



A day in the life of an observer at COP

An observer handbook for COP 27

WELCOME!

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

This UNFCCC handbook* has been prepared to assist those observers attending a UNFCCC COP for the first time. It is also useful for seasoned observers as the handbook has the key information to follow the COP 27 in a nutshell. You will find some pointers on how to participate effectively and contribute to the UNFCCC process.

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

Observer Relations Team

*This observer handbook is a living document and will get updated as needed.



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UNFCCC OBJECTIVE

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

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



Broad principles,



General obligation,



Basic institutional arrangements,



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

WHAT IS A COP?

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



More Background on the COP



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

OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

UNFCCC COPs PARTICIPANTS

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

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

OBSERVERS

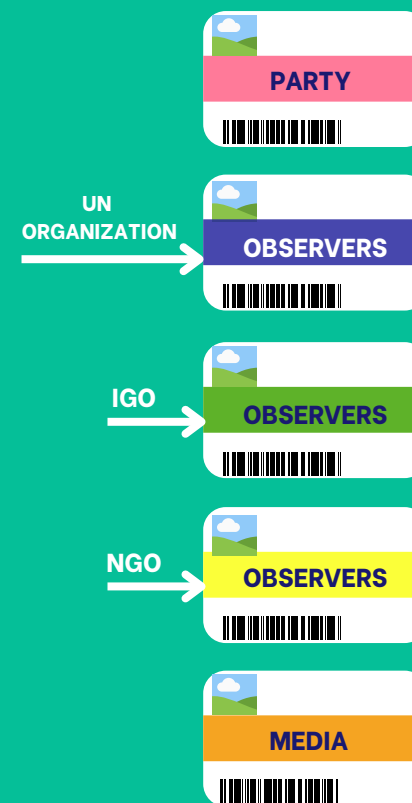
Observer organizations are further categorized into three types:

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

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



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



NGO CONSTITUENCIES

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

WAYS TO ENGAGE (1)

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

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



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

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



WAYS TO ENGAGE (2)



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



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

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



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

STAY UP TO DATE (1)



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The following are useful resources to find information:

- [UNFCCC website](#).
- [Official COP 27 website of the Government of Egypt](#).
- [Information for COP 27 participants \(A-Z\)](#).
- [UNFCCC Handbook](#).
- ['Preparing for the UNFCCC Negotiations and COP27' Webinar Series](#).
- [Learn all about the Convention bodies and climate change acronyms](#).



DAILY PROGRAMME (DP)*

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

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

DAILY READS

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



[Earth
Negotiation
Bulletin](#)



[ECO
Newsletter](#)



STAY UP TO DATE (2)

ANNOUNCEMENTS: THE CCTV MONITORS

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

INFORMATION COUNTER

- Located in Zone B
- Distribution of items such as the COP 27 Welcome Gift.

