



**United Nations**  
Climate Change Secretariat

**Nations Unies**  
Secrétariat sur les changements climatiques

**Guidelines**  
**for the participation of representatives**  
**of non-governmental organizations**  
**at meetings of the bodies of the**  
**United Nations Framework Convention**  
**on Climate Change**

**October 2017**



### **Roles of the secretariat and non-governmental organizations**

**The security of the venues for sessions and meetings of the Convention bodies is the responsibility of the secretariat. The Executive Secretary has the authority to take any action necessary to maintain this security, including denying access to the venues.**

**Non-governmental organizations are responsible for the conduct of each of their representatives. Any behaviour not consistent with these guidelines may have an impact on the participation of the organization and/or of the individual.**

**The secretariat welcomes the full support of participants in maintaining an ambience conducive to intergovernmental discussions and negotiations, and to open and fruitful dialogue between Parties and observers.**

The secretariat encourages non-governmental organizations and their representatives 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:  
Observer Organization Liaison Unit  
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**Guidelines for the participation of  
representatives of non-governmental organizations  
at meetings of the bodies of the  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>1</sup>**

**Introduction**

Meetings of the Convention bodies are convened for negotiations between Parties to the Convention. According to Article 7, paragraph 6, of the Convention “[a]ny body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention, and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object. The admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure adopted by the Conference of the Parties.”

Since the early days of the climate change Convention, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been actively involved, attending sessions and exchanging views with other participants, including delegates. It is recognized that this involvement allows vital experience, expertise, information and perspectives from civil society to be brought into the process to generate new insights and approaches. Furthermore, the access and participation of observers to the process promotes transparency in this increasingly complex universal problem. Such participation flourishes in an atmosphere of mutual trust which acknowledges respect for others and their opinions, and takes into account the nature of intergovernmental sessions.

To promote a harmonious atmosphere supportive of discussions and negotiations at intergovernmental meetings and to encourage the effective participation of observers in the process, the secretariat has prepared guidelines for appropriate conduct during attendance at meetings of bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter referred to as UNFCCC) at whatever premises are used for such meetings (hereinafter referred to as venues). These guidelines are not exhaustive but seek to provide information reflecting current practice regarding attendance of observers at sessions and meetings of the UNFCCC. They are in line with those governing NGO participation at sessions of other bodies in the United Nations system.

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

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines shall apply mutatis mutandis to meetings of bodies of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.



#### **A. Access**

1. Only representatives, whose names have been communicated to the secretariat through the designated contact points of NGOs admitted to sessions of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 6, of the Convention, shall be registered and receive a badge.
2. Badges issued at registration shall be worn visibly at all times.
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 16 years of age. Younger representatives may be registered subject to the following terms and conditions:
  - 4.1. Anyone below 16 years of age (hereinafter referred to as the “minor”) nominated by an NGO shall be accompanied by a chaperone at all times. The chaperone must be 21 years of age or older.
  - 4.2. Unaccompanied minors below the age of 16 will not be permitted access to UNFCCC venues.
  - 4.3. Both the minor and the chaperone shall be part of the allotted quota of the respective NGO. No additional badges for either the chaperone or the minor will be allocated or issued.
  - 4.4. At the time of registration of the minor, each chaperone must sign the appropriate Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity form assuring consent of the parent/s/legal guardian/s of the minor and assuming full responsibility of the minor during their custody at the UNFCCC venues.
  - 4.5. Should the minor violate any provision of UNFCCC guidelines for participation, both the minor and the chaperone will face the same consequences.
  - 4.6. Should such consequences result in confiscation of badges, the NGO will not be allowed to nominate additional individuals in place of the de-badged minor and chaperone for the remainder of the conference/meetings.
  - 4.7. Should the chaperone violate any provision of UNFCCC guidelines for participation, the chaperone will face the consequences.
  - 4.8. Should such consequences result in confiscation of the badge of the chaperone, then another chaperone from among the registered representatives of that NGO shall assume responsibility of the minor by signing the appropriate Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity form in order for the minor to continue participation in the conference/meetings. In the absence of a registered chaperone the minor will not be allowed to participate in the conference/meetings and the concerned NGO will be requested to remove the minor from the UNFCCC venues.

#### **B. Etiquette and safety**

1. Representatives of NGOs admitted to sessions of the Conference of the Parties<sup>2</sup> 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.

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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. 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.

### **C. Participation**

1. The participation of non-governmental observers in the proceedings of meetings, and of open-ended contact groups, is governed by rules 7 and 30 of the draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties being applied, contained in FCCC/CP/1996/2, and by decision 18/CP.4. In this context, meetings designated as CLOSED are not open to observers.

### **D. 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 there is enough space and that they are relevant to the negotiations. A sample of the documents should be deposited with the secretariat for its library. Documents for display should be clearly marked with the name of the responsible organization.
4. Other materials relevant to the negotiations may be distributed at appropriate locations in consultation with the secretariat.
5. Non-governmental observers shall refrain from using the UNFCCC venues for unauthorized demonstrations, and when distributing written materials shall respect other participants' social, cultural, religious or other opinions and refrain from personal attacks.

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