



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change



HOW TO COP

A HANDBOOK FOR
HOSTING UNITED NATIONS
CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCES





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Foreword



Since 1995, government representatives from around the world have gathered every year for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (often referred to simply as “the COP”) – not only to advance work on multilateral agreements but also to provide a message of hope on a common way forward in tackling the realities of climate change. Since the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the conference has grown into one of the largest and most important intergovernmental meetings. The continuing effort to fulfil the promise of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement is spurred on by the urgency of advancing climate-related solutions.

More than formal negotiations. COPs now feature an ‘action zone’, where a rich array of events and exhibits presented by Parties, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the UNFCCC secretariat (the secretariat) showcase and promote climate action, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. This is a space for participants to interact and network. For many, the action zone has come to represent the rich diversity and collaborative nature of the conference.

The foremost gathering of climate change leaders, experts and influencers. It brings together tens of thousands of participants, from Heads of State and high-level officials, to leaders from United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, business and academia, and a wide range of international celebrities involved in climate change action. They come to share their stories at the panel discussions, exhibits, cultural events and hundreds of side events; the host country is closely involved in creating a space to support and channel their energy, innovation and commitment to action.

This handbook is intended not just as a practical reference tool, but also to highlight the far-reaching impact of hosting a COP. Each COP sets new standards for the sustainable organization of conferences – a demonstration of climate action in itself. Meeting the challenge of hosting a COP requires tremendous commitment as well as extensive communication and cooperation. We hope that this handbook, which includes detailed organizational information reflecting lessons learned and best practices from previous hosts, will inspire future hosts to deliver an exciting and successful conference that showcases their climate commitment on the global stage.

THE ESSENTIALS

Hosting a United Nations climate change conference is a formidable but rewarding challenge.

UNFCCC conferences are now the largest annual meetings in the United Nations systems, attracting between 20,000 and 30,000 participants each year. Any event on that scale has the potential to create a high climate impact due to the range of facilities and services needed to accommodate participants. Consequently, measures have been taken to incorporate sustainability at every level to ensure that UNFCCC conferences are among the most sustainable intergovernmental meetings in the world. Success requires national-scale coordination and cooperation. But the rewards are equally large – hosting a conference is an exciting way for a country to step into the global spotlight and showcase its commitment to combating climate change. Hosting a COP can generate and enhance positive national discussions and engagement on sustainability.

Time is of the essence.

The host country should start its planning as early as possible and work closely with the secretariat throughout the process. Previous host countries have emphasized the importance of early planning to ensure success.

Understand the relationship between substantive negotiations and organizational matters.

The expected substantive outcomes will shape the conference in terms of the issues to be discussed, the number of attendees, the services and security required, and the number of high-level diplomats and Heads of State and Government attending. The host country's organizational team should work closely with the COP Presidency and the negotiating team. Such planning and coordination should ideally take place 18–24 months in advance of the conference. Mechanisms for coordination between stakeholders should be established at an early stage.

Make the host country agreement the road map to success.

The host country agreement (HCA) puts in place the legal infrastructure and sets out the specific details of what is required for organizing and holding the conference in the host country. It is critical for success that the HCA be translated into reality on the ground.

Proper protocol matters.

Careful coordination of events and proceedings, an in-depth understanding of protocol and formal diplomatic rules, close cooperation between the host country and the secretariat, and a clear division of labour on protocol matters are required for a successful conference.

Engage a broad range of stakeholders.

The Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of engaging various actors in addressing climate change, and Parties have repeatedly reaffirmed the fundamental value of the contributions of civil society, known as observers in the climate change process. A general expectation has formed that all stakeholders can participate in a meaningful manner. The host country should pursue a broad stakeholder engagement strategy based on transparency, openness and inclusiveness. There is a wealth of expertise to tap into to support substantive deliberations, foster international networks and build national coalitions for a successful conference and a lasting legacy.

Media coverage is vital.

The media will tell the story of the conference to the world. Close collaboration between the secretariat and the host country is key to shaping and synchronizing media messages about the conference and managing the participation of media representatives.

Accommodate the participants.

Ensuring the availability of suitable, affordable, conveniently located hotels and other types of accommodation for tens of thousands of participants requires significant effort. Early planning, using a centralized accommodation booking agency and arranging transportation are just some of the ways that the host country can strive to meet participants' expectations and leave them with a positive impression of the host city and country.

Sustainability is attainable.

COPs, like all large events, have an environmental, social and financial impact, and generate considerable greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The host country must take proactive steps in organizing a sustainable conference and reduce emissions to the extent possible. Afterwards the government can offset the unavoidable portion of the climate footprint using certified emission reduction credits (CERs) from clean development mechanism projects to achieve climate neutrality. Recent COPs have set high sustainability standards, receiving ISO 20121, ISO 14001 and EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) certifications.



1. INTRODUCTION



This handbook is intended to provide the most up-to-date information on hosting a United Nations climate change conference. It provides a practical introduction to host countries on 'how to COP', with extensive information on a range of organizational issues, reflecting lessons learned and best practices from previous host countries and detailed contributions from the secretariat's organizational staff in their areas of expertise – from protocol and external relations, through observers and conference logistics, to sustainability, information technology and media-related issues.

What is a COP?

The United Nations Climate Change Conference is the foremost global forum for discussions on climate change. The annual conferences, held at different locations around the world, are convened under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Convention), a multilateral treaty adopted in 1992. They serve as the formal meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), where they assess global efforts to advance the Paris Agreement aim of limiting global warming to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Since 2005, when the Kyoto Protocol entered into force, the conferences have included the sessions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). Since the entry into force of the Paris Agreement in 2016, the sessions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) are also included. The secretariat supports these bodies, as well as the subsidiary and any ad hoc bodies, in their negotiations.

Having grown steadily over the past two decades, the conferences are now the largest annual meetings convened by the United Nations. Dignitaries and Heads of State and Government regularly attend as well as tens of thousands of government delegates and representatives of civil society, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (known as observer organizations) and the media. Since demand for participation usually exceeds the available space, the secretariat usually caps the number of observer participants to ensure that the capacity of the venue is not exceeded.

Number of participants at recent COPs				
	COP 22	COP 23	COP 24	COP 25
Parties and observer States	15,990	11,259	11,312	11,481
United Nations and specialized agencies	702	887	487	708
NGOs	4,162	7,719	5,063	7,446
IGOs	618	895	654	652
Total observer organizations	5,482	9,501	6,204	8,806
Media	1,204	1,300	1,130	2,185
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	22,676	22,060	18,646	22,472

Number of support personnel at recent COPs				
	COP 22	COP 23	COP 24	COP 25
Technical personnel	3,299	3,206	2,018	3,261
National security personnel	419	528	615	388
United Nations personnel and local support personnel	618	1,349	1,053	732
TOTAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL	4,336	5,083	3,686	4,381

Organization of the sessions

United Nations climate change conferences comprise the sessions of the governing bodies (the COP, the CMP and the CMA) and of the permanent subsidiary bodies, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), as well as of ad hoc working groups. The conference schedule generally includes open working meetings (i.e. plenary meetings and contact groups) and closed negotiating meetings (informal consultations, 'Friends of the President' groups, drafting groups, etc.). The high-level segment, usually in the final three days of the conference, includes statements from ministers and on some occasions Heads of State and Government and high-ranking United Nations officials. The high-level segment also often features ministerial-level round-table discussions.

How to become a host country

The COP Presidency rotates among the five United Nations regional groups: African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and other States. It is usually the country holding the COP Presidency that hosts the conference, but, if there is no offer to host, the default site is the seat of the secretariat in Bonn, Germany. In the case of five past conferences a country representing a regional group held the COP Presidency but did not host the conference itself. For example, the Government of Fiji held the Presidency of COP 23 while the conference was held in Bonn for logistical reasons. Additionally, Chile retained the Presidency for COP 25 although the conference had to be relocated to Madrid, Spain, shortly before the conference was scheduled to take place.

BECOMING A HOST COUNTRY

PRESIDENCY OF THE COP ROTATES AMONG THE FIVE UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL GROUPS



The regional groups hold consultations to determine which country from their region will offer to host on behalf of the group. Once agreed, the chair of that regional group formally sends an expression of interest to the secretariat. The COP usually takes note of the offer in a decision on the dates and venues of future sessions. Before the COP can formally accept the offer the following year, it must be confirmed by the Bureau of the COP and considered by the SBI.

In addition, before the offer can be formally accepted, the secretariat undertakes a fact-finding mission to the prospective host country to verify that all logistical, technical and financial elements necessary for hosting the conference are in place and reports back to the Bureau. The timing of these steps depends on when the offer to host is made.

Preparatory and pre-session meetings

Pre-COP meeting

In preparation for the annual conference, the host country (incoming Presidency) organizes a pre-COP meeting for heads of delegation and sometimes ministers, usually in its territory and lasting two to three days, with the objective of exchanging views on key political issues that will be considered at the upcoming conference. To facilitate the exchange of views, usually no more than 50 Parties are invited, although inviting representatives of the major negotiating groups should be considered to ensure balanced participation. Although the meeting is organized much like any other diplomatic meeting, the host country works closely with the secretariat's governing bodies team to ensure proper representation.



Pre-sessional meetings

Meetings that take place prior to the official opening of the conference, including those of regional and negotiating groups, are called pre-sessional meetings. In previous years, to facilitate the process in a representative and consensus-based manner, some host countries have opted to bear the cost of pre-sessional meetings.

Pre-sessional meetings are customarily held at the main conference venue, with the venue operational at least one week in advance of the official start of the conference. The host country and the secretariat work in close consultation from early on to ensure suitable plans are in place for hosting pre-sessional meetings.

The host country and the secretariat: a team effort

An effective partnership between the host country and the secretariat is essential for delivering a successful conference. Previous host countries have noted the unprecedented cooperation and communication required within and among various departments of the host country government as well as with their secretariat counterparts.

The host country will benefit from a clear understanding of the myriad organizational and managerial responsibilities – who does what, by when and with whom. Some responsibilities belong exclusively to the host country, while others belong solely to the secretariat. Within the secretariat, the Conference Affairs division leads the logistical preparations, while the Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress division leads the work with the incoming Presidency on substantive and procedural preparations. From the outset, the host country needs a solid understanding of the division of labour on organizational and substantive matters and an appreciation of the need for teamwork and timely information-sharing with the secretariat as preparations for the conference move forward.





2. TIMELINE FOR PREPARATIONS



The timing of the preparations to host a conference is dependent upon when the offer to host is made. The timeline on the following page is intended to provide an overview of the key steps in the planning process in a typical scenario in which a host country has made an offer to host the following year's conference (i.e. roughly one year for preparations).

Even with a full year remaining on the calendar, the actual time available for planning is often closer to nine months. Breaks in the calendar, such as holiday seasons, can slow down the planning process. Past hosts have strongly recommended that future hosts

come forward with their offer to host as early as possible. Most wish they had begun their preparations earlier, noting that two years of preparation time would have been ideal.

If a host country has more than a year to plan, internal activities and outreach to other conference participants may commence earlier. Key actions include assembling the conference team, internal budget discussions, cooperative actions with other governments, civil society engagement and outreach, and ensuring orderly procurement and selection of the general contractor and service providers.

COUNTDOWN TO COP

The basic timeline for each COP event

18
MONTHS AHEAD

Fact-finding mission by the secretariat to assess the proposed host city and possible venues

12
MONTHS AHEAD

Official announcement of a country's intention to host next COP

9 to 12
MONTHS AHEAD

First technical mission by secretariat and discussions on logistics, transportation and accommodation

3 to 4
MONTHS AHEAD

Third technical mission by secretariat with goal of finalizing the planning

4 to 5
MONTHS AHEAD

Second technical mission by secretariat to host country and confirmation of observer delegations

5 to 9
MONTHS AHEAD

Organizational team visits Bonn during sessions of the subsidiary bodies to familiarize itself with UNFCCC conferences and sign host country agreement

2
MONTHS TO GO

Official conference freight forwarder appointed to ship equipment

6
WEEKS TO GO

Set up of premises as secretariat team starts to work on the site

2
WEEKS TO GO

Registration area and equipment operational

2
DAYS TO GO

Security sweeps and venue handover to United Nations

4
DAYS TO GO

Two-day test phase

1
WEEK TO GO

Pre-session meetings begin

OPENING DAY

The United Nations Climate Change Conference is opened



18 months ahead

- Fact-finding mission by the secretariat upon invitation of the potential host country to assess the proposed host city and possible venues

12 months ahead

- Official announcement of country's intention to host the next conference, at the latest during the preceding conference

9–12 months ahead

- First technical mission by the secretariat
- Initiation of discussions on the host country agreement and its annexes, the venue, information technology, media, security, transportation, accommodation, etc.

5–9 months ahead

- Technical mission by the host country organizational team to Bonn, ideally during the sessions of the subsidiary bodies, to familiarize itself with UNFCCC conferences and to develop a network of counterparts with the secretariat's organizational team
- Signing of the host country agreement during the subsidiary body sessions in Bonn or at another opportunity
- Immediately after the subsidiary body sessions, opening of the online registration system for Parties and observer organizations to nominate delegations; the capacity of the premises should be determined by this date
- Provision of information on visas, accommodation, transportation and rental costs for offices and pavilion space on a commercial basis

4–5 months ahead

- Second technical mission by the secretariat to the host country
- Confirmation of observer organization delegations

3–4 months ahead

- Third technical mission by the secretariat to the host country with the goal of finalizing the planning phase

2 months before opening day

- An official conference freight forwarder to be appointed by the host country to receive technical equipment needed by the secretariat

6 weeks before opening day

- Start of premises set-up
- Arrival of core secretariat team to start working on site

2 weeks before opening day

- Registration area and equipment operational

1 week before opening day

- Pre-session meetings begin

4 days before opening day

- Two-day test phase

2 days before opening day

- Bomb sweep of the premises organized by the host country and handover of the venue to the United Nations

Opening day of the conference

- Conference declared open¹

3–4+ days after closing day

- Dismantling of venue
- Departure of secretariat core team and property

¹ Recent conferences have not closed after the scheduled 11 days because the negotiations had not finished; closure was delayed by one or two days.



3. THE HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT



What is the host country agreement?