Left monitor

Formal Meetings

Right monitor

**Side events and
other activities**



REGULAR CONFERENCE DAY



ACCESS

UNFCCC Badge Required

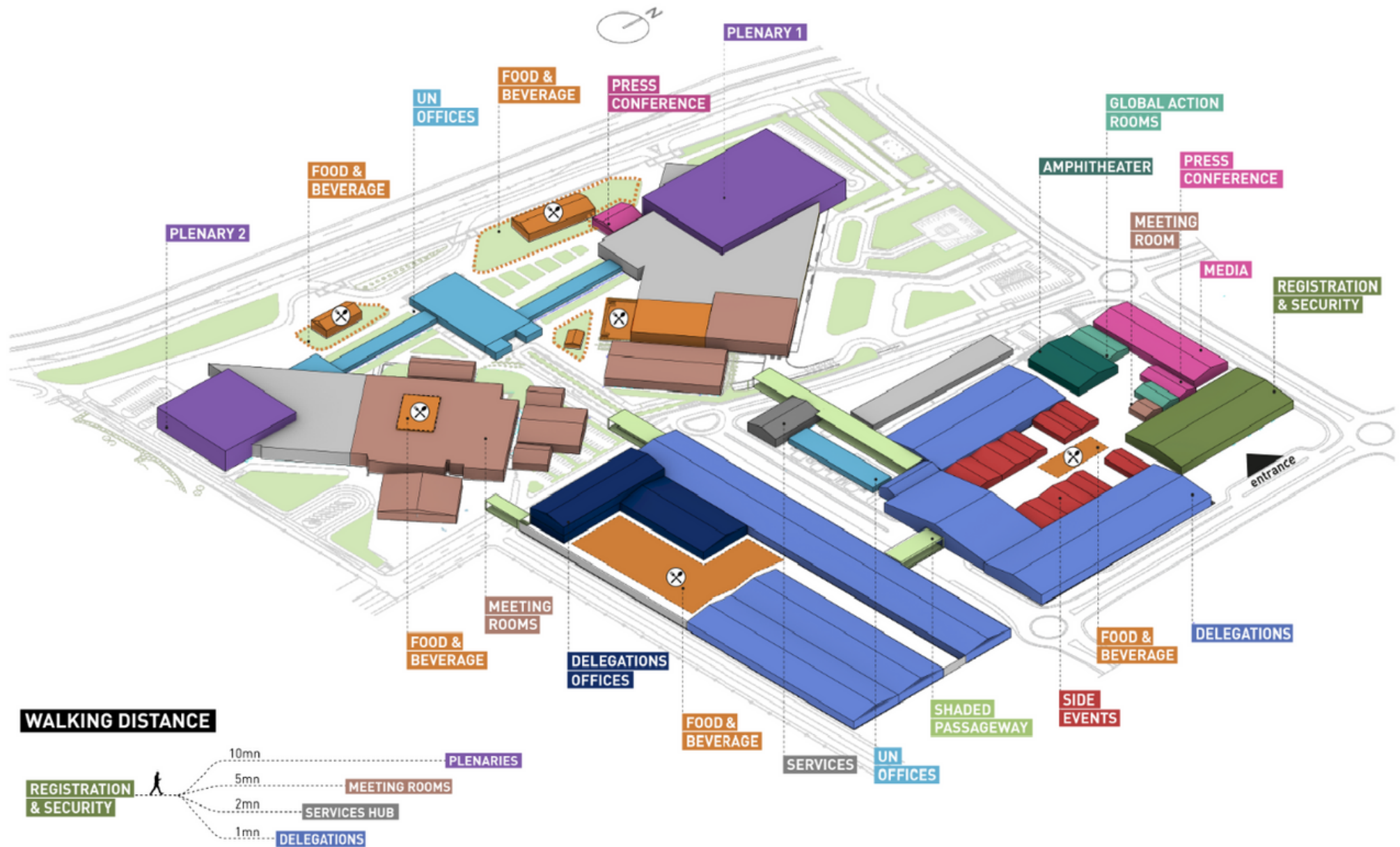


Off Site Events

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



VENUE- Blue zone*



*Up to date information will be found [here](#).

VENUE- Green zone

The Green Zone is delivered by the COP's host country (called the Presidency), For COP 27 Egypt is planning COP27 Green Zone at a walking distance just across the street from the Blue Zone:



The Green zone is a platform where business community, youth, civil and indigenous societies, academia, artists and fashion communities from all over the world can express themselves and their voices would be heard.



It promotes dialogue, awareness, education, and commitments via events, exhibitions, workshops, cultural performances, and talks.



LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

For the most up to date information please refer to the [Information for COP 27 participants](#) list in full. The following list consists of the most frequently asked questions:

MEETING ROOMS

Meeting room booking requests for the first day of the conference (6 November) can be submitted electronically by downloading, filling and sending the Meeting Room Assignment form by email to meetingrequest@unfccc.int. As of 6 November, all meeting room booking requests must be submitted in person at the Meeting Room Assignment counter (MRA) located at the venue.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

The COVID-19 situation will be kept under review in the lead up and during the conference. For up to date information please refer to the link [here](#).



ACCOMMODATION

COP 27 delegates are urged to book their accommodation as soon as possible. For detailed information on accommodation please refer to the link [here](#).



TRANSPORT

The Sharm El Sheikh International Convention Center will be served by a conference shuttle bus system operating between the venue and main hotel zones throughout Sharm El Sheikh.



VISA

All foreign participants entering Egypt must have a valid passport.

Please consult the COP 27 Presidency website for information on visa [here](#).



CATERING

For information concerning food options in Blue Zone make sure to check the food available in the different zones [here](#).

