



# **A day in the life of an observer at COP**

An observer handbook for COP

# WELCOME!

Is this your first COP? Are you a seasoned observer?

This UNFCCC handbook\* has been prepared to assist those observers attending a UNFCCC COP for the first time. It is also useful for seasoned observers as the handbook has the key information to follow the COP in a nutshell. You will find some pointers on how to participate effectively and contribute to the UNFCCC process.

We hope this handbook will help you before and during the COP experience and we wish you a fruitful and productive conference.

*Observer Relations Team*



\*This observer handbook is a living document and will get updated as needed. New information from the original version is highlighted in yellow.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

The organizations of the United Nations system are committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an **inclusive, respectful and safe environment**. UNFCCC events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any UNFCCC event.

The Code of Conduct applies to any UNFCCC event, and any other forum organized, hosted or sponsored in whole or part by the UNFCCC wherever it takes place, and any event or gathering that takes place on UNFCCC premises whether or not the UNFCCC is organizing, hosting or sponsoring.

**The Code of Conduct applies to all participants at a UNFCCC event, including all persons attending or involved in any capacity in a UNFCCC event.**



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## CODE OF CONDUCT

# UNFCCC OBJECTIVE

The objective of the UNFCCC is to “**stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system**”.

In pursuit of this objective, the UNFCCC establishes a framework with:



Broad principles,



General obligation,



Basic institutional arrangements,



and an intergovernmental process for agreeing to specific actions over time (including through collective decisions by the Conference of the Parties, and as well as other international legal instruments with more specific obligations – such as the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement)

# WHAT IS A COP?

The **Conference of Parties** (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements. A key task for the COP is to review the reports submitted by Parties on their GHG emissions and climate action.



## More Background on the COP



The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The COP meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session. Just as the COP Presidency rotates among the five recognized UN regions – that is, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others – there is a tendency for the venue of the COP to also shift among these groups.

# OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

## UNFCCC COPs PARTICIPANTS

UNFCCC COPs are not open to the public. All participants need to be duly accredited. There are three categories of participants at meetings and conferences in the UNFCCC process:

- Representatives of Parties to the Convention and Observer States,
- Representatives of observer organizations,
- Members of the press and media.

## OBSERVERS

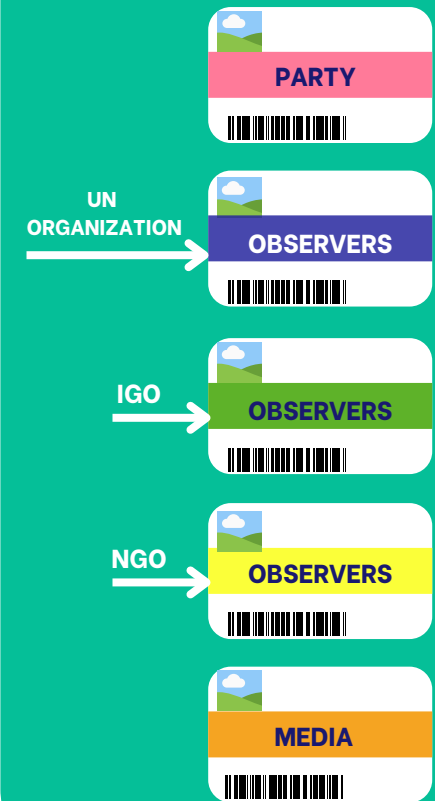
**Observer organizations** are further categorized into three types:

- the United Nations System and its Specialized Agencies,
- intergovernmental organizations (IGOs),
- and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

IGOs and NGOs can register delegates once they have received observer status.



The different participants are reflected in the color of the badge:



# NGO CONSTITUENCIES

Of the three observer categories in the UNFCCC process, the NGOs are organized within a constituency system. NGO constituencies in the UNFCCC are loose groups of NGOs with diverse but broadly clustered interests or perspectives.