The host country agreement (HCA) is a legally binding agreement between the secretariat and the host country setting out the respective responsibilities of each party in terms of the preparation, organization and conduct of the conference, including staffing and financial aspects.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 40/243, established that United Nations and bodies may hold sessions away from their established headquarters when a host government agrees to defray the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved. United Nations Secretariat administrative instruction ST/AI/342² provides guidelines for the preparation of host country agreements.

The HCA and its supporting annexes are drafted and prepared by the secretariat. The annexes are supplemented by detailed technical requirements, which are necessary for costing and procurement purposes. More details on the host country agreement and supporting annexes can be found in [Annex I](#).

How is the host country agreement prepared?

A secretariat team visits the proposed conference venue on a preliminary fact-finding mission to verify that all logistical, technical and financial elements necessary for hosting the conference are in place. The secretariat then prepares a report on the mission for consideration by the Bureau of the COP.

Subsequent planning missions are undertaken to further define arrangements with the host country, culminating in the drafting and finalizing of the HCA. The planning mission teams are led by the Conference Affairs division with support from other parts of the secretariat.

Planning missions focus on key elements of the conference, such as the estimated number of participants, the level of participation (i.e. Heads of State and Government, ministers, other high-level representatives), the participation of representatives of NGOs and civil society, and the expectations for the high-level segment. They often include visits to the proposed conference venue; discussion topics can include space for conference and meeting rooms, offices, document distribution facilities, interpretation booths, multimedia equipment, and more.

² Available at <https://hr.un.org/content/guidelines-preparation-host-government-agreement-falling-under-general-assembly-resolution>.

Financial obligations of the host country towards the secretariat

Costs and expenses, among others, shall be covered by the host country in respect of conference-servicing staff members, both for planning missions and for the conference itself.

The host country agreement is an official, public document, which needs to be easily understandable and should address the roles of each party and the benefits for both. It should provide a detailed description of the requirements. It can be useful for making financial calculations; therefore, it must be as accurate as possible. Past host countries have noted that they should have pushed for more clarity in the HCA early on to better support budget committee decisions on financing for their COPs.

Finally, the host country agreement must be translated into reality on the ground; therefore, the more detail included and the earlier, the better. Past hosts have noted that it would have been beneficial to view the HCA as more than a baseline, to avoid the need for additional planning and preparation at a later stage.

Timeline for completion

An offer to host a conference will be accepted via a COP decision, which will also specify the deadline for

concluding and signing the host country agreement. The HCA should be finalized no later than at the midyear sessions of the subsidiary bodies, which are usually held in Bonn in May or June. An official signing ceremony, with ministerial-level representation of the host country and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, is typically held to publicly mark the occasion.

The general timing of official notifications on the conference is as follows:

- **3 months** before the conference, notification sent to admitted NGOs and IGOs;
- **8–10 weeks** before the conference, notification sent to United Nations specialized agencies and related organizations;
- **8 weeks** before the conference, notification sent to Parties and an offer for funding issued to eligible Parties.

Before the notifications are issued, the host country should have information ready on the following topics of interest to conference participants:

- Hotel accommodation;
- Special transportation arrangements during the conference;
- Arrangements for visas;
- Venue and dates of pre-session meetings;
- Arrangements for the provision of offices and pavilions on a commercial basis.





4. PROTOCOL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS



A successful conference requires the cooperation and professionalism in a multilateral environment of all participants, that is, representatives of national governments, IGOs, NGOs, the United Nations system, non-Party stakeholders and others. More importantly, it requires effective collaboration on and understanding of the host country strategy for the conference and its expected outcomes, as well as familiarity with the protocol and formal diplomatic rules of the UNFCCC process, the national protocol of the host country and the functioning of the overall multilateral system. It is important that the division of labour in these areas between the host country and the secretariat is clear.

Registration procedures

Official registration of participants is the responsibility of the secretariat. However, as the host country may receive questions on registration, it should understand how the registration system works. The process of registering the host country delegation is described in [Annex II](#).

General procedures

- Party, NGO and IGO delegates are nominated via the UNFCCC online registration system (ORS).
- Parties can confirm their delegations at any time prior to or during the conference and they can increase their respective delegations at any time. Confirmed delegates will be automatically sent a letter confirming their delegate status.
- United Nations and specialized agency delegates are nominated via written communication to the secretariat.
- The deadline for NGO and IGO nominations is approximately 12 weeks before the conference. The number of badges given to such delegates may be capped due to limited space or service capacity or for safety and security reasons. Approximately six weeks before the conference, NGOs and IGOs provide confirmation of their original nominations. This process must conclude one week before the conference begins.
- NGO representatives must be at least 16 years of age. Younger representatives (minors) nominated by an NGO must be accompanied by a chaperone over the age of 21. The chaperone will be required

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- to sign a waiver assuming full responsibility for the minor during their custody at the UNFCCC venue.
- The secretariat will send updated participant lists to the host country periodically, starting at four to six weeks before the conference and ending with the final list of participants at the conclusion of the conference.
- The conference venue perimeter is under the authority of the United Nations and is considered United Nations territory. All participants who enter must wear a badge issued by the secretariat on the basis of a valid nomination by a Party, observer organization, press/media company or other provider.
- Each Party participating in the conference has a designated national focal point who nominates and confirms the Party's delegation via ORS.
- Accredited NGOs and IGOs designate a contact person who is entitled to nominate and confirm their delegations via ORS.
- Upon receiving an invitation from the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, heads of United Nations system observers and specialized agencies can forward their respective nomination letters to the secretariat requesting registration.
- The host country should register all technical and local security staff for the conference so that they can access the premises. It is suggested that the host country designate a focal point for liaison on this matter with the secretariat so as to streamline the registration process.
- Media participants can be nominated individually through ORS by entering their personal data and uploading the required documentation, which includes a letter of assignment and an active press card.
- Once the details of a delegation have been confirmed in ORS by the national focal point or designated contact person, an acknowledgment letter is automatically generated to confirm its participation. Press and media will be notified of their registration status through an acknowledgement letter.

Conference protocol

From the welcoming of participants at the general opening of the conference, to the opening ceremony of the high-level segment, following appropriate protocol is key to shaping public perception of the conference. It helps to convey the importance of the event and establish a respectful and dignified relationship among delegates, setting the tone and providing momentum to the negotiation process.

General rules on protocol

- The secretariat is responsible for protocol inside United Nations territory.
- The host country is responsible for all protocol outside of United Nations territory. The secretariat has no jurisdiction outside of that area.

- To ensure that United Nations and host country protocol services complement each other to provide a seamless and secure conference, the host country should consider nominating a protocol officer to liaise with the secretariat.
- The secretariat, through its protocol and external relations officer, coordinates the arrival of dignitaries at the United Nations premises, as well as at the opening ceremonies and other events during the conference, in consultation with the United Nations conference security officer and the protocol officer of the host country.

- Demonstrate support for the UNFCCC process and ensure momentum;
- Increase media coverage;
- Provide an opportunity for ministers and others to engage in bilateral discussions;
- Provide an opportunity for networking and communication among ministers.

The high-level segment includes an opening ceremony, often with the participation of Heads of State and Government, the United Nations Secretary-General, ministers and other heads of delegation, who deliver statements. Recently in-session high-level ministerial dialogues and round tables have also taken place. The high-level segment attracts considerable attention from the global media, non-Party stakeholders and observer organizations.

The incoming COP Presidency is invited by the SBI at its May/June session to put in place some of the arrangements for the high-level segment in consultation with Parties and the secretariat. The political level of participants attending the high-level segment is a reflection of the strategy developed by the host country and of the overall state of the climate change negotiating process.

The high-level segment

The conference includes a high-level segment, typically during the second week. The high-level segment is intended to:

- Facilitate agreement on major political issues;
- Provide policy guidance by raising issues and signalling priorities;
- Raise awareness of the strategy of the host country at the ministerial or Head of State or Government level;

THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The high-level segment is intended to:

Facilitate agreement on major political issues



Provide policy guidance by raising issues and signaling priorities



Provide opportunities for networking and communication among ministers



Demonstrate support for the UNFCCC process and ensure momentum



Raise awareness of host country strategy at ministerial and Government levels



Increase media coverage



Provide opportunities for ministers to engage in bilateral discussions



The host country should work closely with the secretariat's Conference Affairs and Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress divisions on arrangements for the high-level segment.

Detailed protocol, organizational and logistical information on the high-level segment is contained in [Annex III](#).

The COP Presidency and the host country should work with the secretariat to produce one comprehensive, up-to-date, detailed calendar of all conference-related cultural events and activities. Such planning should be done in consultation with those in the President's team and in the secretariat who are involved in the substantive negotiations to help to avoid scheduling conflicts. A key goal is to ensure that important social or cultural events are not scheduled during important official proceedings, especially during the high-level segment.

Hosting the United Nations Secretary-General

[The United Nations Secretary-General and the accompanying delegation usually attend the conference for several days in conjunction with the high-level segment. In terms of protocol, the Secretary-General is treated as a Head of State or Government.](#) Previous practice has been for the host country to cover the cost of the Secretary-General's hotel room and related charges. A representative of the host country and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary normally greet the Secretary-General up-on arrival at the airport.

[There are a number of requirements for the Secretary-General's visit.](#) The host country should assist in finding suitable hotel accommodation for the Secretary-General (a VIP suite) and the accompanying delegation (regular rooms), for example, along with making arrangements for appropriate office space and equipment at the hotel. There are also special requirements for office space, office equipment, refreshments and other supplies at the conference venue. Transportation for the Secretary-General and team also needs to be provided by the host country. The secretariat can provide the host country with details of all requirements.

Visas

[The time and effort involved in issuing visas, whether traditional or electronic, is considerable, so the host country should anticipate visa time frames and deadlines.](#) In accordance with the provisions of the host country agreement, the visa process should be expedited and visas provided free of charge. Many past host countries opted to nominate a visa focal point early on, preferably a person from the foreign affairs ministry or the immigration authority, to streamline the visa process. It is important that the focal point be part of the organizational team during the conference.

[Visas can be highly sensitive.](#) Some countries have existing laws that do not allow them to issue visas to nationals of certain countries, and in some cases immigration officials do not have the flexibility to make exceptions. Potential issues of this kind should be addressed early and directly with the secretariat. If certain delegations would not be able to participate in the conference due to visa restrictions of the potential host country, it may not be approved to host the conference.

The host country and the secretariat should establish pragmatic procedures to implement the visa provisions of the host country agreement within the framework of local immigration law. All embassies and consulates of the host country should be informed of the conference and be requested to expedite the issuance of visas to the extent possible.

A good practice, if national regulations permit, is to deliver visas in advance to delegates participating in the midyear sessions of the subsidiary bodies, as key negotiators will usually attend those sessions. Accordingly, by issuing visas in advance, during the subsidiary body sessions, the host country can ensure the strategic participation of those negotiators.

[The host country must issue visas to participants from all countries requiring a visa for the host country.](#) The secretariat shares the names and passport and contact details of all participants for the purpose of the issuance of visas. Once a person has been identified as a participant, the visa issuance procedure should be expedited. The list of nominated participants should also be the basis for exempting participants from the payment of visa fees.



Participants from some least developed countries (LDCs), African States and small island developing States (SIDS) often encounter problems in obtaining visas in their respective countries and many do not have credit cards. It is therefore important that the host country recognize these factors affecting visa arrangements and hotel accommodation. It may be the case that the host country does not have diplomatic relations with certain countries or, even if it does, visa applicants may be required to provide proof that they have sufficient financial means for a stay in the host country. However, in many cases the secretariat assumes the cost of their participation and they are official representatives of their countries, which the host country should take into account in making arrangements for visas.

If possible, provision should be made to grant visas at ports of entry. While the penalties imposed on airlines for transporting passengers without visas can be very high, it is nevertheless possible that participants, in particular ministers and other dignitaries, will arrive at ports of entry without a visa.

It is extremely important to avoid any potentially embarrassing refusal of admission at ports of entry because the participant does not have a visa. Good communication between the focal point for visas, the authorities at ports of entry and the protocol and external relations officer of the secretariat should help to avoid this problem.

Funded participants

The UNFCCC Trust Fund for Participation in the UNFCCC Process provides financial support to Parties eligible for funding. A notification of the offer for funding is prepared by the secretariat and sent to eligible Parties at least eight weeks before the conference. The offer covers travel arrangements and DSA for the period of participation. For COPs, the practice of the secretariat is to provide financial support for two nominees of all eligible Parties plus a third delegate from eligible SIDS and LDCs. Once the nominations are approved, the secretariat makes the appropriate travel arrangements for the beneficiaries.



5. FACILITIES



Given the ever-growing interest of governments, civil society and the media, COPs have grown substantially in recent years to become one of the biggest events globally and the largest within the United Nations system.

To ensure that Party delegates, members of civil society and the media can work in a comfortable and secure environment, special attention must be paid to the planning of conference facilities. The venue should be located close to adequate accommodation options and be easily accessible using the existing public transport network.

The conference venue must be equipped with facilities for security, registration, meetings, observers, media, catering, offices and VIPs.³

Security and registration/ accreditation facilities

To ensure a secure environment for all, conference participants must pass through a security screening procedure before accessing the conference facilities.

The screening process is similar to the standard screening practice applied at international airports. Hand-carried objects are scanned by an X-ray machine and participants are channelled through a metal detecting gate.

The size of the queuing and screening areas, as well as the number of screening lanes, should be proportionate to the anticipated number of participants. A well-organized screening area minimizes the likelihood of long queues, delays and participant frustration.

On their first day at the conference, after clearing security screening conference participants proceed to the registration counters to pick up their conference badge. The registration area encompasses a queuing space, several counters with approximately 25 workstations, a back office and a small storage area for equipment and supplies.

Although the UNFCCC accreditation process is relatively straightforward and efficient, the sheer number of participants having their picture taken and badge produced can lead to queues, particularly

³ More detailed technical descriptions are contained in the annexes to the host country agreement.

in the first few days. To reduce congestion, the secretariat anticipates peak periods of attendance on the basis of the conference agenda and puts in place crowd control measures such as additional queueing lanes and reactive diversion with belt barriers. Dedicated lanes are also provided to accommodate VIPs and maintain security during peak periods.