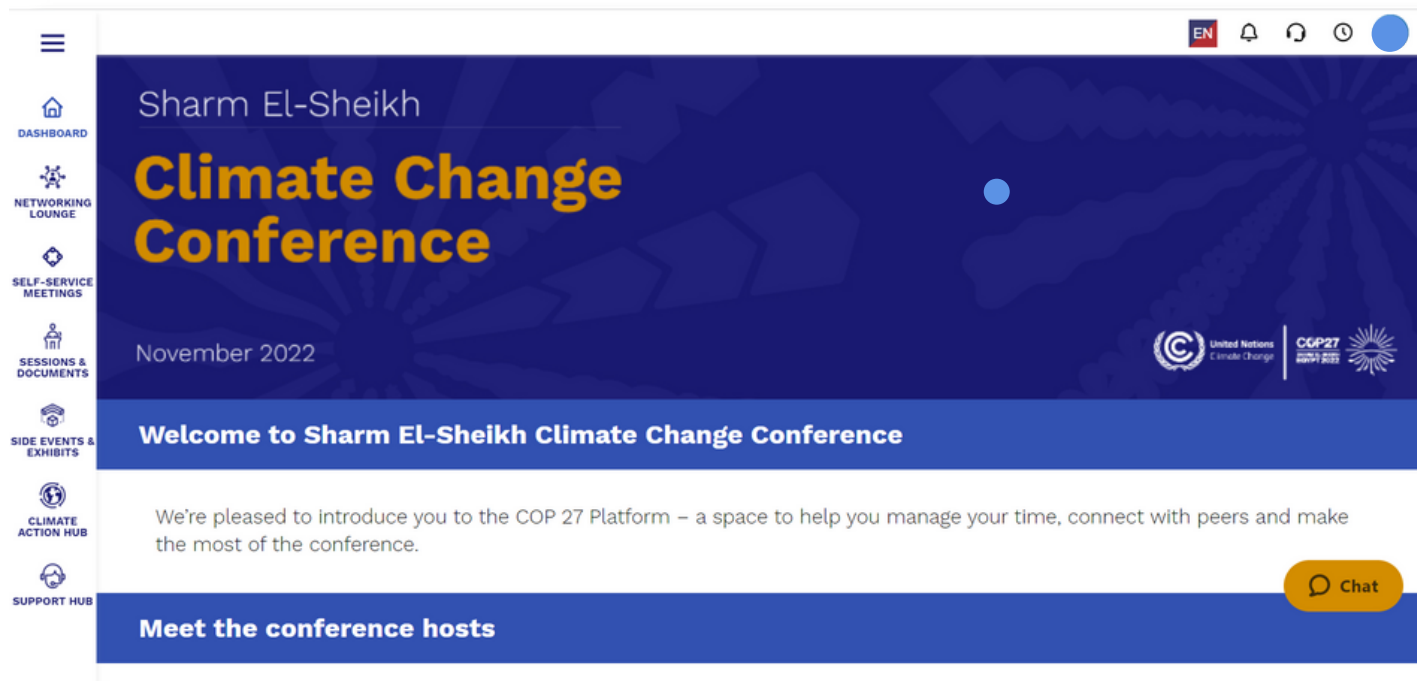
COP 27 PLATFORM

Throughout COP 27, the platform can be used to access meetings that allow virtual participation or online viewing according to your badge type, connect with other participants online via the networking lounge, and create self-service virtual meetings.

You should have automatically received an email for the relevant information to log in, if that is not the case please check your spam and ensure to check the email address that you have been registered with for COP 27. Please refer to your email confirmation for further information about the platform.

Once you have logged in to the platform, you will be able to browse the sections and features available to you. Additional features such as the schedule of meetings, and meeting links will be available closer to the start of the conference.

If you are planning to actively participate in remotely in meetings check the [**Technical requirements and guide to initial set up requirements**](#).



SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

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

Official secretariat-managed side events will be taking place in each of the nine side event rooms every day (except Sunday, November 13, the rest day!) from Wednesday, November 9, to Thursday, November 17.

We invite you to attend side events and exhibits and engage in knowledge sharing, capacity building, and networking activities. Check out the [side events schedule](#) and the [exhibits schedule](#). For more information on how to participate in side events and exhibits, please consult [this webpage](#) on the official UNFCCC website.

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

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

Side event rooms:

Akhenaten	150 people
Amon	150 people
Hatshepsut	300 people
Khufu	300 people
Memphis	300 people
Osiris	300 people
Thebes	150 people
Thutmose	150 people
Tutankhamun	100 people

PROCESS FOR ADVOCACY ACTIONS

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



Admitted organizations are required to submit a request (through cool@unfccc.int) by 15:00 local time the day prior.



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





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



COP 27 CLIMATE ACTION CALENDAR

The incoming Presidency of COP27, together with the [High-Level Champions](#) and [Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action](#), have published the calendar of the thematic programme of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November.

