

Constituted Bodies and Support Team

Background Information and Guiding Questions

Quality of engagement with constituted bodies and support team

The COPs and the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) are the most high-profile and well-attended UNFCCC sessions. However, the work of the UNFCCC is not limited to these bodies: there are over a dozen constituted bodies that meet throughout the year to work on specific topics.

Whereas the rules of procedure for observer participation at the COPs and SBs are set out in the Convention, the constituted bodies each have their own mandate and operate with different procedures for observer participation, many of which offer opportunities for engagements on the specific thematic areas. At sessions of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC), for example, observers are invited to present their views on each agenda item; these views are then openly deliberated upon by the TEC and taken into consideration in its decision-making. Mapping of how constituted bodies, work programmes and other initiatives are engaging observers was shared as part of the background note.

Not only do the constituted bodies often allow for substantial and open modes of observer participation, they also allow for relevant observers to contribute to the work of the UNFCCC within more targeted workstreams and issue areas. Yet, the rules of procedure of the constituted bodies remain poorly understood and observers are often confused about the different mandates that each body operates under. This agenda item seeks to explore how to encourage observer organizations to participate in and contribute to the work of the constituted bodies that most closely align with their area of expertise.

The discussions will also offer the opportunity for participants – both from observer organizations and constituted bodies - to share their views and experiences and align their expectations around the most effective way for observers to engage with constituted bodies, considering the technical nature and specific mandates of these groups.

- What are the good practices of modes of engagement from observers' perspective?
- How can the mandates of each constituted body be more prominently shared and understood? How can interested stakeholders be directed to the relevant constituted body that most closely aligns with their area of activity and expertise?
- What could be ways to coordinate/communicate not only with the COP Presidencies but also with HL Champions, GCA, UNFCCC Secretariat, SBs, constituted bodies?

The first survey carried out within this process asked participants to think about issues and solutions around concrete ways to facilitate meaningful observer engagement (especially from developing countries), not only during COP, but throughout the year and in other venues (e.g., during SBs, regional climate weeks, etc), and how to support more diverse participation (e.g., from developing countries and groups with less financial resources), such as through the platform of side events/ exhibits.

Inputs addressing these questions from the perspective of Agenda Item 5 have been summarized below to help frame the discussions:

Quality of engagement with constituted bodies and support team	
Key concerns	
•	A clear mapping of the "routes in" and channels to high quality/meaningful engagement is required. As a new IGO Observer organisation we are not at all clear about ways in which we are encouraged or permitted to contribute.
•	Improving the accessibility of communication which often assume a high level of understanding UNFCCC processes.
Proposed solutions	
•	Facilitating access to the intersessional meetings to participate in the preparation of decisions; facilitating the process for observers to contribute to working papers etc.
•	To be granted the opportunity for observers to submit written inputs (9) and to provide a platform for them to meet and consolidate their contributions into the process (9).
•	The process of registering for SBs and COPs can be more transparent. Such as the timetable (when to open SEORS) can be announced at a fixed date. (3)
•	Capacity building to help observers understand the process [aimed at newcomers] [on how to contribute most efficiently to the negotiation in specific areas] [briefing on on-going processes] (21).
•	A specific organization/department should be established to facilitate the observer organization (2).
•	Accessible website/ easy to find way around (substantial updates shortly before a meeting is a no-go);
•	Information/briefing for Presidency and Secretariat (regularly) on Constituencies.
•	Regular virtual exchanges/briefings with constituted bodies and/or their lead organisations prior to COP.