Each NGO constituency is represented and organized by respective constituency focal points (CFPs). They provide a conduit for the exchange of official information between their constituents and the secretariat. Their contact details can be found [here](#).

The constituencies mirror the 9 Major Groups, established in the Agenda 21 and re-confirmed in the outcomes of the Rio+20 summit (A/RES/66/288 - The future we want):

<b>Business and Industry</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Farmers</b>
<b>Indigenous peoples</b>	<b>Local government and municipal authorities</b>	<b>Research and independent</b>
<b>Trade union</b>	<b>Women and gender</b>	<b>Children and Youth</b>



In addition to the nine NGO Constituencies, the secretariat recognized additional 'informal NGO groups'. Informal groups are recognized as groups of active admitted observer organizations contributing to the process with particular thematic thrusts that are not visibly or adequately covered by the work of the existing nine NGO Constituencies. They receive certain support from the secretariat during the sessions:

- Faith-Based Organizations,
- Parliamentarians,
- Education and Communications NGOs.

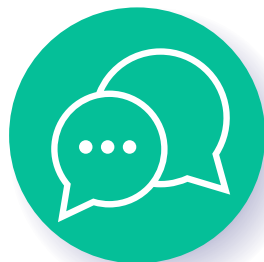
The list of Focal Points is available [here](#).



# WAYS TO ENGAGE (1)

There are many ways for observers to engage during formal sessions of the UNFCCC:

Follow the negotiation to be able to provide tailored substantive inputs to Parties, ensure transparency to the workings of a complex intergovernmental process, raise public awareness, and enhance public access to information.



Making joint constituency statements in the plenaries and during the high-level segment addressing the conference with concise and impactful messages from a diversity of voices, channeled through constituencies.

Hold bilateral meetings with government delegates to share position papers and submissions, and advocate policy perspectives. The secretariat offers meeting rooms free of charge through the Meeting Room Assignment (MRA) system. Forthcoming information will be available [here](#).



# WAYS TO ENGAGE (2)

**Showcasing and advocacy through press conferences and side events and exhibits**, whereby observer organizations can network and disseminate their messages and stories to a wide audience. For further information refer to slide 18.



Develop position papers and making formal submissions in response to calls for information and views by negotiating bodies. Information on submissions is available [here](#).

Preparing for dialogues and briefings and raising key issues and asking pertinent questions to the Presiding officers and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary. These meetings are usually chaired by one of the NGO constituency Focal Points. During the conference, information on such meetings will be published in the **Daily Programme** and on the CCTV screens.



# STAY UP TO DATE (1)



## INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The following are useful resources to find information:

- [UNFCCC website](#).
- [Provisional schedule](#)
- [UNFCCC Handbook](#).
- Learn all about the [Convention bodies](#) and [climate change acronyms](#).



## DAILY PROGRAMME (DP)\*

- Official UNFCCC guide to each day's official meetings, events and press briefings.
- Provides an overview of the status of the previous day's negotiations and links to other conference related pages.
- In electronic form to reduce carbon footprint.
- Published each morning on the conference website.
- Consult the CCTV monitors for any last-minute changes and updates.

\*Forthcoming information can be found [here](#).

## DAILY READS

[TWN Climate change updates and briefing papers](#)



[Earth Negotiation Bulletin](#)



[ECO Newsletter](#)



# STAY UP TO DATE (2)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS: THE CCTV MONITORS

- Present all over the venue
- Any changes to the Daily Programme will be shown here.
- Besides the official meetings you will find information on side events, press briefings, etc.

## INFORMATION COUNTER

- Located in Zone B
- Distribution of items such as the COP Welcome Gifts.

Left monitor

**Formal Meetings**

Right monitor

**Side events and  
other activities**



# REGULAR CONFERENCE DAY

Grab a coffee and check the online Daily Programme (DP)

8:00

9:00

If you are part of a constituency: Daily Constituencies meetings (1 hour)

Follow the negotiation meetings. Either on the Platform or in the meeting rooms.