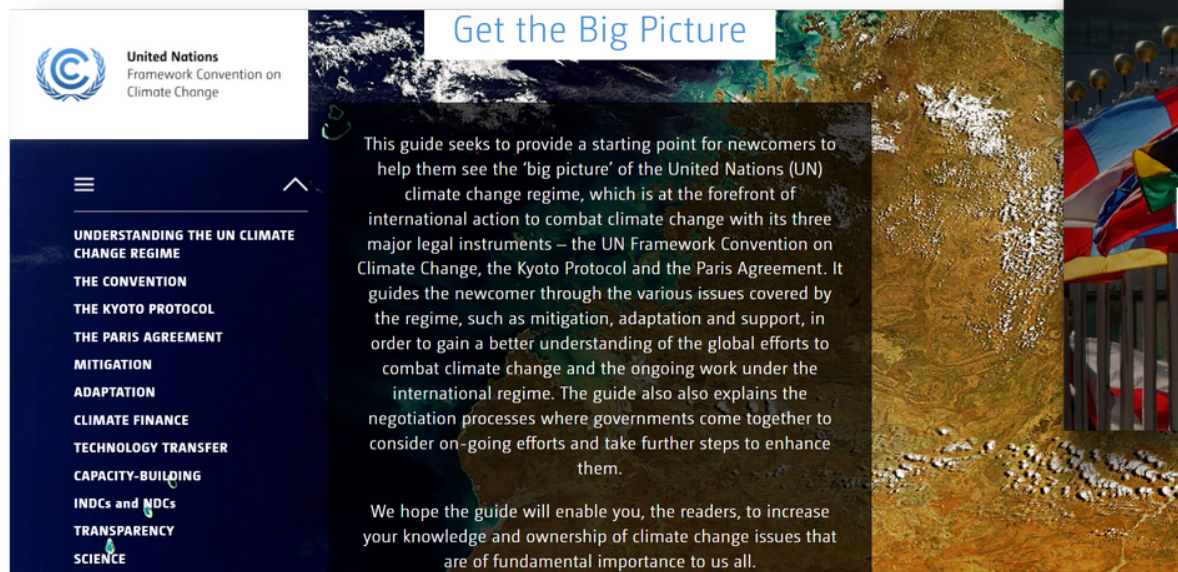
The programme unites government and non-Party stakeholders, fostering collaboration among them to deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions and help ensure a just transition to a net-zero economy which alleviates poverty and helps secure a sustainable future. Up to date information will be available [here](#).

	7 Nov	8 Nov	9 Nov	10 Nov	11 Nov	12 Nov	13 Nov	14 Nov	15 Nov	16 Nov	17 Nov
Day	WLS		Finance	Science & Youth	Decarbonization	Adaptation & Agriculture	Rest Day	Water & Gender	Energy & ACE	Biodiversity	Solutions
 COP 27 Presidency events	World Leaders Summit (WLS)		Finance	Science	Decarbonization	Adaptation	Rest Day	Gender	ACE	Biodiversity	Solutions
				Youth & Future Generations		Agriculture & Food Systems		Water	Energy		
 MP-GCA			Finance	Resilience	Industry	Land	Rest Day	Water	Energy	Oceans and Coastal Zones	Human Settlements
										Transport	

*For a glossary of climate change acronyms please refer to the link [here](#).