An important design element of the security screening and registration/accreditation areas is spaciousness and unobstructed flow of participants. Bottlenecks and backflows of participants should be avoided to the extent possible.

Appropriate facilities for the security offices and the control room are of great importance for overall conference security and safety. The control room is the conference surveillance and security coordination hub. In addition, the security facilities contain the armory and a rest area for the United Nations security team and the security liaison team of the host country. Facilities are also required to accommodate a medical team and emergency response equipment.

Meeting facilities

The conference meeting facilities include two large plenary halls and up to 30 meeting rooms in various configurations.

Plenary

The plenary hall is where all formal meetings of Parties take place. It should have the capacity to seat approximately 1,600 participants and is by far the most technically complex of all the conference meeting facilities.

Inside the plenary, the seating arrangement is a formal configuration. Seating is allocated in alphabetical order with each of the 197 Parties followed by Observer States to the Convention having four seats: two at a table and two advisor seats behind them. Each Party is provided with a microphone and country nameplate. Behind, seats are allocated for representatives of international organizations, United Nations specialized agencies and observer organizations. Non-allocated seating rows are located at the back of the plenary for additional participants to follow the proceedings.

The plenaries are equipped with large projector screens to enable participants in the room to see

the speakers, whether they address the plenary from the floor or from the podium. The screens should be sufficiently large to offer optimal visibility from any location within the hall. Depending on the size of the hall, it may be necessary to install additional screens in the middle of the plenary to ensure good visibility for those seated in the back rows.

The head table on the podium, which usually seats nine people, is equipped with integrated screens displaying a name handling system that informs the chair which country or entity is requesting the floor, and a geo map of the plenary to assist the chair in identifying the location of the requester. The head table has an integrated comfort monitor to view content displayed on the projection screen behind the podium. The podium is also equipped with a lectern and a teleprompter, which is usually only used during the high-level segment for the national statements of Heads of State and Government.

The plenaries are equipped with interpretation booths to facilitate simultaneous interpretation in all six official United Nations languages. Participants are provided with infrared headsets that enable them to follow the proceedings in the language of their choice.

A minimum of four television broadcast-quality cameras is required in the plenaries, which, along with the dome camera system, transmit the proceedings to a master control room.⁴ From there, all images and audio feeds in each of the six United Nations languages are made available to the media for further editing and dissemination.

Meeting and conference rooms

The conference facilities usually include between 25 and 30 meeting rooms of various sizes and configurations. The exact number, as well as the set-up of the rooms, depends on the conference agenda. The most popular configuration, given that the rooms are usually used for negotiations, is the hollow square, accommodating 20 to 100 persons, where all Parties face each other. Additional seats are generally provided in a second row for advisors or as overflow to allow observers and others to follow the proceedings. All tables are equipped with electrical power outlets to enable participants to charge their electrical equipment while working.

⁴ See media facilities on p.19.



Table arrangements for more than 50 persons require additional audiovisual equipment (monitors, dome cameras, spotting systems) to enable participants to see the speakers and follow the presentations and text on screen.

The second most popular configuration is the classroom format, with 100–250 seats at tables. Each table has one microphone per two seats and, similar to the square format referred to above, is equipped with electrical power outlets to enable participants to charge their electrical equipment. The classroom format is popular with the regional negotiating groups (SIDS, LDCs, African Group and Group of 77 and China), which hold coordination meetings twice daily. For some special events, the head table in rooms with a classroom format may be replaced with Davos-style seating (lounge chairs and small coffee tables). This configuration necessitates the provision of handheld or lavalier microphones.

Other, less frequently used formats include the U-shape, banquet style (with several round tables) or round-table format (with one large table). A standard feature of all rooms is the ability to record audio (and video, if applicable) and facilitate virtual participation.

Meeting rooms can be equipped with interpretation facilities for up to three languages. The provision of such interpretation facilities depends on the conference agenda and the nature of the events to be held in the meeting room.

Observer facilities

Observers play a central role at United Nations climate change conferences. The number of observer participants and the range of observer-related activities has increased significantly in recent years.

Observer facilities are focused generally on side event rooms and exhibit booths. Between 6 and 13 rooms are dedicated to conference side events. The rooms are set up in theatre style (seats only), with a head table for between six and eight panellists/presenters. All rooms are equipped with a projection screen and a projector (alternatively, large LCD screens can be used), adequate sound amplification equipment for the room size, one microphone per two speakers at the table and up to four handheld microphones for the audience. In line with the secretariat's aim of enhancing non-Party stakeholder engagement and participation, all side event rooms are equipped

with virtual participation facilities, including static cameras focusing on the head table and webcasting functionality. Side event rooms are also equipped with facilities for the remote participation of panellists via Skype or similar videoconference platforms.

Observers as well as Parties are also offered the opportunity to present their work at exhibit spaces free of charge. In line with the secretariat's paper-light policy, exhibit spaces are equipped with LCD screens to enable exhibitors to present their content in digital format.

There are on average 30–70 such exhibit spaces at a conference; the layout depends on the space. The detailed layout and design is developed in close cooperation with the secretariat during the planning phase.

Media facilities

The media play an important role in amplifying the messages from the conference as well as informing the broader public of climate change issues and the progress of the negotiations. To facilitate their work, media representatives need a dedicated, well-equipped area from where they can disseminate the information coming out of the conference.

The heart of the media area is the master control room, where audio and video feeds from all over the conference venue (from the plenaries, press conference rooms and certain adequately equipped meeting rooms) converge. The master control room is usually equipped and operated by the host country's national broadcaster as it has the necessary equipment and technical expertise to run such an operation.

The international broadcast centre, which should be in close proximity to the master control room, accommodates international, regional and local radio and television broadcasters in approximately 80 workspaces in an open-plan layout, allowing for approximately 10 enclosed cubicles for large international broadcasters and 12 enclosed cubicles for international print news agencies.

The written press area (for online and print media) should accommodate at least 370 tables with chairs, 100 laptop workstations with internet access, and 200 desks with integrated power outlets and network cables.

In addition to these facilities, the media require 'stake-out' positions – a permanent interview corner equipped with branded event backdrops and adequate lighting – to enable ministers and other VIPs to make brief appearances or statements on camera.

Accredited media also require as many as 30 stand-up positions for TV broadcasters to make live broadcasts, which should be made available in appropriate locations throughout the conference venue. Stand-up positions are not permitted in plenary rooms.

Ideally the stand-up positions should be located within 100 m of the satellite farm (the area in which satellite newsgathering vehicles are parked). The satellite farm should be located in a central position within the venue where satellite newsgathering vehicles can receive power and audio/video feeds from the master control room and stand-up positions.

Two press conference rooms provide the opportunity for Parties and observers to communicate with the media. The rooms should be equipped with a minimum of two cameras. All press conferences are webcast live and on demand.

Catering facilities

Owing to the intensity of the work programme during a conference, it is important to provide adequate catering facilities at the venue. Experience has shown that, owing to the diversity of the participants, it is advisable to have three types of catering facilities: a large food court to cater to the masses, a smaller restaurant facility to provide more exclusive catering (ministerial and high-level lunches for instance) and a third area that can be used for normal day-to-day catering while offering the possibility to host medium-sized receptions on demand.

As catering hubs also tend to serve as informal meeting spots for participants, the host country may choose to plan and design catering areas on the basis of a communal concept that allows for spontaneous or private conversations. Such planning should incorporate open spaces, sufficient seating and layouts that prevent congestion.

Office facilities

COPs are working conferences and as such office space is always in high demand. Most Parties require office space for the duration of the conference. Office space for Parties is always offered on a fairly priced, commercial basis as its availability is critical to the success of the conference.

Adequate office facilities are also required by the host country, which will need to relocate and accommodate many of its own staff to support the conference on site.

A number of secretariat staff will also need suitable office facilities at the venue to support the conference. The secretariat and COP Presidency teams are usually located in close proximity to facilitate collaboration and coordination.

VIP facilities

Provisions must be made to accommodate and cater to the particular needs of Heads of State and Government attending the conference, including a VIP lounge where they gather before proceeding to the plenary to deliver their statements. The size of this facility depends on the anticipated number of VIPs and their accompanying teams.

The ideal location for a VIP lounge is as near as possible to the main plenary to ensure the shortest possible transit time and easier control for security. In addition to the lounge area, it has become customary to provide a few bilateral rooms (10–20 person capacity) in the immediate vicinity to enable Heads of State and Government to meet privately.



6. SERVICES



This chapter provides practical guidance on basic conference services.

Local staff

To effectively support such a large-scale event, which attracts between 20,000 and 30,000 participants each year, the host country needs to recruit a sufficient number of local staff to provide organizational and support services during the conference. The number of positions is determined by the secretariat and varies depending on the size, location and scope of the conference.

The recruitment of local staff for the conference creates a valuable connection between the international climate change process and the community in which the conference is taking place.

Through their involvement, local staff gain unique insight into the United Nations system, international climate change negotiations, climate action and large-scale conference management. As a result of their participation, they develop a richer understanding of their role in the climate change process as citizens, and, in turn, may actively contribute to collective climate action at the regional, national or community level.

A list of specific local staff roles, as well as corresponding job descriptions, is shared with the host country as soon as it is confirmed as the host of the conference.

As a first step in the process, the host country nominates a focal point to liaise with the secretariat on all local staff related matters. The focal point initiates the recruitment and deployment of local staff as per the agreed dates and terms and conditions. The focal point is also responsible for ensuring that all recruited staff are cleared by security and for providing the secretariat with their names, passport numbers and birthdates.

Local staff welfare is the shared responsibility of the secretariat and the host country. The host country is responsible for elements such as providing meals, transportation, wages and in some cases uniforms. Specific arrangements are determined by the host country subject to local labour laws and budget. The host country covers all costs related to the recruitment and employment of local staff as specified in the host country agreement.

The local staff specified in the host country agreement are to be assigned solely to the United Nations and as such are trained, supervised and managed for the duration of the conference by United Nations staff only.

Accommodation

The host country is responsible for ensuring that reliable, affordable and relatively convenient accommodation is available to the conference participants commensurate with their needs and resources. The host country should make timely arrangements with the accommodation sector, ideally as soon as the city selection is made. Many past hosts have managed accommodation successfully by appointing one dedicated hotel agency to consolidate room availability and to manage reservation requests, leaving some contingency for sole use by certain groups, such as those with limited budgetary and/or organizational capacity.

Setting payment deadlines is key to maximizing room occupancy and ensuring that all participants can be accommodated. Special consideration should be given to observer organizations, as they may not know how many delegates they will be allowed to register until the observer quotas are announced, which is usually well after the hotel booking system has opened.

As a first step in the process, the host country nominates a focal point to liaise with the secretariat on all accommodation arrangements and related matters. The focal point initiates planning and implementation of accommodation arrangements as per the agreed requirements. The focal point is also responsible for ensuring that all accommodation arrangements are secured as per the set timelines.

Regardless of early preparation and action by the host country, making arrangements for hotels and other accommodation for conference participants almost always presents a major challenge. Ensuring the availability of adequate, well-located, reasonably priced accommodation for thousands of conference participants is a significant undertaking, particularly given that most hotels are privately owned and that ensuring reasonable pricing is outside governmental competence. It is not unheard of for hotels to take reservations only to renege on bookings once the guests arrive. Such obstacles can be avoided through pre-payment options, but pre-payment can present challenges in other areas, particularly for participants from the LDCs and SIDS and those who rely on subsidized travel.

Host countries are often blamed for these issues, irrespective of how much control or influence governments can exercise over private businesses. Previous hosts have recommended working with the

secretariat to anticipate peak attendance periods and working with a centralized agency for booking hotels and other travel-related services, such as transportation shuttles.

Additional information on accommodation requirements can be found in [Annex IV](#)



Transportation

To ensure that the conference proceeds smoothly, it is essential for the host country to provide reliable and safe transportation for all conference participants. Transportation from the designated accommodation areas to and from the conference venue should be secured and should operate on a full schedule, to be determined by the conference working hours, plus the anticipated extra hours often required by negotiators and staff. Many previous host countries have opted to provide public transportation free of charge to all conference participants. Subsidized transportation is particularly valuable to participants from the LDCs and NGOs and those with limited resources, and it enhances inclusivity and global representation at the conference.

The host country may also want to facilitate the provision of vehicles on a commercial basis. Previous host countries have selected one or two transportation companies as the official vendor(s) for the conference and requested that the vendor(s) tailor services to the needs of the conference participants.

As with other services, the host country may want to consider nominating a focal point to liaise with the secretariat on all transportation arrangements

and related matters. The focal point should initiate planning and implementation of these arrangements as per the agreed requirements and should ensure that all transportation services are operational as per the set timelines.

In order to ensure that the United Nations senior management and the core COP organizational team are unhindered and able to move about as needed, the secretariat requires additional vehicles for United Nations use only. The number of vehicles is determined by the size of the secretariat team and depends on the size, location and the scope of the conference. The host country covers all costs related to the procurement of these vehicles and the employment of drivers, as specified in the host country agreement.

Transportation arrangements for ministers and Heads of State and Government are the responsibility of the host country and should be in line with the host country's bilateral protocol arrangements.

Catering services

In addition to the catering facilities outlined in the previous chapter, the host country must provide adequate catering services at the conference premises, ensuring that catering services are available to all on a commercial basis.

The host country may want to nominate a focal point to liaise with the secretariat on all catering services related matters. The focal point should initiate planning and implementation of the arrangements as per the agreed requirements and ensure that all catering service points are operational as per the set timelines.

All offerings should take into consideration catering for different religious beliefs and dietary requirements and should provide vegetarian/vegan alternatives. Opening hours should accommodate conference schedules and allow for extended sessions within a reasonable notification period.

The main catering services should offer international menus, a food court style set-up and 'grab and go' coffee points.

In addition to the main catering services, the host country should arrange for ad hoc meeting and event catering services, controlled and paid for by

the event organizers. As best practice the secretariat recommends that the host country design and set up a web page for placing orders. Payment modalities are to be determined by the host country and/or catering provider.

The secretariat may request catering and water services on a non-commercial basis for Bureau meetings, the high-level segment, the VIP lounge and the plenary and interpretation booths. The host country or catering provider should provide personnel to assist with these services.