10:00

13:00

Negotiation meetings break for lunch between 13:00 - 15:00. Go check out various catering option.

1

Back to the negotiation meetings!

15:00

18:00

End of formal meetings: use side events and receptions for networking

2

## Go to the Side Events and Exhibits hall!

Check the full day side events schedule and the list of exhibits beforehand and select those that are more interesting to you.

## End of formal meetings:

There are various side events throughout the day until 20h00. Not only official side events, activities at various hubs and Global Climate Action programme coordinated by the secretariat but also various pavillions. On some days, there are social events which are excellent opportunity for networking.

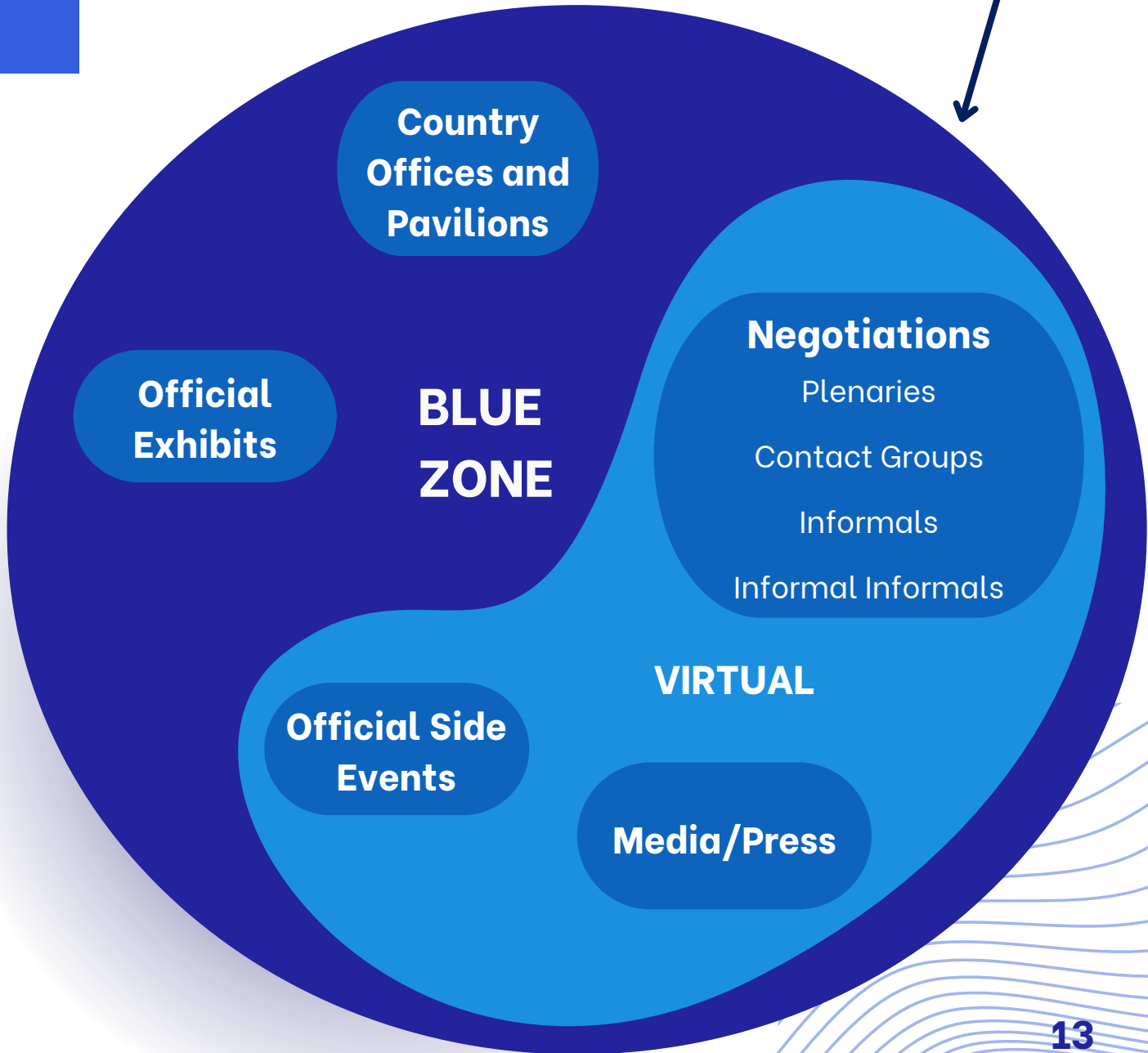


# ACCESS

UNFCCC Badge Required



Badge not required. Some events may require pre-registration or tickets



# SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

As a way to engage observers in the Convention process, the secretariat manages side events and exhibits within the negotiation venue where observers can interact with Party delegates and other conference participants. Side events and exhibits are organized by observer organizations, Parties partnering with observers, as well as UN bodies and specialized agencies.

Is your organization involved in organizing a side event or hosting an exhibit?

The most up-to-date logistical information for side event organizers, speakers, and exhibitors can be found in **SEORS (Side Events and Exhibits Online Registration System)**.

# ADVOCACY ACTIONS

Inside the conference venue, advocacy actions by admitted observers can be facilitated upon request and after confirmation by the UNFCCC secretariat.



Admitted organizations are required to submit a request (through [cool@unfccc.int](mailto:cool@unfccc.int)).



United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and secretariat staff must be present during the action to ensure the safety and security of all participants. Trust relationship between NGO colleagues, the secretariat and UNDSS colleagues is vital.



Any advocacy actions outside the conference venue, that is, outside the blue zone, are under the sole jurisdiction of the host country.





# CLEARANCE PROCESS – ADVOCACY ACTIONS

5 November 2022

## WALK THROUGH

- NGOs interested & available
- UN Department for Safety and Security
- UNFCCC secretariat

The day before



REQUEST LATEST BY  
15:00

- **Form to fill in**
- Consultations
- Guidelines

SECRETARIAT  
CLEARANCE

- Political sensitivity
- Logistical arrangements
- Web/Media announcement
- Guidelines

