial and budgetary matters

<i>Date/time</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
	7	Provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Conference
	8	Other matters
	9	Adoption of the report of the Conference on its tenth session