Banking services

To ensure access to cash for all conference participants, banking services and cash machines (ATMs) should be available at the conference venue. The host country should provide – free of charge to all participants with conference badges – banking services during the pre-session week and throughout the conference.

As above, the host country should nominate a focal point to liaise with the secretariat on banking services arrangements and related matters. The focal point should initiate planning and implementation of these arrangements as per the agreed requirements and timelines.

A list of the required banking services is shared with the host country as soon as it is confirmed as the host of the conference.

Information and communication technology

High-quality, state-of-the-art, innovative and fully functional information and communication technology (ICT) is an essential component of an efficient delivery of a conference. In developing a solid ICT strategy, the host country should consider:

- **ICT requirements in the host country agreement:**
The infrastructure set-up can be very complex and can pose challenges for local contractors. Previous hosts have recommended that both the host country's and the secretariat's ICT teams streamline and map the host country agreement requirements;

SERVICES

The secret to a smooth-running conference lies in the logistics and there are several factors that organizers should prioritize, including:



LOCAL STAFF

With up to 30,000 participants attending, local staff are essential for a successful COP



BANKING SERVICES

ATMs and banking services should be made available at the conference venue



ACCOMMODATION

Affordable, well-located accommodation and early consolidation of room availability is essential



CATERING SERVICES

Caterers should provide healthy food options that take into account religious and dietary requirements



TRANSPORTATION

Participants need safe, reliable transportation between accommodation areas and the conference venue



SHIPMENTS

Host country organizes and bears costs for shipment of the UNFCCC equipment and materials



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

State-of-the-art information and communication technology is an essential element of the conference

- **Availability:** All conference ICT services must be available at all times (i.e. 24/7) for the duration of the conference and the pre-session meetings. The host country needs to ensure reliable ICT services, solid cyber security services, webcast services and virtual participation services. It should also prepare for security audits by an independent entity, create an ICT master plan and ensure business continuity and disaster recovery planning;
- **ICT infrastructure needs within the venue and connection to external facilities:** ICT services may need to connect to external locations, such as hotels, to ensure remote access limited to areas supported by the secretariat;
- **Mobile readiness:** The secretariat ICT team brings its mobile systems to the conference, including servers and its mobile registration system, to ensure seamless virtual accessibility from the secretariat's headquarters in Bonn;
- **Practising for 'conference mode' operation:** Owing to the heavy dependence on ICT services during the conference, all services should be ready, audited and fully tested at least one week before the start of the conference to ensure smooth operation, particularly in relation to

registration and security. The ICT team will plan to provide full on-site support for all services for the duration of the conference. When planning venue space allocation, it is important to anticipate the space required for ICT equipment and the monitoring and support teams;

- **Post-conference wrap-up and closure:** ICT services should continue uninterrupted for six hours after the closure of the conference to give participants the opportunity to access email. Collaboration on data uploads between the secretariat and host country ICT counterparts should continue until all data hosted outside the secretariat website have been transferred to the headquarters in Bonn.

Shipments

UNFCCC and United Nations office shipments

The host country organizes and bears all transport costs, insurance charges and related expenses for the shipment of the UNFCCC equipment, supplies and materials required for the conference from the secretariat's headquarters in Bonn and any



established United Nations office (upon request of the secretariat) to the site of the conference and back to their original location.

The secretariat, in consultation with the host country, determines the most cost-effective mode of shipment of such equipment, supplies and materials and the timelines for outbound and inbound deliveries. The secretariat will ship only the necessary technical equipment and minimum goods required to operate as at headquarters with the aim of reducing the climate footprint of the conference.

Process and procedures

The host country appoints a shipment/consignment liaison officer, who reviews inventory lists and shipping procedures and liaises with the secretariat and the host country's customs officials to ensure proper shipment of the goods related to the conference. The host country appoints a shipment company to handle all shipments by the secretariat in close consultation with the shipment/consignment liaison officer.

Consignment delivery

The host country receives shipments and consignments that are not part of the UNFCCC shipment, such as those coming from Party delegations, exhibitors and side event organizers. The secretariat, in consultation with the host country, puts in place effective procedures to handle the incoming consignments and conference materials that are sent to the conference venue using commercial shipping companies.

The host country appoints a consignment company that manages a warehouse at the venue where shipments for the conference will be received. This includes consignments from participants for delegation offices, delegation pavilions, exhibits and side events.

The consignment company sets up a system and provides the necessary recourses to receive goods at the warehouse and to dispatch them within the venue.

All activities need to be documented and statistics provided in close consultation with the secretariat.



7. SAFETY AND SECURITY



A United Nations climate change conference requires robust security and safety arrangements, which can present a range of challenges. A safe and secure conference requires a high level of coordination between the United Nations security team, the secretariat and the host country law enforcement and emergency service agencies in order to effectively carry out all aspects of daily security and safety operations and to be prepared for any heightened security or safety incident. The management of access for all categories of participants, traffic and deliveries to the venue should be coordinated as effectively as possible in accordance with the security plan for the conference premises, which will be prepared by the United Nations security team in cooperation with the host country counterparts.

Issues that the host country will need to address:

- Understanding the concept of inviolability of the conference premises controlled by United Nations security inside the venue perimeter. Only conference attendees with proper accreditation are allowed access to the premises;
- A detailed memorandum of understanding between the secretariat and the host country on security cooperation for the conference is drawn up and signed. It specifies the division of responsibilities for security operations between the two parties. The host country needs sufficient resources to carry out its role in the joint operation and may be asked to provide resources to the United Nations security team so as to assist it in fulfilling its role;
- The conference also requires the establishment of a host country joint law enforcement and emergency services security committee, which should be involved from the first planning mission and should include the host country security coordinator for the event. The host country security coordinator will be a decision maker in terms of the security plan and its implementation;
- The United Nations security team needs to be supplemented by security personnel from the host country to fulfil its role within the United Nations premises. The United Nations security team recommends whether this element should be made up of the host country's national law enforcement officials or private security personnel, as the element reports to the United Nations event security coordinator within the United Nations premises;

- A security risk assessment for the conference should be developed by the competent host country authority. The assessment should be shared with the United Nations security team and the secretariat, and an information note prepared by the host country for COP participants informing them of any safety or security precautions to take and outlining expected behaviour while in the country.

The host country will need to involve the appropriate safety and security decision makers from the outset. The host country security coordinator and team for the conference should be appointed early in the planning phase. Decisions regarding security that are made late can be very costly.

Emergency rehearsals should be conducted to help anticipate any possible natural or human-caused security situations and to ensure that the lines of responsibility between host country and United Nations security are understood.

Security should be covered in information for participants and in any security briefings.

Code of conduct

These briefings should also include a review of the UNFCCC Code of Conduct that applies to all participants attending COPs. The code can be found online at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CodeOfConduct_Harassment_UNFCCC_Conferences.pdf.

The concept of the United Nations premises may be confusing for some local or national officials who are unfamiliar with international security arrangements or the concept of inviolability and thus may require additional explanation. The term “United Nations premises” is used to identify the conference premises under the control of the United Nations security team supported by the host country’s national law enforcement officials or private security personnel reporting to the United Nations event security coordinator. Many host country officials assume that although the COP is a United Nations conference, they are nevertheless in charge of all security and safety matters.





8. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



Close collaboration between the secretariat and the host country is essential for managing the participation of local, national and international media. Cooperation is also crucial for managing the messages that the media deliver to the world about the conference.

Media access and relations

The host country can help to ensure maximum media participation and press coverage by providing the necessary space, logistics and technical support for live feeds and a continuous flow of information to the media. The host country may wish to reflect on its national laws regarding media access, equipment and behaviour; for example, if there are restrictions on what is allowed to be brought into the country (in terms of media equipment), what pictures can be taken or what can be published. The secretariat's primary areas of responsibility for media access are accreditation, registration and the distribution of official conference badges, as well as managing the circulation of registered media participants on the premises.

Website and mobile app

The official conference website is managed by the secretariat and contains all official documentation and webcast coverage of the negotiations (available at <http://unfccc.int>). It is also customary for the host country to create a separate website and mobile app in order to provide practical information to conference participants and to showcase national climate change efforts. Websites and mobile apps should be complementary and should avoid unnecessary duplication of information.

Information for participants

The UNFCCC website features a specific section that addresses frequently asked questions and provides information to facilitate participation in the conference and orient visitors in the host country. It includes information on matters such as access to the conference premises, registration and badges, social events, transportation and emergency contact numbers. The section also includes links to further information available on the UNFCCC and host country websites.



MEDIA ACCESS AND RELATIONS

Ensure the media has space, technical support and a continuous flow of information



CONFERENCE WEBSITE AND MOBILE APP

Host countries should create a website with information on the host city and to showcase national efforts on climate change



MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The host country should promote the conference via local, regional and international media, ensuring broad coverage of the conference and the host country itself



LOGOS AND BRANDING

Branding the COP offers a strategic opportunity for positive promotion of the host country and its policies



PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

The host country should build a promotional campaign to showcase national action on climate change and to create public awareness

Media engagement

Beyond organizational and logistical support, the host country should promote the conference via local, regional and international media, ensuring broad coverage of the conference and the host country itself. Activities can include assisting the secretariat with organizing press conferences, exclusive interviews or media tours. The host country may want to consider establishing a team to help the media navigate the country and to help to connect them with important environmental projects or innovative climate change leaders.

Logos and branding

Branding – of both the United Nations and the host country – offers a strategic opportunity for positive promotion on many levels. The host country may wish to begin its preparations early and to launch a promotional campaign so as to build support in the country and ensure that all entities involved in national branding or promotion support the overall strategy. The host country works closely with the secretariat on conference communications,

websites and outreach activities, as specified in the host country agreement, including the annex on recognized names for the conference and visual design specifications. In particular, close consultation is needed on the placement and use of logos, legal and copyright issues, and the role of corporate sponsors.

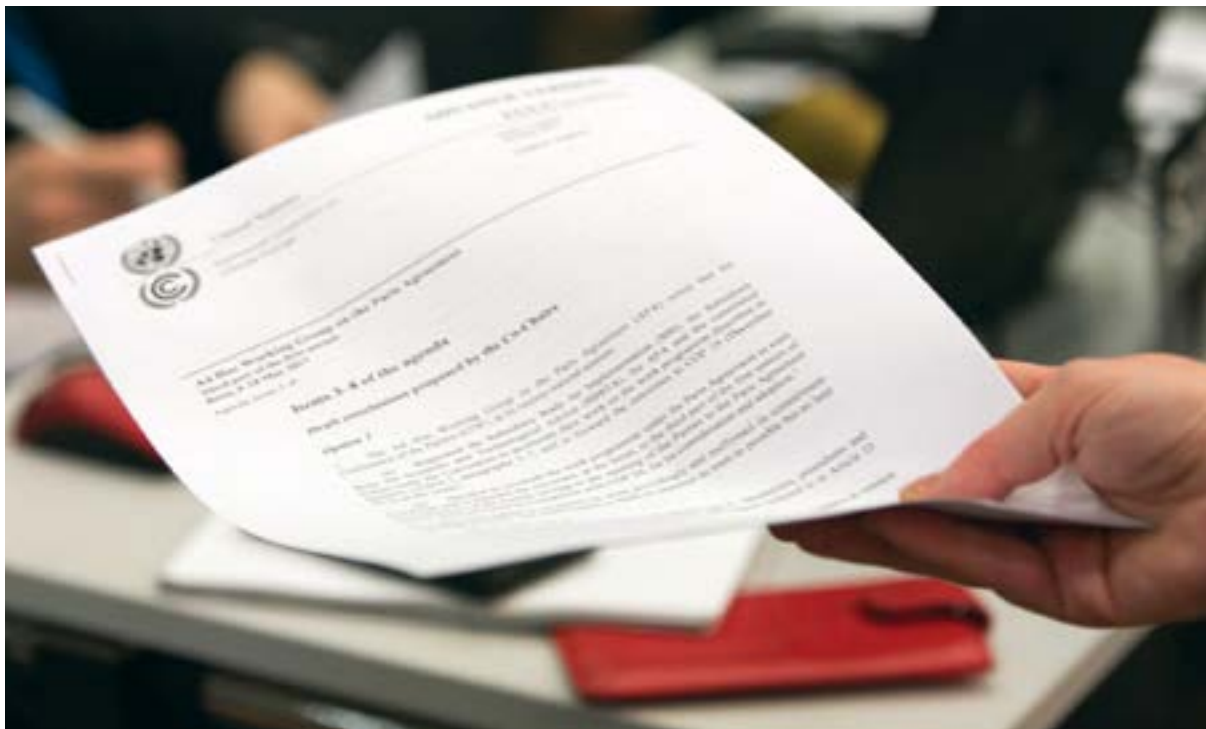
Previous hosts have noted that, with good planning, a COP can significantly benefit the public image of the host country. Good branding can increase public awareness in the country, the region and globally. Hosting a COP presents a huge opportunity for the host country to promote the values and ideas that it stands for.

Promotional campaign

The host country should build a promotional campaign to showcase national action on climate change and to create public awareness. Outreach in the past has included the production of digital media campaigns, in addition to the use of traditional communication tools.



9. DOCUMENTATION SERVICES



Documents inform the climate change negotiations and capture their progress and outcomes. They are used to provide background information for the negotiations, disseminate proposals, circulate interim versions of negotiated texts and publish adopted texts. Official documents bear a symbol that indicates the document's status and purpose.

The secretariat is responsible for the production and management of documents during the conference. The document-related costs that the host country is responsible for (e.g. document distribution and reproduction space and materials, photocopiers, paper, and the shipment of documentation and related equipment and materials) are specified in the annexes to the host country agreement.

Continuously enhancing the environmental, social and economic sustainability of its operations is a priority of the secretariat. Reducing paper wastage is a major component of that work.

The UNFCCC website serves as the main access point for documents. The use of electronic documents has been promoted through the UN Climate Change

mobile application and through the announcement on Twitter of the public availability of new in-session documents. Although participants are encouraged to rely on the digital versions, a paper copy of any official document can be requested at the documents distribution counter.

The host country can assist the secretariat in its efforts by supporting the implementation of innovative document distribution solutions and encouraging participants to minimize printing during the conference.