UNDSS CLEARANCE

- Safety and security
- Guidelines

On the day



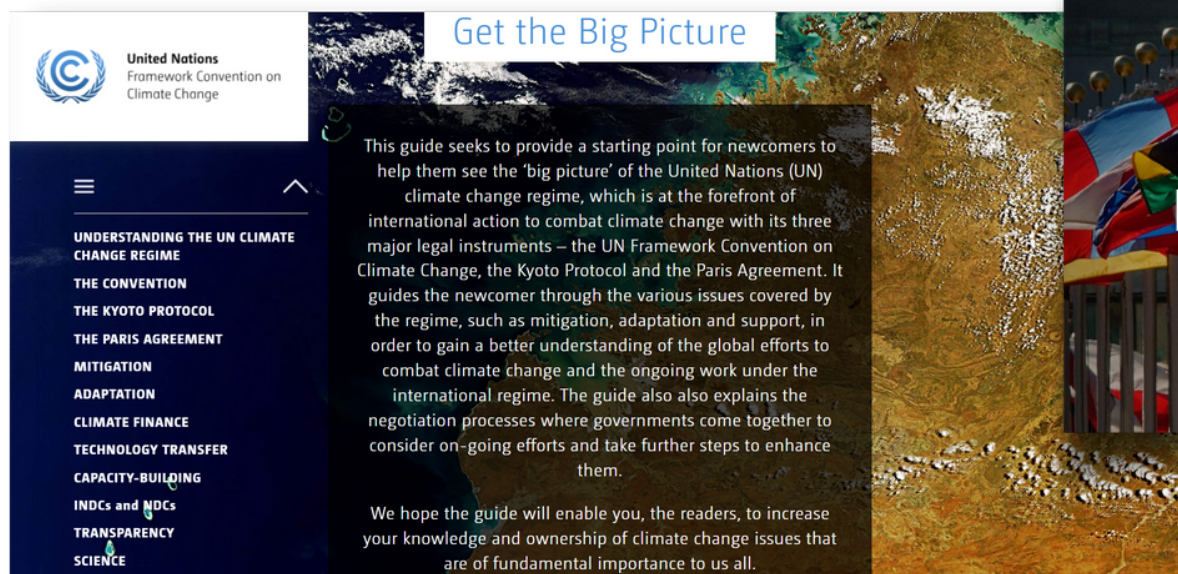
AUTHORIZED ACTION

- Staff presence
- Agreed time and content
- Guidelines
- Talk to secretariat staff, if any issues