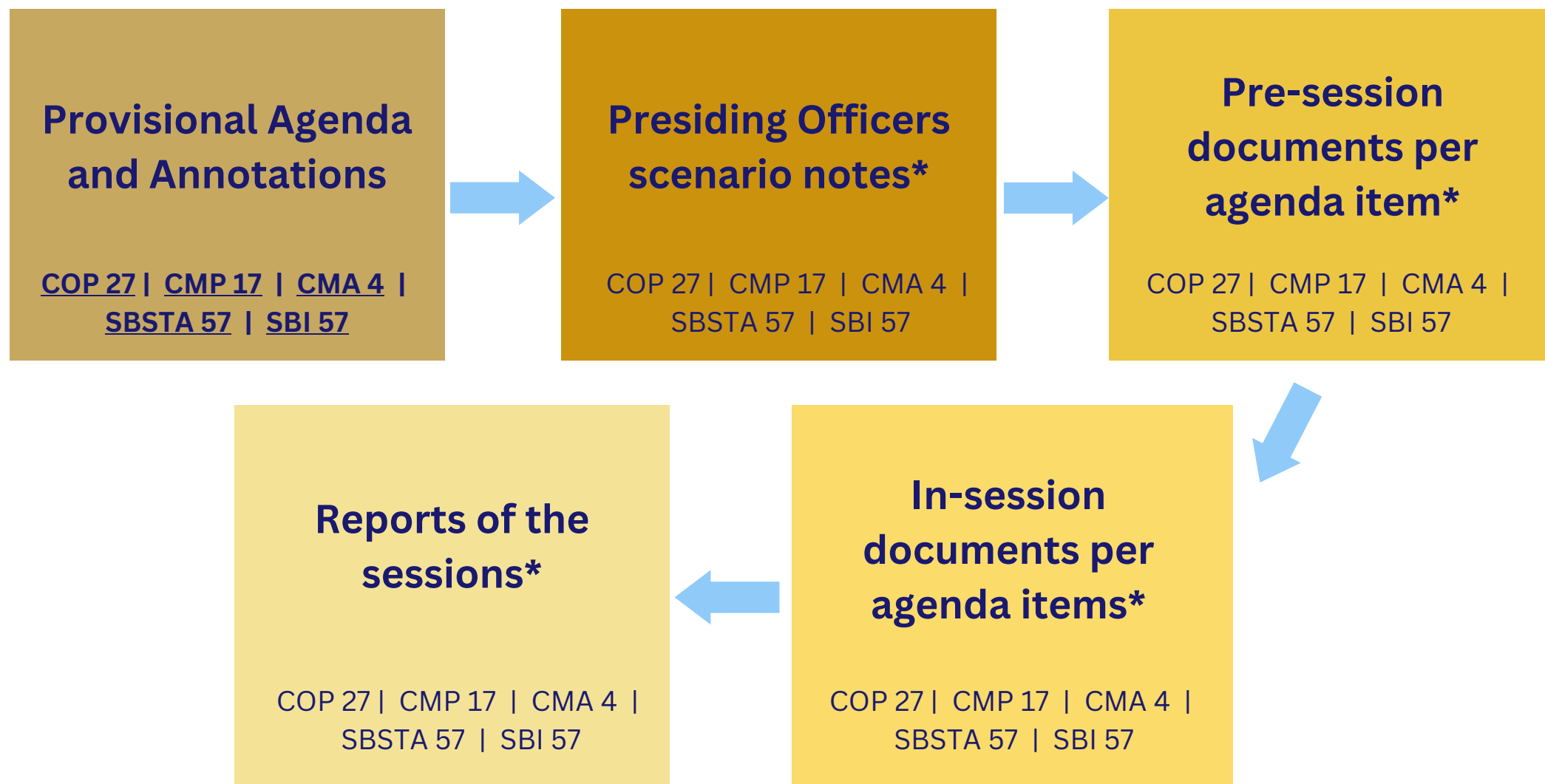
FOLLOWING THE NEGOTIATIONS – UNFCCC GUIDE

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



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

DOCUMENTS



*The forthcoming documents will be available [here](#)

DOCUMENTS

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

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

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

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



NEGOTIATION MEETINGS

PLENARY

- Open to observers
- NGO Constituency statements, time permitting

CONTACT GROUPS (CGs)

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

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (ICs)

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

INFORMALS INFORMALS (INF INFS)

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



ACCESS TO MEETINGS

FORMALITY OF MEETINGS:

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

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

ACCESS TO OBSERVERS: Open ○ Closed ✕

Meeting type	○	○	○ / ✕	○	○
	OPENING PLENARY	CONTACT GROUPS (CG)	INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS	CG CONCLUSIONS	CLOSING PLENARY
TIMELINE					
Documents to consult	PRE- SESSIONAL DOCUMENTs	DELIBERATIONS DRAFT TEXT	DRAFT TEXT	L DOCUMENT (STILL DRAFT)	ADOPTION OF L DOCUMENT



MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

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



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



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



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



MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

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



Party representatives must be able to sit at the table.



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



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



MAKING INTERVENTIONS

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



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



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



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



UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS



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



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



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



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



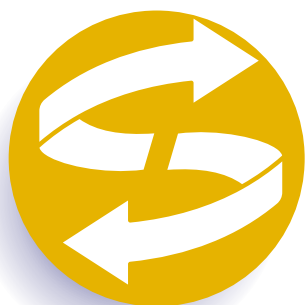
Observer's intersessional work back home: Votes, campaigns, grassroots works, work with local governments and municipal authorities, etc.



BEYOND COP – OBSERVER ACTIONS OPPORTUNITIES



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



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



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



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



CODE OF CONDUCT

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

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





We wish you a productive conference!

For more information please visit the Non-Party
Stakeholder web pages or contact us at
cool@unfccc.int



UNFCCC Negotiator App

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



TWITTER
@UNFCCC
@simonstiell



UN Climate Change App

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



Apple phones



Android phones