10. OBSERVER ENGAGEMENT



Observer engagement is of fundamental value to United Nations climate change conferences. Decision 1/CP.21 contains provisions that specifically mandate or broadly encourage non-Party stakeholders to engage in various aspects of the implementation of the outcomes of the Paris Conference. In addition, Parties have repeatedly reaffirmed the fundamental value of effective participation of observers and the value of contributions from observer organizations to deliberations on substantive issues. In the formal process, observer input has been increasingly incorporated into technical background documents and other negotiating texts. Participation by observer organizations in COPs has grown dramatically in recent years: more than 1,100 observer organizations registered nearly 9,500 delegates for COP 23, for example.

The secretariat will support the COP President in maximizing observer engagement by providing support and advice and connecting the Presidency with observer organizations. The majority of observer organizations belong to NGO constituencies, which channel observer input and feedback to the Presidency.

The secretariat, in addition to supporting the admission of new organizations as observers:

- Provides input to the Presidency on observer issues;
- Supports the presiding officers of bodies on agenda items on observer engagement;
- Facilitates side events and exhibits put on by observers and Parties/observers in collaboration;
- Coordinates observer participation through notifications and registration;
- Facilitates plenary interventions by observer organizations and organizes briefings and bilateral consultations by the Presidency and other presiding officers;
- Ensures decorum in accordance with the guidelines for participation, which outline appropriate conduct for effective NGO participation in the UNFCCC process;
- Makes available non-Party stakeholders' submissions to the negotiating bodies.

OBSERVER ENGAGEMENT

There are three key categories of non-Party stakeholders that are involved in climate action: United Nations organizations, IGOs and NGOs. NGOs are clustered into nine constituencies:



Categories of observers

In the UNFCCC process there are three key categories of non-Party stakeholders that are involved in climate action: United Nations organizations, admitted IGOs with observer status and, the largest group, admitted NGOs with observer status. The broad spectrum of NGOs is clustered into nine constituencies:

- Business and industry;
- Environmental;
- Farmers;
- Indigenous peoples;
- Local government and municipal authorities;
- Research and independent;
- Trade unions;
- Women and gender;
- Youth.

While these informal groups of like-minded observers are not an exhaustive representation of all stakeholders, the constituency groupings enable observers to self-organize and coordinate efforts and they make it easier for the Presidency to engage with observers.

Admission

The first step for an IGO or NGO to engage in the formal process is to obtain observer status, which allows it to register delegates to attend UNFCCC conferences and meetings. By the end of 2018, over 2,340 organizations had been admitted as observers.

The deadline for organizations wishing to apply for UNFCCC observer status in time for a forthcoming COP is 31 August of the year preceding the COP. Applications are reviewed by the secretariat and the COP Bureau and formally approved via a COP decision.

Engaging observers

COP Presidencies have increasingly recognized the role of non-Party stakeholders and pursued a proactive consultative process with stakeholder groups at the national and international level to build support for accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The SBI has encouraged Presidencies to engage stakeholders in various ways. Successful consultative processes should maintain a

fair balance among observer constituencies and be based on the principles of transparency, openness and inclusiveness. Past Presidencies found such consultations useful in their work of presiding over a COP.

Engagement activities include: inviting non-Party stakeholders to submit their views and expectations for the conference, particularly when Parties are invited as part of a consultation process; a series of international dialogues in the lead-up to a conference with respective non-Party stakeholders to discuss specific relevant topics; multiple in-session briefings for observer organizations; engaging non-Party stakeholders at ministerial high-level events during the COP; and a follow-up meeting with observers on the outcomes of the COP and the action plan for the year of the Presidency tenure.

COP 21 established the role of two high-level champions per year, for the period 2016-2020. These champions, selected on a rotational basis from current and incoming presidencies, facilitate the contribution of non-Party stakeholders to the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. Supported by the secretariat, they organize a series of Global Climate Action events during the COPs, including a high-level plenary event.

Establish a dialogue with observers early in the planning process. The secretariat facilitates introductions of constituency representatives to the host country on the margins of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies. The host country should keep in close contact with them in the lead-up to the conference as well as in the year that follows the Presidency tenure.

Be conscious of observer categories and their perspectives. For effective engagement it is important to appreciate the different types of observer: regulars who attend every UNFCCC session and focus on specific agenda items; stakeholders who offer solutions to specific issues but do not follow the two-week negotiations; local observers for whom the conference is new and who focus primarily on local and national issues; those with advocacy or media focus, etc.

Use the COP as an opportunity to build relations with civil society at the national level. Past COP Presidencies have noted that the benefits of their outreach efforts and improved communication lasted

well after the conference had closed, helping the national government to advance its national agenda, including discussions on nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans.

Extraterritoriality is not just about security. Conference participants can make statements, including being critical of their governments or others on issues related to the agenda of the conference, provided the code of conduct is not violated and the spirit of the conference is upheld. This is a highly important matter of principle for the observer community.

In-session observer engagement

In line with SBI conclusions, there are established practices for channelling observer input and allowing their voices to be heard at UNFCCC sessions:

- **Open dialogue:** The SBI has encouraged COP Presidencies to explore ways to enable admitted NGO constituencies to have an open dialogue with Parties, whereby agenda-setting and the programming of the dialogue are conducted jointly among the admitted NGO constituencies, the Presidency, the Bureau and the secretariat, as appropriate, on the understanding that any outcomes of such dialogue should have persuasive value only, respecting the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process;⁵
- **Dialogues and briefings with presiding officers:** The COP Presidency and presiding officers of subsidiary bodies invite observers to in-session dialogues for briefing and discussion on the advancement of work. An observer representative usually chairs such meetings, while the secretariat supports their organization and preparation;
- **Bilateral meetings:** Another opportunity for dialogue between the COP Presidency and observer organizations are bilateral meetings. For example, the secretariat coordinates bilateral meetings for the incoming Presidency with the nine NGO constituencies during the May/June sessions of the subsidiary bodies;
- **Plenary interventions:** The SBI has invited presiding officers to seek opportunities for observer organization interventions.⁶ Many observer organizations value the opportunity to make their voice heard in the formal proceedings. Interventions are usually allotted two minutes per constituency and the requests are coordinated by the secretariat in advance as part of the plenary management;

⁵ FCCC/SBI/2017/7, paragraph 119(b)(i).



- **Access to official meetings:** Observers may participate, without the right to vote, in the proceedings of any session unless at least one third of Parties object. As per decision 18/CP.4, this rule on observer organizations applies also to any open-ended contact group established in the UNFCCC process. The COP Presidency is encouraged to work with the presiding officers to ensure the openness of meetings as per the stipulated rules;
- **Observer organizations are given office and meeting space at COPs.**

In addition, the SBI has encouraged Presidencies to explore, in line with the existing processes and draft rules of procedure being applied and under the existing agenda items, ways of exchanging information on best practices and on gaps and challenges related to public participation and public access to information with regard to nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans.⁷

Side events

In recent years, side events have become an integral part of United Nations climate change conferences, providing a dynamic platform for observers, as well as Parties and other actors, to showcase climate action, highlight diverse climate change issues and share knowledge. They typically feature oral presentations, panel discussions, and question and answer sessions. A typical side event lasts 90 minutes, although major events, such as those held by a host country at the ministerial level, can last as long as three hours.

Demand for side events usually far exceeds available capacity. Several measures have been implemented to manage this excess demand, such as scheduling side events throughout each day of the conference rather than just outside of negotiation hours, and providing incentives for applicants to consolidate proposals among themselves. Feedback from participants and experience have shown that the overall number of side events should be limited to around 200 to ensure relevance and adequate participation.

⁶ FCCC/SBI/2011/7, paragraph 119(a)(i).

⁷ FCCC/SBI/2017/7, paragraph 119(b)(ii).



In utilizing side events to engage observers, the host country can:

- Organize Presidency side events on priority topics either related to or in parallel with negotiation issues to elicit feedback and ideas from non-Party stakeholders and others;
- Actively participate in side events organized by observer organizations and others;
- Encourage national and regional observer groups to hold side events on key topics of interest to the host country.

Organizing side events and exhibits

- Requirements for side event rooms and exhibits are part of the host country agreement.
- The application process, including communication with the organizers, is managed through an online system hosted by the secretariat (the side events and exhibits online registration system).
- The application period is generally between four and seven days and is scheduled approximately four months before the conference.
- The selection criteria are outlined on the website and are intended to ensure a balanced presentation

of views as well as relevance to the UNFCCC.

The selection is managed by the secretariat in consultation with the host country, bearing in mind the overall priorities of the conference.

- Applicants are informed of the results of their application and an online schedule is published on the UNFCCC website approximately two months before the conference. Subsequently, the secretariat liaises with the side event organizers on the logistical arrangements and manages any late requests.
- The secretariat oversees the implementation of side events and exhibits during the sessions.

Global Climate Action

Since COP 21 a series of events under the patronage of the high-level champions for Global Climate Action (GCA) are also organized at each COP. They typically consist of thematic events (transport, energy, human settlements, land use, business & industry, oceans, and water) as well as highlight events that put the spotlight on specific issues or sectors of relevance to the GCA agenda, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and finance food systems.



Normally, some 25 GCA events take place during the two weeks of a COP, with some additional smaller events organized, often in specifically-made theatre-style “action” areas such as the Climate Action Arena. These inspiring events and happenings are meant to highlight special initiatives or innovative ideas related to the GCA agenda. The Climate Action Arena is typically equipped with social media links to allow streaming of events to UNFCCC social media channels.

Climate Action Studio

To highlight the importance of non-Party stakeholder action in the climate change process, the Climate Action Studio is set up, whenever feasible, during COPs and subsidiary body sessions. A balance of representatives of selected observer constituencies admitted to the UNFCCC process, as well as representatives of NGOs, IGOs, United Nations agencies and Parties, are interviewed, focusing on themes related to the negotiation process. The interviews are then edited and disseminated through the Climate Action Studio social media channels.

Actions and media stunts

Any demonstrations outside the conference venue, that is, outside United Nations territory, are under the sole jurisdiction of the host country.

Inside the conference venue, the UNFCCC allows demonstrations (also known as actions or media stunts). The secretariat works with the United Nations security team to identify appropriate locations for demonstrations and to facilitate them if requested by observer organizations. Actions can range from small performances to demonstrations with many participants.

Demonstration-organizing groups are required to submit a request at least 24 hours in advance. The request is reviewed by United Nations security for compliance with security and safety regulations, and by the secretariat to ensure compliance with guidelines for NGO participation and to ensure that decorum is maintained. United Nations security and secretariat staff must be present during the action to ensure the safety and security of all participants.

Gala invitation

The host country may wish to invite representatives of observer organizations to any official gala events that it hosts. For the official gala event for ministers, the host country traditionally invites the heads of United Nations organizations and IGOs present at the conference and representatives of the nine official NGO constituencies. This gesture by the host country is highly appreciated by observers and helps to promote inclusiveness. The secretariat can assist with the identification of such representatives and with the delivery of invitations.

In the same vein, the host country can make any other event or social function that it organizes outside of the conference venue open to observer organizations.

Engagement after the conference

The COP Presidency should continue to play an important leadership role in the year following the conference and should seek to maintain the momentum of observer participation at the national and intergovernmental level. In particular, best practices should be continued in cooperation with the next host country. For example, the Mexican

COP Presidency continued to engage the business community jointly with the South African COP Presidency as a follow-up to its public-private partnership events. The Polish, Peruvian, French and Moroccan COP Presidencies continued to hold bilateral meetings with observers at the sessions of the subsidiary bodies after the respective COPs. Lessons learned and success stories related to observers should also be passed on to the incoming COP Presidency, either at meetings or in written form, such as the publications produced by the Mexican and Qatari COP Presidencies on their engagement efforts. At the national level, civil society initiatives should be continued, as in Morocco, where local governments started a climate action road map and civil society continued work on human rights and climate change after the conference.





11. SUSTAINABLE CONFERENCES



The secretariat is committed to implementing sustainable practices, such as the improved management of operations and facilities, building on existing efforts and promoting cost-effectiveness, including – in cooperation with host countries – in relation to UNFCCC conferences.

In the context of organizing UNFCCC COPs as sustainable events, most of the measures put in place are related to the environmental dimension of sustainable development as defined by the Brundtland Commission, formerly known as the World Commission on Environment and Development.⁸ More concretely, the 2012 United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Events Guide⁹ defines a sustainable event as “designed, organized and implemented in a way that minimizes potential negative impacts and leaves a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved”.

Since 2005, host countries have taken steps to reduce the GHG emissions resulting from COPs. The host country agreement includes a paragraph on climate neutrality, whereby the host country commits to organizing a climate-neutral conference. In cooperation with the secretariat, the host country should decide on the level of ambition for the environmental sustainability of the conference. This decision depends on a number of factors, such as availability of resources, existence of certain conditions in the host city and country, and available

infrastructure at the venue(s). The role of the secretariat is to provide advice to the host country and to assist it, to the extent possible, in formulating, implementing and monitoring a sustainability strategy and action plan.

In 2009, in approving the secretariat’s programme budget for the biennium 2010–2011, the COP encouraged the UNFCCC Executive Secretary to continue to implement initiatives to reduce the level of GHG emissions of the secretariat’s operations and activities in line with the United Nations Climate Neutrality Strategy.¹⁰

In the outcome of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/288 “The future we want”, the United Nations system is called upon to improve the management of facilities and operations by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost-effectiveness (paragraph 96).

Host countries should address sustainability aspects jointly with the secretariat. Evaluating the costs and benefits of certain measures may not always lead to clear conclusions or indicate positive net benefits, but as public expectation of sustainable practices is growing, host countries will want to be able to demonstrate their efforts to ensure a high standard for sustainability is met.

⁸ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/wced>.

⁹ See <http://greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/Sustainable%20Events%20Guide%20May%2030%202012%20FINAL.pdf>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/UNClimateNeutralStrategy.pdf>.

Hosting a sustainable event: the benefits

Organizing events sustainably can have many benefits in addition to reducing the environmental impact.

Financial advantages: Despite an occasionally higher investment of financial or human resources to research new solutions or invest in new tools, conserving energy, water, paper and other resources, reducing waste, purchasing local products and simply consuming less can all save money. Following sustainability principles can also bring long-term financial benefits thanks to the more efficient use of resources and easier access to credit lines and sponsors.