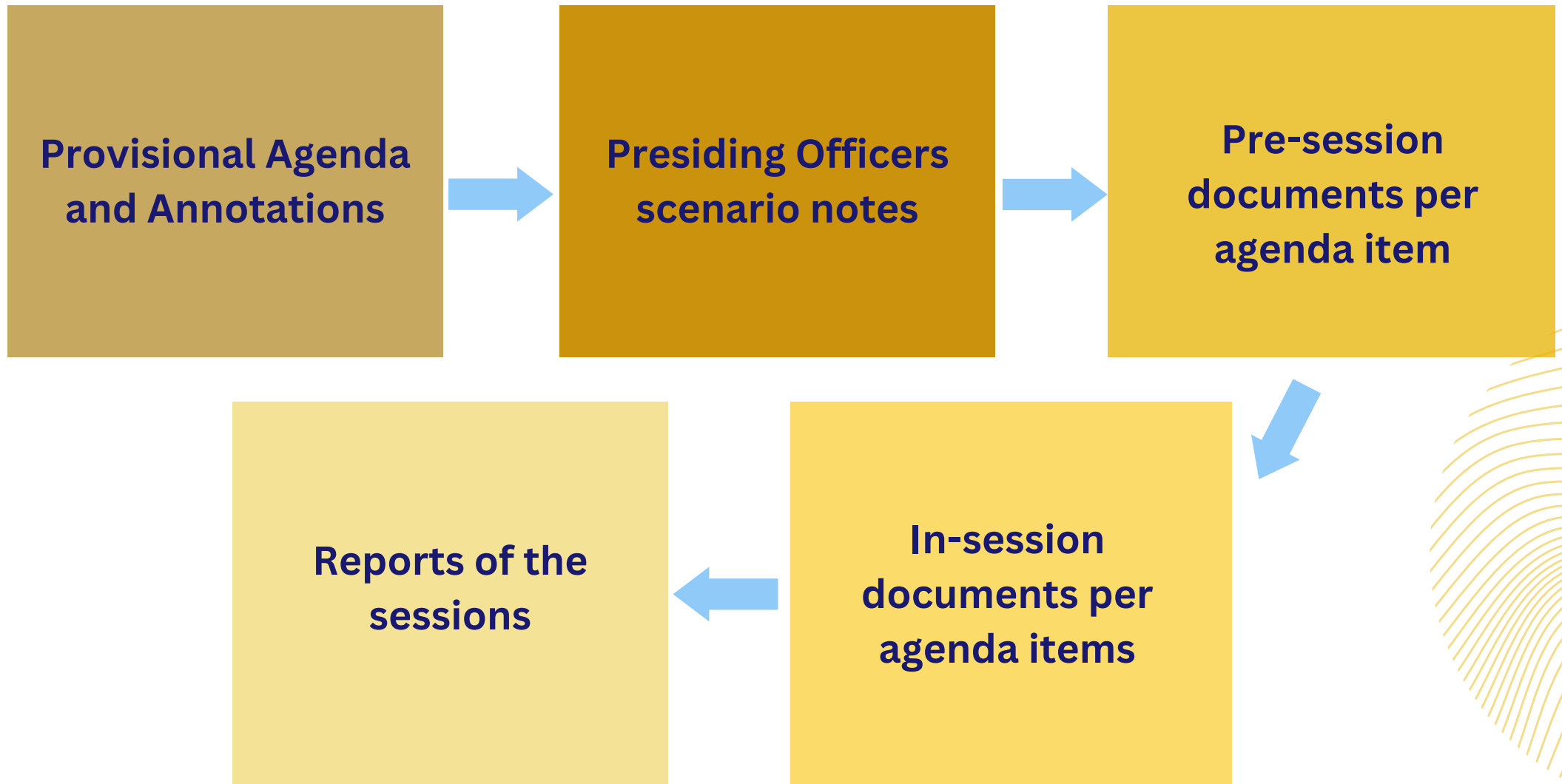
# FOLLOWING THE NEGOTIATIONS – UNFCCC GUIDE

- The **UNFCCC interactive guide** seeks to provide a starting point for newcomers to help them see the ‘big picture’ of the United Nations (UN) climate change regime.
- It guides the newcomer through the various issues covered by the regime, such as mitigation, adaptation and support, in order to gain a better understanding of the global efforts to combat climate change and the ongoing work under the international regime.
- It explains the negotiation processes where governments come together to consider on-going efforts and take further steps to enhance them.



UNDERSTANDING THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE REGIME
THE CONVENTION
THE KYOTO PROTOCOL
THE PARIS AGREEMENT
MITIGATION
ADAPTATION
CLIMATE FINANCE
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER
CAPACITY-BUILDING
INDCs and NDCs
TRANSPARENCY
SCIENCE
NEGOTIATIONS

# DOCUMENTS



# DOCUMENTS

**PRE-SESSION DOCUMENTS:** prepared by the UNFCCC secretariat with other entities' assistance prior to the session to facilitate work on a specific agenda item.

**IN-SESSION DOCUMENTS:** draft texts (works in progress) and L documents.

**POST-SESSION DOCUMENTS:** included in the reports of the sessions.

Document	Description	Language	Abbreviation
Regular document	Session reports, provisional agendas, constituted body reports, background documents	All UN languages	
Information document	Practical data (e.g. list of participants), workshop reports, background documents	English	INF
Technical	Detailed background on technical is-	English	TP
Limited distribution document	Draft decisions or conclusions presented to the governing or subsidiary bodies for adoption	All UN languages	L
Addendum	Addition to any of the above docu-	According to orig-	Add
Revision	Revision to any of the above docu-	According to orig-	Rev
Corrigendum	Corrections to any of the above docu-	According to orig-	Corr



# NEGOTIATION MEETINGS

## **PLENARY**

- Open to observers
- NGO Constituency statements, time permitting

## **CONTACT GROUPS (CGs)**

- Open to observers “unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session of the Convention body setting up that contact group object and on the understanding that the presiding officers of such contact groups may determine at any time during their proceedings that they should be closed” (Decision 18/CP. 4).
- NGO Constituency statements, time permitting

## **INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (ICs)**

- If established by CG: closed but encouraged to remain open
- If established by Plenary: “at least first and the last meetings of the informals may be open”, “recognizing the right of Parties to keep informal meetings closed” (SBI conclusion FCCC/SBI/2011/7, para 167).
- NGO Constituency statements “if time and Parties allow”

## **INFORMALS INFORMALS (INF INFS)**

- Including drafting groups/spin off groups/Friends of the Chair
- Not open to observers



# ACCESS TO MEETINGS

## FORMALITY OF MEETINGS:

Confused by types of meetings and documents?  
The chart below will make your life easier

**Open meetings are limited by capacity, overflow rooms with live feed are enabled. Closed meetings can be opened if Parties decide to do so during the sessions.**

ACCESS TO OBSERVERS: Open  Closed

<b>Meeting type</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	OPENING PLENARY	CONTACT GROUPS (CG)	INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS	CG CONCLUSIONS	CLOSING PLENARY
<b>TIMELINE</b>	<hr/>				
<b>Documents to consult</b>	PRE-SESSIONAL DOCUMENTS	DELIBERATIONS DRAFT TEXT	DRAFT TEXT	L DOCUMENT (STILL DRAFT)	ADOPTION OF L DOCUMENT



# MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

## Implications of the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process in terms of meeting rooms:



If the room is full, Party representatives have the priority, and the secretariat consults the co-facilitators to try and arrange for some representation of observers.