Positive reputation and image: Making an event sustainable will raise its profile, attract participants, who are increasingly aware of sustainability issues, and garner media attention. National activities (environmental, economic or social) can be highlighted as good practices in national and international media. Partners and potential donors will also appreciate a sustainable conference.

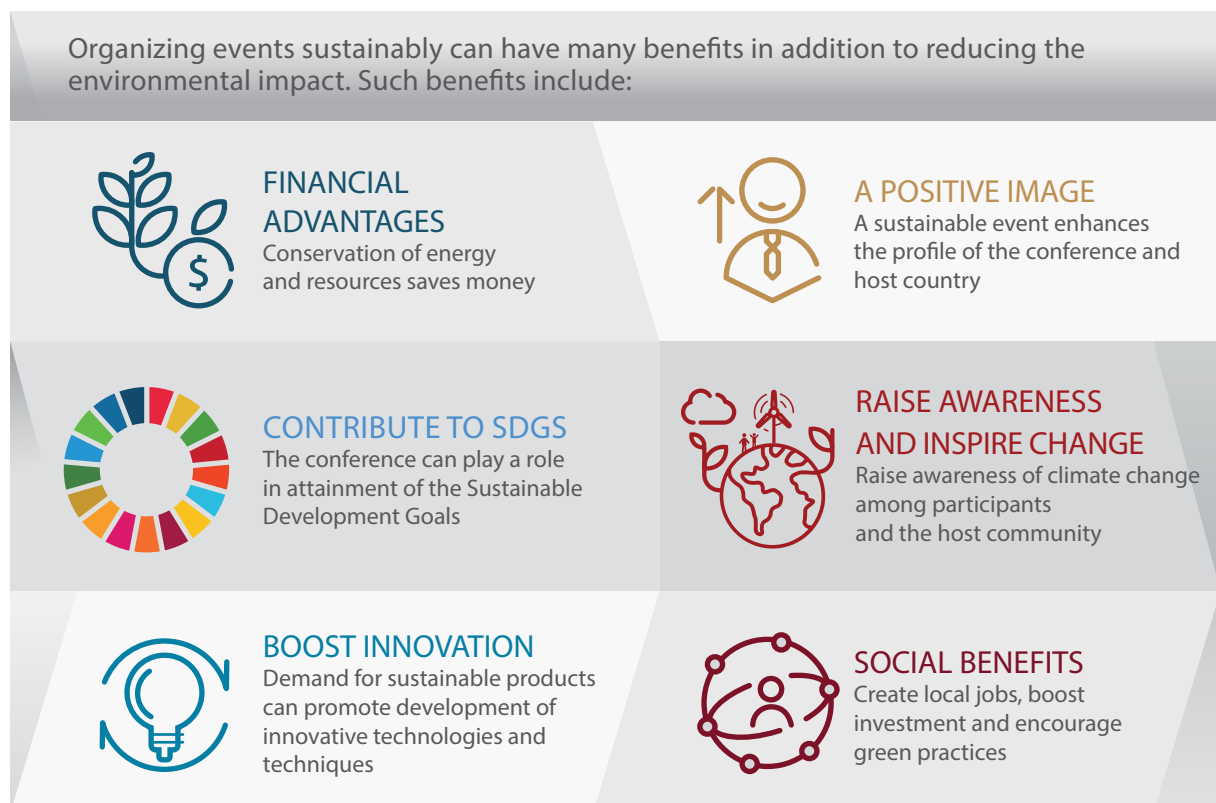
Social benefits: If planned and implemented carefully, the conference can benefit the region by creating

jobs, encouraging local investment, involving regional small and medium-sized enterprises and promoting better working conditions and increased social inclusion. It can also catalyse environmental and sustainable good practices across the region as well as improve the relationship between the host country and the local community.

Innovation: The host country can drive demand: its requirements for more sustainable products will both trigger and promote the development of innovative technologies and techniques, leading to more efficient use of resources and improved participant experience.

Raising awareness and inspiring change: The conference provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among participants, staff, service providers, the local community and the general public on sustainable events and sustainability beyond the conference.

Contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: The report on the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bonn in November 2017,¹¹ encourages future hosts to ensure that United Nations climate change conferences play their part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



¹¹ See <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/11.pdf>.

Planning

By taking sustainability into consideration, the host country can minimize negative environmental impacts and leave behind a positive legacy, inspiring those involved to live more sustainably. Following the three dimensions of sustainability, a sustainable event balances responsibility in the following areas.

Environmental responsibilities: low-emission transport and mobility, waste reduction, reuse and recycling, water and energy efficiency, avoidance of the use of hazardous substances and materials, climate targets, green procurement, etc.

Economic responsibilities: increased efficiency, avoidance of corruption, sensible and transparent public procurement, use of quality goods, boosting innovation, job creation, profitability, responsible accounting, sustainable growth, etc.

Social responsibilities: fair use of human resources, a healthy and safe work place for all involved, respecting human rights, complying with international labour standards, including minorities, respecting diversity, providing equal opportunities, displaying sensitivity to cultural and religious groups, etc.

PLANNING THE COP

Planning is key to a successful COP. Every conference should:

PROVIDE AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE SETTING FOR ALL



MINIMIZE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY



ENSURE A SAFE AND SECURE ATMOSPHERE



ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIVING



ENCOURAGE MORE SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR



PROMOTE THE USE OF RESPONSIBLE SOURCES AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES



LEAVE BEHIND A POSITIVE LEGACY



The conference should incorporate the following aspects into the event design:

- Provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all;
- Ensure a safe and secure atmosphere;
- Minimize any negative impact on the environment and community;
- Encourage healthy living and working;
- Promote the use of responsible sources and sustainable use of resources;
- Leave behind a positive legacy;
- Encourage more sustainable behaviour.

Management principles

To integrate sustainability into the conference, the host country needs to start early and develop a strategy well in advance. Environmental and social policies, management systems and/or action plans should be in place, including for appropriate communication with staff and participants to encourage sustainable behaviour. In particular, the host country should:

- Develop a policy and prepare an action plan with clear measurable objectives and key performance indicators, responsibilities, deadlines and appropriate monitoring;
- Allocate sufficient resources (time, staff and funds) – remember, long-term financial savings and more efficient use of resources may compensate for some or all of the initial investment;
- Build a core sustainability team, ideally including representatives of the main stakeholder groups (e.g. host city, host country, the secretariat, general contractor for the conference/event agency, suppliers, venue(s), hotels, local community, etc.);
- Consult with the secretariat on developing a sustainability action plan, tapping into the good practices and lessons learned from previous conferences.

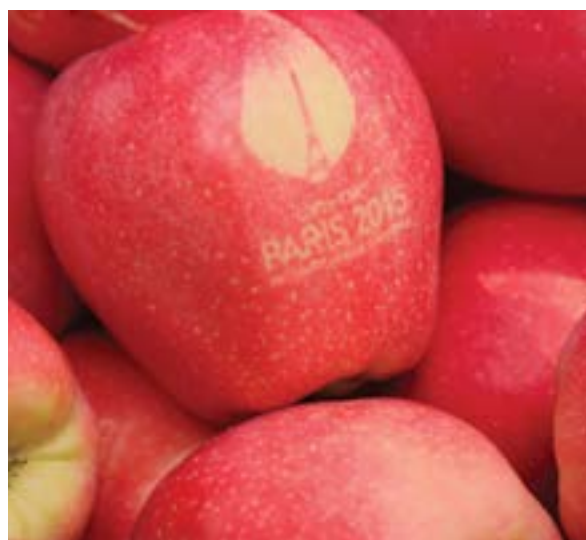
Climate neutrality and offsetting

In spite of all efforts to reduce the environmental impact of the conference, and especially its climate footprint, a conference of such size and reach will inevitably result in a residual balance of GHG emissions. The emissions attributable to the conference can be grouped by source into two broad categories: (1) emissions from the travel of participants to the conference and (2) emissions from all activities at and around the conference venue and

in the host city, including accommodation and local transportation. Normally, emissions from participant travel constitute the lion's share of the overall footprint of a conference, but the share of emissions from local activities can also be considerable, for example if major construction work is involved.

The first and most important step in achieving the overall goal of a climate-neutral conference is, to the extent possible, to avoid and reduce GHG emissions. Yet, certain emissions remain unavoidable. These should, in a second step, be measured in accordance with robust international standards and offset by purchasing and cancelling CERs¹² from clean development mechanism¹³ projects.

To offset the unavoidable residual GHG emissions from local activities, first the amount of emissions needs to be determined. For the conference venue, the essential figures cover: electricity and steam consumption; on-site fuel consumption (combustion) for power and heating; release into the atmosphere of refrigerants for air conditioning, heating and cooling; water consumption; catering; and waste generation. Outside the venue, data need to be collected on aggregate fuel consumption for dedicated local transport (public transportation, taxis, shuttles, limousines, etc.) as well as per capita electricity/steam/fuel/water consumption and waste generation at the hotels. The respective providers should be requested to collect or estimate these data and make them available after the event. Most previous host countries have used a dedicated contractor to guide and coordinate this complex measuring exercise and assist the many stakeholders involved.



¹² See <https://cdm.unfccc.int/Issuance/index.html>.

¹³ See <https://cdm.unfccc.int/about/index.html>.



While the host country can take steps to minimize the impact of local activities, it has little influence over the volume, routing, mode or class of travel of the conference participants. Strictly speaking, the emissions generated through travel and their eventual offsetting are the responsibility of the traveller, and some Party delegations, observer organizations and media agencies are already implementing compensation schemes. However, neither the secretariat nor the host country can effectively monitor this. Yet, news media and NGOs have focused scrutiny on the apparent irony of the emissions generated by thousands of participants flying in from all around the globe to discuss how to reduce worldwide GHG emissions. Therefore, since COP 13 and CMP 3 most host countries have considered it part of their hospitality to offset also the travel-related carbon emissions of all registered participants.

The secretariat supports the host country by calculating the emissions of registered participants' travel to the host city. (Note that unaccredited visitors who come to the host city cannot be captured.)

The secretariat uses the International Civil Aviation Organization methodology,¹⁴ which is the globally recognized industry standard and applied by over 50 United Nations organizations to calculate their GHG emissions from air travel. The methodology does not include a radiative forcing index factor, though previous hosts have decided to apply a precautionary factor of 2.7 or 3.0 both to safeguard against current uncertainties of the non-carbon effects of aviation and to ensure adequate provision of support to emission reduction projects.

The secretariat can advise and/or assist the host country with the purchase of CERs for offsetting purposes and with their cancellation. Some previous host countries undertook to compensate for residual GHG emissions through dedicated projects, such as afforestation, in their own or other countries. However, such projects may not necessarily fulfil the strict criteria that UNFCCC Parties have collectively established themselves. Therefore, the secretariat strongly suggests purchasing and cancelling CERs. There are plenty of offers on the market and many governments already have their own programmes

¹⁴ See <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/CarbonOffset/Pages/default.aspx>.

and sources of CERs for offsetting emissions from government operations.

In case the host country has special preferences with regard to the nature or origin of CERs used for offsetting emissions, the secretariat can help identify appropriate sources so that the host country can purchase and cancel the required amount. The secretariat uses Adaptation Fund CERs for offsetting its emissions and can recommend them as they foster both adaptation and mitigation action. First, the Adaptation Fund is an important tool created by Parties, aimed at supporting adaptation measures in countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Second, Adaptation Fund CERs represent a 2 per cent share of CERs issued from all mitigation projects worldwide, without discriminating between countries, projects, clean development mechanism methodologies, etc. If the host country wishes, the secretariat can purchase and cancel on its behalf an amount of Adaptation Fund CERs equivalent to the amount of GHG emissions resulting from the conference. Funds for this should be provided under the host country agreement or a separate project.

Third-party certification

Building on the successful certification of the sustainability management systems of COP 21, COP 22 and COP 25 under ISO 20121¹⁵ and of the environmental performance of COP 23, COP24 and COP25 under EMAS¹⁶, it is highly recommended that third-party certification be considered for all future COPs. Such a management system provides the overall framework for the sustainable organization of the conference, minimizing the environmental impact of operations and communicating the results in a transparent manner, and hence enhances credibility. The secretariat can provide good practice reports and connect future host countries with lead organizers of past conferences that were certified externally.

Routes to sustainability

To summarize, the host country should consider the following measures for sustainability:

- Reducing conference-related GHG emissions and offsetting the unavoidable balance;
- Implementing procedures to reduce the consumption of water, energy, paper and other materials and resources;
- Putting measures in place to reduce the generation of waste and to reduce, reuse or recycle unavoidable waste;
- When purchasing goods and services, including the environmental and social impacts of their life cycle in the purchasing decision;
- Applying social and environmental principles throughout the implementation of the conference to reduce damage to the environment and ensure the accessibility, inclusion and well-being of all participants and staff;
- Taking measures to foster economic, social and environmental benefits for the local community and to minimize any disruption;
- Making efforts to inform and involve relevant stakeholders (including participants, local staff, national and city authorities, sponsors, NGOs, businesses, contractors and technical experts) in order to comply with and support the principles stated above;
- Putting in place a reporting system that allows for the communication, assessment and evaluation of sustainable event processes, initiatives and results in a transparent manner, thereby ensuring accountability.

The United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Events Guide includes a checklist that provides a detailed set of recommendations for event organizers.¹⁷

Additional sustainability recommendations can be found in [Annex V](#).

¹⁵ See http://www.iso.org/iso/sustainable_events_iso_2012.pdf.

¹⁶ See https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm.

¹⁷ Available at <http://greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/Sustainable%20Events%20Guide%20May%2030%202012%20FINAL.pdf>.