When negotiations or Party meetings and NGO meetings are booked back-to-back, and the former runs over time, NGO meeting organizers are kindly requested to contact Meeting Room Assignment (MRA) counter and not disturb the negotiations or Party meetings directly. The MRA team will provide support.



In the event that the meeting room you have booked is required for urgent negotiation meetings at short notice, you may be provided with an alternative solution.



# MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

## Implications of the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process in terms of seating arrangements:



Party representatives must be able to sit at the table.



**Default:** Observers are to sit in the back rows. When you are allowed to speak, please find a seat with a mic that is free.



Occasional exceptions, depending on the co-facilitators and on the nature of the agenda items requiring observer inputs: observers might be invited to sit at the table after all Parties have taken their seats.





# MAKING INTERVENTIONS

Observers are often invited by the Presiding Officers to make interventions at the opening, stock-taking and closing plenaries - time permitting. Sometimes, co-chairs of CGs might invite observers to make interventions at the end of the CGs, if time and Parties allow for it.



If your organization wishes to speak on a particular agenda item, approach the secretariat support team present in the room at the beginning of the CG / IC, and they will ask the Co-Facilitators to explore the possibility.



If the Co-chairs ask the Parties and no objection is raised, and only if time remains after all Parties have spoken, observers will be given the floor. In this case representatives of the 9 NGO constituencies have the priority, followed by other observers.



Parties are increasingly open to hearing observer statements in CGs and ICs.



# UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS



Year-long inter-ministerial consultations to develop one national position (x 198 Parties).



Negotiators come to sessions with instructions from the national governments with little leeway to deviate from.



Contentious issues forwarded to the Ministerial consultations (at COPs).



Work in the national governments where the national positions are made.



Observer's intersessional work back home: Votes, campaigns, grassroots works, work with local governments and municipal authorities, etc.



# BEYOND COP - OBSERVER ACTIONS OPPORTUNITIES



Make written submissions on agenda items where Parties have requested observer inputs.



Prepare concrete textual bridging proposals that reflect the on-going discussions and help resolve the difficulties. Share them with Parties during your bilateral meetings.



Follow the meetings of the Constituted Bodies for in-depth discussions and understanding Parties' positions on the issues at hand.



Join voices together with other groups rather than working in isolation.



# CODE OF CONDUCT

UN meetings operate on the principles openness, transparency and inclusiveness, to create an enabling environment for the participation of a diversity of voices and interests. To ensure that Parties can conduct their work and a diverse range of stakeholders can participate in the process effectively , participants are expected to adhere to a number of rules as set out below.

- **Code of Conduct to address harassment at UNFCCC conferences, meetings and events (reporting a complaint** within the code of conduct).
- **Guidelines for the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations at meetings of the bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.**
- **Use of cameras and audio/video recording devices by participants at sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other meetings and workshops.**
- **UN Security guidelines related to media actions, distribution of publicity materials, and use of UN emblem at the UNFCCC conferences .**





# We wish you a productive conference!

For more information please visit the Non-Party  
Stakeholder web pages or contact us at  
[cool@unfccc.int](mailto:cool@unfccc.int)



#### UNFCCC Negotiator App

The free Negotiator App gives you essential information about the UN Climate Change Talks.



#### UN Climate Change App

This app will give you quick access to information about the UN Climate Change process and associated events.



**TWITTER**  
[@UNFCCC](https://twitter.com/UNFCCC)  
[@simonstiell](https://twitter.com/simonstiell)



Apple phones



Android phones