Annexes

ANNEX I: HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT

The host country agreement, supporting annexes and technical requirements cover the following topics:

Host country agreement (legal text)

- Article 1: Date and place of the Conference
- Article 2: Attendance at the Conference
- Article 3: Premises, equipment, utilities and services
- Article 4: Climate neutrality and sustainability
- Article 5: Medical facilities
- Article 6: Accommodation and transportation
- Article 7: Conference communications, websites and outreach activities
- Article 8: Liaison officer and local and technical staff
- Article 9: Police protection and security
- Article 10: Privileges and immunities
- Article 11: Financial arrangements
- Article 12: Liability
- Article 13: Settlement of disputes
- Article 14: Annexes
- Article 15: Confidential nature of documents and information
- Article 16: Final provisions

Annexes and technical requirements

- Annex I: Premises
- Annex II: Media services and operations
- Annex III: Secretariat pre-sessional meetings
- Annex IV: Information and communications technology
- Annex V: Information and cyber security
- Annex VI: Estimated direct costs of servicing the Conference away from the headquarters of the UNFCCC secretariat
- Annex VII: Local support staff
- Annex VIII: Shipment and freight forwarding
- Annex IX: Transport for the United Nations
- Annex X: Catering services
- Annex XI: Banking services
- Annex XII: Recognized names and visual design specification
- Annex XIII: Climate neutrality and sustainability

ANNEX II: REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Registration of technical staff

All technical staff assigned to work during the conference – from the date of the official handover of the conference premises to the United Nations until the end of the conference – should be cleared by local security before uploading their details onto the online registration system. Once the United Nations receives the premises, only technical staff duly cleared by host country security will receive a badge to gain access to the premises.

The host country is requested to nominate a focal point to register technical staff. The focal point will receive a special Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and a handbook on how to populate the file. The file should be forwarded to the service providers, who should input the required information regarding their staff, and be returned to the host country for security checks. The file will then be uploaded to a designated site provided by the secretariat. No other list will be accepted by the secretariat.

Technical staff should collect their badges during the week (Monday to Friday) before the conference opens. Thereafter the secretariat will focus on the issuance of badges for delegates.

Registration of the host country delegation

The host country delegation will be nominated via the procedures specified in chapter 4 of this handbook. However, it is a very complex process for the host country to compose its national delegation (dignitaries, parliamentarians, staff from different ministries, conference organizers, etc.) owing to the wide range of functions performed by the host country and the number and diversity of its representatives. It is therefore important that the national focal point or person in charge of composing the national delegation contact the secretariat's external relations officer as soon as possible to start preparing the national delegation.

All persons performing political or negotiating functions related to the conference should be included in the delegation as representatives of the host country. Those with more technical functions, such as conference organizers, should be included as 'delegation overflow'; they will receive badges as part of the host country delegation but will not be included on the list of participants. On an exceptional basis that category may also include certain persons from the government who would be important to include on the list of participants for political reasons.

Host country office for registration

An office of the host country for liaison with the secretariat's external relations officer/registration desk should be placed in the registration area, near the registration counter. The office will liaise with persons claiming to be part of the host country delegation or technical staff whose names have not been entered on the online registration system or whose details have not been uploaded. The host country national focal point and the contact point for technical staff or persons delegated by them should be on hand to deal with such cases as they should have full control of the delegation and the list of technical staff. They may deny access or make a nomination online.

The secretariat's external relations staff will work with the liaison office on a daily basis on comparing lists of nominees and issuing badges immediately to those persons nominated by the liaison office. This will avoid disputes at the registration counter and also facilitate efficient management.

Distribution of information on participants

Information on participants is considered confidential until the conference begins. The secretariat is obliged to share the information with a restricted number of persons in the host country, on a confidential basis, for the purpose of granting visas. Best practice for host countries is to create a generic email account to receive this information and to delegate the task of distributing it internally to those in the security or organizational team who need it. The secretariat will continue to send this information during the conference.

ANNEX III: PROTOCOL AND THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Protocol arrangements organized by the government

Arrival of participants at the principal transport hubs

- It is highly recommended that the host country arrange for a welcome booth at all the principal transport hubs (airports and train stations) that participants are likely to use. The available information should cover all tourist services, including reputable taxi companies, train and bus schedules, shuttles to venues, accommodation, maps, local phone and internet services, local travel tips, etc.

Arrival of ministers and heads of United Nations agencies at ports of entry

- The host country may wish to station a protocol officer at the main airport or other transportation hub to welcome ministers and heads of United Nations agencies before they collect their luggage and exit the immigration area. The protocol officer can assist them with their luggage and the immigration procedures.
- Standard practice is for the host country to request other countries and United Nations organizations to provide the arrival dates and travel details of their ministers or heads of agency to facilitate welcome services. Countries that do not provide this information will understandably not receive any protocol support at the port of entry.

Arrival of Heads of State and Government and the United Nations Secretary-General at ports of entry

- Protocol for Heads of State and Government and the Secretary-General must follow the host country's general protocol rules. The host country is also responsible for the security of these dignitaries while they are in the country.
- The arrival, accommodation and departure of the Secretary-General should be coordinated by the host country with the Secretary-General's office and the United Nations head of security for the conference.
- The arrival, accommodation and departure of any visiting Heads of State and Government should be coordinated by the host country with the ministry of foreign affairs of the relevant State.

Protocol arrangements organized by the secretariat

Welcoming ceremony

- The secretariat, in consultation with the host country, organizes the welcoming ceremony of the conference. The structure and procedure of the ceremony will be outlined in a 'minute by minute', a document that contains the arrival and departure schedules of dignitaries to and from the conference venue, the formal names and titles of the ceremony participants, a description of the events that will take place, the speakers list, details of who should be on the podium and any other pertinent information.
- The 'minute by minute' is a live document that will be periodically updated and distributed to the host country's protocol officer, security, the press/media officer, the host country organizer and senior secretariat officials.
- Ministers, the city mayor and other officers below ministerial rank usually attend the welcoming ceremony.
- The ceremony may include a short cultural or media event, which must be organized in consultation with the secretariat in order to avoid any clashes with the proceedings for the opening of the sessions.
- The welcoming ceremony typically coincides with the proceedings for the opening of the sessions and the election of the COP President.

Opening of the high-level segment

- The high-level segment, which is held in the main plenary hall of the conference venue, is attended by ministers and other senior officials and is usually inaugurated during the second week of the conference with an opening ceremony attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Head of State or Government of the host country and other Heads of State and Government (presidents, prime ministers and monarchs).
- Owing to the formal nature of the high-level segment and the high profiles of the dignitaries who customarily attend the opening, protocol is more rigid than at the conference welcoming ceremony.
- Access to the plenary for the high-level segment is strictly controlled by security. A ticketing system is often used, whereby tickets are distributed to Parties and NGOs for the exact number of seats in the plenary hall and equitable access is provided to each delegation (Parties, NGOs, IGOs, United Nations agencies) ahead of the event. Only participants with a ticket are allowed access to the plenary hall. The doors are closed after the arrival of the Heads of State and Government and the Secretary-General. Once the dignitaries have departed, the plenary hall is open to all.
- During the opening of the high-level segment speeches are delivered by the Head of State or Government of the host country, the United Nations Secretary-General, the COP President and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC. Other Heads of State and Government in attendance will also be invited to deliver their national statements. Statements are delivered in accordance with the list of speakers linked to in the Daily Programme.
- The inaugural section of the high-level segment traditionally closes after these official statements, allowing for the departure of dignitaries and the Secretary-General.
- The high-level segment then resumes with interventions from those speaking on behalf of negotiating groups (African Group, Alliance of Small Island States, Environmental Integrity Group, European Union, LDCs, Umbrella Group, etc.) ministers of foreign affairs, ministers of environment and other ministers delivering national statements.
- On the day of the opening of the high-level segment the proceedings are scheduled to end in time for ministers and other heads of delegation to attend a reception, traditionally hosted by the Head of State or Government or the Ministry of Environment of the host country.

Seating of high-ranking guests and senior United Nations officials

- An additional first row should be made in the plenary hall to accommodate senior officials from the host country accompanying host country and United Nations dignitaries. The total number of seats depends on the layout of the plenary hall but is usually limited to 10–20 seats for the host country and a similar number for United Nations officials.
- The host country may wish to invite a limited number of high-ranking officials to attend the welcoming ceremony for the opening of the conference and/or the opening of the high-level segment. The host country can request special badges for these officials.

Statements at the high-level segment

- The high-level segment is presided over by the COP President or the Vice-President of the Bureau.
- The most important activity of the high-level segment is the delivery of national statements. Reference to the high-level segment is made first in the notification of the conference, which is issued to Parties and observer States at least two months before the conference. Included are details on the dates and format of the high-level segment, who is expected to attend, the permitted duration of speeches, and the opening and closing dates for registration of speakers.
- Statements from ministers and heads of delegation are heard in joint meetings of the COP, the CMP and the CMA. The high-level segment concludes on the last Friday of the conference with the adoption of decisions and conclusions by the COP, the CMP and the CMA.

- Given the number of Parties that register to speak, the recommended time limit for each statement is three minutes. Statements on behalf of groups are strongly encouraged and additional time is allocated for them.
- Full texts of national statements that are received by the secretariat are posted on the UNFCCC website.

High-level segment security

- United Nations security is assigned to cover the entire high-level segment. Security staff are positioned at all entrances/exits and at the podium. In addition, a 'barrier ribbon' is set up to prevent people from directly approaching the speakers or the table used by staff servicing the high-level segment.

High-level segment opening reception

- The host country traditionally offers a reception following the inauguration of the high-level segment. A personalized invitation from the reception host is usually addressed to the head of each delegation, the heads of United Nations agencies, IGOs and NGO constituency focal points, and senior secretariat staff. Admittance to the reception is by invitation only.
- It is up to the host country to decide whether it would like to provide transportation for guests to and from the reception.
- The host country may use the Daily Programme as a channel to provide information on arrangements for the dinner and the modalities for the collection of invitations.
- The secretariat is not normally involved in the organization of the reception but can be consulted on details such as titles of guests, menu, protocol for non-Party guests, etc.

ANNEX IV: ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS

The secretariat assesses and makes the accommodation arrangements for United Nations personnel supporting the conference, Party delegates, observer, NGO and media participants, VVIPs, ministers and Heads of State and Government, and applies the following standard criteria for evaluating accommodation options:

- Proximity to conference venue;
- Public transportation connections to and from conference venue;
- Wi-Fi/Internet access;
- Capacity and room availability;
- Value for money;
- Standard and services provided (e.g. safe in rooms, 24-hour room service and reception);
- Security, safety and sanitation standards;
- Accessibility for people with reduced mobility;
- Hotel room rate compatibility with United Nations DSA.

Participant category	Specific requirements
UNFCCC and other United Nations staff servicing the conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 hotel rooms
Party delegates, between 5,000 and 8,000 hotel rooms, divided as follows:	
Funded Party delegates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel bookings to be made without the need for submitting credit card details or advance payment • 400 hotel rooms
Delegates from the LDCs and SIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel bookings to be made without the need for submitting credit card details or advance payment • Rooms for between 1,500 and 2,500 delegates
Delegates from other Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms for between 4,500 and 6,000 delegates

Participant category	Specific requirements
Non-Party delegates	
Representatives of United Nations and intergovernmental organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms for approximately 1,000 observers
NGO representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms for approximately 6,000 observers
Accredited media representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms for between 1,000 and 2,000 participants
VVIPs	<p>United Nations Secretary-General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One suite for Secretary-General - A number of regular rooms (to be determined by the Secretary-General's office) - Five hotel rooms to be blocked for Secretary-General and immediate team • Covered courtesy of the host country per previous practice • If the host country cannot cover the cost, preferably the room rate should be covered by DSA
VVIPs	<p>President of the United Nations General Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One suite for President - A number of regular rooms (to be determined by the President's office)
Ministers and Heads of State and Government	<p>Accommodation requirements should be clarified by making enquiries directly with the respective diplomatic representations in line with protocol arrangements</p>

ANNEX V: SUSTAINABILITY

Accessibility and inclusion

The host country should consider possible special needs of conference participants and staff (e.g. concerning their access to and movement within the conference area, acoustics appropriate for hearing-aid users, Braille signage and printing, etc.) and include people with disabilities in the workforce.

The conference venue should be fully accessible to participants of reduced mobility. Wheelchairs should be available to facilitate movement within each conference zone and wheelchair-accessible bus and shuttle services should connect the venue with major hotel hubs.

Accommodation

The host country may wish to host an awareness-raising seminar in order to engage hotels and tour operators. It can recommend hotels on the basis of their sustainability performance and promote eco-certified hotels on the host country website or official accommodation web portal.

If no certified hotels are available, a certification label could be created, leaving behind a positive legacy. The host country can also talk to hotel associations about the sustainability performance of the hotels in the host city and encourage improvements in the following areas:

- **Management:** An environmental and/or corporate social responsibility policy should be in place at each hotel, including appropriate communication with staff and guests to encourage sustainable behaviour. Special attention should be given to the health, safety and rights of hotel staff (following United Nations Global Compact principles¹⁸);
- **Energy efficiency and water conservation:** Energy and water efficiency measures should be implemented to reduce consumption;
- **Waste:** Hotels should be encouraged to reduce waste and introduce appropriate and controlled systems for waste collection and recycling; participants should be requested to keep the original packaging of their shipments in good condition for reuse when sending back leftover materials at the end of the conference;
- **Cleaning:** Hotels should be encouraged to select non-toxic and green-labelled cleaning products and avoid the use of toxic chemicals to the extent possible;
- **Catering:** Hotels should be encouraged to serve locally grown food.

If the host country intends to work with a travel agent, it should choose one that implements recognized social and environmental practices and ask them to raise awareness of the sustainability aspects of the conference in their communication with clients.

Catering/food and beverages

In determining the catering menus for the conference, every effort should be made to strike a balance between aspects related to the environmental (e.g. the provision of climate-friendly food) and the economic (i.e. affordable prices for all conference participants) dimensions of sustainability, while ensuring adequate availability and diversity of food.

Conscious of the obligation for organizational aspects of United Nations climate change conferences to support the objectives of the Convention, and to reduce their climate footprint, the catering approach should focus on food that has a low climate footprint and is certified organic as well as on fair trade (hot) drinks. Most food on offer should be vegetarian/vegan (at least 40 per cent per good practice at COP 23) with the optional addition of meat (100 per cent organic certified) or fish/seafood (100 per cent certified by the Marine Stewardship Council or a similar label, and no red salmon). With this one action a host country can achieve

¹⁸ See <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>.

multiple sustainability goals, from reducing emissions to improving participants' health, animal protection and awareness-raising. The provision of climate-friendly food and drinks can be complemented by levying an (optional) surcharge on meals with a higher climate footprint and using the extra revenue for offsetting associated emissions. Host countries should also consider the following:

- The majority of all food products should be from organic farms and/or be locally/regionally produced;¹⁹
- To enable participants to make informed decisions and raise awareness regarding sustainability issues related to food choices, including the impact of consumer choices on the climate and individual health, all sustainability measures should be detailed in prior and on-site communication;
- Clear food labelling should be ensured (vegetarian/vegan, certified organic, regional, etc.) and its sustainability should be clear;
- A carbon dioxide calculator such as that²⁰ provided for COP 23 should be made available to allow users to compare the carbon footprint of various ingredients and exemplary menus in a light-hearted way;
- Water dispensers should be made available throughout the conference venue. If possible, multiple-use bottles could be distributed to all registered participants free of charge to reduce the number of cups that are handed out (which, if disposable, should be recyclable or biodegradable);
- Following a UNFCCC bulletin concerning the use of plastic containers at meetings, hosts of and service providers for meetings and events organized by the secretariat should, to the extent possible, not serve food and beverages in plastic containers (cups, bottles, jars, plates, etc.). The same applies to cutlery and food wrapping. The recent findings and wide media coverage of environmental degradation, including damage to oceans and biodiversity as a result of plastic waste, make it imperative for the secretariat to take appropriate action.

Communications

A comprehensive website informing participants, the media and the public on the sustainability measures in place at the conference is a mandatory element of any COP communications campaign. The icons of relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals²¹ should be included on the website (and displayed on site) to illustrate how the conference sustainability strategy is contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²² The COP 23 sustainable conference page provides a good example of an effective and comprehensive website on conference sustainability.²³ A link to that website should be included in the UNFCCC notification of the conference.

The host country should use social networks, blogs or the host country or UNFCCC websites to give visibility to the sustainability measures taken and create awareness among participants, encouraging them to introduce sustainability measures in their own offices and homes.

Information dissemination

- In line with the objectives of the secretariat's paper use reduction initiative, participants should be encouraged to rely on digital versions of official and draft documents, which can be downloaded from the UNFCCC website.
- Touch-to-collect technology could be deployed in order to facilitate the reduction of paper publications. It enables participants to collect documents and publications electronically and to exchange digital business cards with each other, facilitating the reduction of conventional paper business cards. It is based on near-field communication technology that exchanges information between two devices without using Wi-Fi.
- To further facilitate access, QR codes for selected official documents can be displayed on poster boards close to the documents counter and elsewhere.
- The Daily Programme for the conference is made available in electronic format only. A PDF version is posted each morning on the UNFCCC website.

¹⁹ As per previous practice, regional is defined as within 160 km of the host city.

²⁰ See <http://game.klimagourmet.de>.

²¹ See <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> and <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material>.

²² See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

²³ See <https://unfccc.int/cop-23/sustainable-conference>.

- To reduce the amount of emissions generated in connection with the conference, and with a view to further reducing paper usage and wastage at the conference, participants should be asked to refrain from distributing any printed materials, such as publications and information related to side events and exhibits, other meetings or future conferences. The electronic dissemination of information should be strongly encouraged.
- If possible, Parties and observers should be invited to display visual electronic materials (videos, slideshows, images, etc.) to promote their climate action on screens at the climate change resources corner. Posters to promote official side events and exhibits may be displayed exclusively on dedicated poster boards.
- The selection criteria for official side events and exhibits routinely include the commitment of side event organizers and exhibitors to disseminating all documentation in electronic format only. Side event organizers and exhibitors should be requested to upload electronic files on the UNFCCC website, post QR codes at their exhibit booths and in side event rooms and promote their websites and mobile applications, if any.
- Side event schedules are announced on the UNFCCC website and via the free UN Climate Change mobile application. Information on other events may also be posted on the UNFCCC website.
- Official side events should be broadcast live using appropriate software, and links to the recordings of the broadcasts made available on the UNFCCC website.
- Daily updates on the negotiations, such as the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, ECO and Third World Network, are disseminated in electronic format only. To facilitate access, the secretariat includes weblinks to the updates in the Daily Programme. The publishing organizations may wish to display a copy with QR codes at their exhibit stands.

Energy management and sources

The venue should be an energy-efficient building or have energy reduction measures in place. In addition, energy from renewable sources should be used to the extent possible. The target average temperature for all indoor areas of the conference venue should be 21 °C. Also, participants should be requested to turn off room lights and ventilation as well as information and communication technology equipment when not in use, enabling energy-saving features.

Fair trade

The objectives of fair trade include empowering small-scale producers with limited market access. Purchasing fair trade products can make an important contribution to sustainable development and, in particular, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Purchasing fair trade coffee, tea, juice, chocolate or fruit can make a difference to many families, and demonstrate the positive outcomes of a sustainable event.

Field visits

Field visits to local social and sustainability projects can be organized, thus involving the community and acknowledging the importance of their role in society.

Greening Ambassadors

Temporary staff or volunteers called “Greening Ambassadors” should be available on site to answer any questions about the sustainability strategy and provide concrete advice on how participants can be part of the sustainable organization of the conference, such as with regard to proper use of the recycling system and climate-friendly food.

Guidelines for exhibitors, pavilion organizers and pavilion stand builders

Sustainability guidelines should be prepared and disseminated widely and early on.

Labour standards, health, safety and security

While legislation on health, security and social insurance usually exists in all countries, its enforcement varies considerably. It is important to comply with all laws and ensure that workers are properly insured and legally employed. Accidents on construction sites (e.g. during set-up of the venue and exhibits) can be avoided through diligent compliance with safety and security regulations.

Local travel and transportation

Individual transportation arrangements, such as rental of cars or vans, should be strongly discouraged. Individual local transportation contributes to higher emissions, air pollution, resource use, land use for roads and parking, and traffic congestion, with the resulting aggregate loss of productive time and increased stress levels. During peak hours using individual transport hardly reduces commuting time – on the contrary it may lead to additional delays.

Instead, transportation by bus, tram, metro and regional train – where available – is strongly recommended. If possible, access to public transportation should be provided free of charge to all registered conference participants. In addition, free rental bicycles should be made available.

No-gift policy

A no-gift policy should be seriously considered. The money saved could be invested in social projects or scholarship funds. Where participant gifts are considered necessary, the host country should make sure that they are practical and reusable and/or make a valued souvenir. They should be produced using sustainable materials, such as organic or reused/upcycled/recycled long-lasting materials and ideally locally sourced. Products from local social projects should be given preference. The sustainability of the product should be highlighted, for example by adding a note on its production. Participants will appreciate that sustainability has been considered in all aspects of the conference.

On-site sustainability tours

Guided on-site sustainability tours to inform participants on selected sustainability aspects of the conference, covering issues such as waste avoidance and separation, catering and the availability of rental bicycles and electric shuttles, can be offered at the conference venue.

Paper use

- Participants should be encouraged to print and photocopy only what is absolutely necessary prior to and during the conference. On site they should be encouraged to request only essential documents from the documents counter.
- All paper used for printing and photocopying at the conference should be 100 per cent recycled and certified by Blue Angel or a similar eco-label. Colour paper should be kept to a minimum.
- Printing and photocopying should be double sided and in black and white and, where possible, the font size kept to a legible minimum. Paper that has print on one side only should be collected and reused.
- Eliminating the use of paper business cards should be considered. Many smartphone applications support sharing digital business cards that are automatically updated in case of changes, and scanning and storing personal information received from others.

Partnerships for sustainability

Non-Party stakeholders from the private sector and other parts of society should be invited to join forces in supporting the organization of a sustainable conference.

Reporting

- **Basic:**

If the host country would prefer a simple way to monitor its sustainability results, it is recommended to use the checklist from the United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Events Guide,²⁴ which provides recommendations for hosts of large events and covers the most important organizational aspects. It might also be useful when choosing service providers, who could be asked to tick the criteria they fulfil. The checklist will help benchmark the event, while the criteria not applied could become goals for a future event.

- **Advanced:**

If the host country already has considerable experience with sustainable events and reporting, the Event Organizers Sector Supplement²⁵ by the Global Reporting Initiative can be used, choosing the appropriate application level (A, B or C).

The host country may wish to start by using the reporting template provided in annex II to the United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Events Guide, enabling it, at a later stage, to easily fill out the Global Reporting Initiative level C template.

Service providers

Cleaning, technical support, energy supply, waste collection, deliveries, catering and accommodation all involve local businesses and people. When applying sustainability criteria, the host country should require a certain percentage of the workforce to be recruited through local social projects, including people with disabilities and refugees. For service and supply contracts along the supply chain, performance conditions should require proven compliance with the United Nations Global Compact, human rights and core International Labour Organization conventions.

Shipments

To reduce the climate footprint associated with the shipping of goods in relation to the conference, as per previous practice all shipments processed through the official warehouse should be subject to a maximum allowance of a cumulative total weight of 50 kg per Party or observer organization. Parties and observer organizations setting up areas²⁶ within delegation spaces on a commercial basis should be permitted an extra allowance of 50 kg per area. Shipments in excess of the allowance should incur a surcharge to symbolically reflect the emissions associated with the shipping of the goods. The proceeds from the surcharge could be donated to climate action projects or used to help cover the cost of offsetting the climate footprint of the conference.

Side events and exhibits

Side events and exhibits are very visible to participants. To minimize any negative impacts, the host country should focus on the following:

²⁴ Available at <http://greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/Sustainable%20Events%20Guide%20May%2030%202012%20FINAL.pdf>.

²⁵ See <https://sustainable-event-alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EOSS-G3.1-Complete.pdf>.

²⁶ A clearly delimited space, incorporated as such in the secretariat's space allocation scheme and regardless of its size, where Parties and observer organizations showcase their achievements, products and services pertaining to climate change.

- **Materials:**
 - o Encouraging exhibitors to minimize the amount of promotional material at their stands and to use material that is produced as sustainably as possible, giving strict guidelines regarding which and how much material is allowed;
 - o Encouraging the use of reusable structures (e.g. stands and furniture), such as modular exhibition stands that are easy to assemble, disassemble and reuse, rather than furniture with individualized designs that can be used only for specific or one-off occasions;
 - o Reusing carpet – new systems make it easy to use carpet made up of smaller tiles so that when one square is damaged the individual piece can be replaced without having to change the whole carpet;
- **Energy efficiency:** Encouraging exhibitors to avoid energy-intensive stands and unnecessary lighting, applying energy efficiency measures wherever possible;
- **Waste:** Requiring exhibitors to follow strict waste-collection rules, connecting to local collection systems, since a considerable amount of waste can be generated at exhibits, including from the packaging of display materials and stand construction as well as discarded materials.

Social sustainability

The host country should involve the local community as much as possible by recruiting local staff (social integration) and showcasing successful local projects with a focus on climate change and sustainable development.

Sourcing and procurement

All sourcing and procurement decisions should be made with sustainability principles in mind. In addition, the commitment of service providers to adhering to sustainable, ethical and fair practices could be strengthened by requesting them to consent to a COP-specific supplier code of conduct. A good example, developed on the basis of the United Nations supplier code of conduct,²⁸ is available.²⁹

Sustainable procurement

Given the scale of goods and services needed for a large event such as a United Nations climate change conference, it is important to include sustainable procurement considerations in all purchasing activities. The host country should work with suppliers to make more sustainable choices. Choosing environmentally certified providers (where feasible, without compromising economic sustainability) can greatly enhance the sustainability credentials of the conference. If no such providers are available, the host country can still look for contractors that comply with environmental and social principles. If these are also difficult to find, it should work with those that can create solutions that reduce negative environmental and social impacts.

Additional information on sustainable procurement and sustainable event tenders can be found in annex I to the United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Events Guide.³⁰

Sustainable venue

The venue should have sustainability features, including building eco-certification. If such a venue is not available, the host country should work with venue management to reduce the ecological footprint of the venue's operation during the conference. There are a number of relatively easy to implement energy efficiency measures that can contribute to reducing energy consumption, such as awareness-raising among conference participants, moderate use of air conditioning/heating/cooling equipment, energy-saving light bulbs, low-energy appliances and equipment, lighting timers, and sleep mode on equipment.

²⁸ See <https://www.ungm.org/Public/CodeOfConduct>.

²⁹ Available at http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/application/pdf/supplier_code_of_conduct_cop_23.pdf.

³⁰ Available at <http://greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/Sustainable%20Events%20Guide%20May%2030%202012%20FINAL.pdf>.

Temporary staff

Temporary staffing needs should be met by volunteers or local staff who represent the context of the host city and country, including senior citizens, people with disabilities, refugees and students, while also striving for gender equality.

Virtual participation

Professional video and teleconferencing services are available at affordable prices, thereby reducing the need for some stakeholders to travel to the venue. Depending on the infrastructure in the host country, other technology measures can reduce this need further and improve access to the proceedings.

Waste avoidance and recycling

- Every effort should be made to avoid the generation of waste. All unavoidable waste should be strictly separated at source to enable the highest possible quality of recycling.
- Participants should be asked to actively participate in the waste management initiative and support waste avoidance and waste separation as much as possible. Posters explaining how to properly sort waste should be put up throughout the conference venue. Pictograms can provide orientation on which bin should be used for which type of waste. This information should also be posted online.
- The amount of food waste should be minimized through appropriate measures. Unavoidable food waste could, for example, be turned into biofuel and biogas. The same could be done with leftover food, though a better option would be to have a local charity pick up edible leftovers and distribute them to people in need (subject to national legislation).
- If possible, hot drinks should be sold in ceramic or multi-use plastic cups.
- Participants should be encouraged to keep their UNFCCC lanyard for use at their next UNFCCC meeting.
- Temporary structures should be made from reusable materials. Fittings such as furnishings and technical equipment should be rented. The companies setting up these facilities should commit to avoiding packaging materials as much as possible (or using reusable packaging).
- Any plants used for the decoration of meeting rooms and other public areas of the venue should be living (as opposed to cut) and reused after the conference.

Water

Water management measures, such as flush-stop buttons in restrooms, should be in place.

Web-marketing and social media

Use of social networks, blogs and the host country COP website can give visibility to sustainability measures, enhance awareness among participants, and encourage them to introduce sustainability measures in their own offices and homes.

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