Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development, Eighth session

The eighth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Services, Trade and Development will take place on **23-24 September 2020** in the form of a formal virtual meeting with interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations. The virtual session will take place from 14:00 to 16:00 (Geneva time).

All relevant documentation is available at:


1. Participation and registration

Online registration is mandatory and should be completed through the following link: https://indico.un.org/event/28982/

To facilitate approval of registration, Permanent Missions of States members of the Board are requested to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the name(s) and title(s) of their representative(s). Kindly note that the letter of credentials of representatives should be uploaded to the system during the online registration process.

Other participants (i.e. representatives of members of UNCTAD that are not members of the Board and representatives of specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental bodies wishing to attend as observers) are also eligible to participate in the session as observers and should register online by the same date using the link above.

Any enquiries concerning registration should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; email: meetings@unctad.org.

2. Further information and contact details

All enquiries concerning substantive issues should be addressed to the Division on International Trade and Commodities. Email: TNCDB@unctad.org

We request participants to register as soon as possible to facilitate quality assurance tests before the meeting dates. We recommend participants to use their individual e-mail addresses (not the generic mission account) for registration, as links to the test session and the actual meeting will be communicated via e-mail.
3. Arrangements for the conduct of discussions

As virtual meetings with interpretation are limited to 2 hours each, and in order to ensure as smooth a meeting as possible, speakers wishing to take the floor during the virtual session are requested to inscribe on the list of speakers and should inform the Secretariat by 21 September 2020 at statements@unctad.org. To ensure that statements are interpreted as clearly as possible, delegates are also requested to submit to the same e-mail address a copy of their statements 24-hours in advance of the session. Participants are kindly requested to limit their interventions to a maximum of 5 minutes.

As per the guidance, it is expected that interventions will be by way of prepared interventions and in accordance with the list of speakers prepared on the basis of the inscriptions received 24 hours prior to the various debates. Nevertheless, should delegations need to request for the floor, they may do so through the hand raising functionality on the online platform.

Written statements

Written statements may be submitted for posting on the UNCTAD website after they have been delivered. These should be sent to statements@unctad.org.

4. Logistics

The virtual meeting will be organized using Interprefy, a remote simultaneous interpretation platform with the six official languages of the United Nations. We request that participants register as soon as possible to facilitate quality assurance tests prior to the meeting dates. Links for the test and for the virtual meeting will be sent to the email addresses used for registration. The link to the virtual meeting will be sent to registered participants one day in advance of the start of the session.

More information about Interprefy is available at https://www.interprefy.com/.

a) Testing connectivity and devices

To avoid technical problems during the live meeting, we strongly encourage participants to participate in the test session, scheduled to take place on 21 September 2020, where connectivity will be tested and explanations on the use of the platform provided. Registered participants will be informed by e-mail on the time of the test and how to connect to the test session.

In addition, participants can already do a preliminary test of their device and connection by using the following link: test platform

b) Links to the virtual session & nomenclature

Links to the virtual meeting will be sent to registered participants the day before the start of the meeting.

When you access the speakers’ link please use the following nomenclature to identify yourself:

- For representatives of member States: Name of country + name of person
For representatives of IGOs & NGOs and other Experts: Name of organization + name of person

Participants who receive the viewers’ link will only need to click on the link and select the language in which they wish to hear the proceedings.

To avoid a crash of the system from an overload of connected participants, we request delegations to only have one person per delegation using the speakers’ link. As the link is not individualized, different representatives can connect at different times. Please ensure that the above-mentioned nomenclature is used. Other members of the same delegation should use the viewers’ link.

c) Tips

Here are key tips to ensure that you can connect correctly:

- Please **DO NOT USE A MOBILE OR TABLET DEVICE**. Only use a laptop or a desktop computer.
- For the browser, please use Google Chrome/Mozilla Firefox/Edge updated to the latest version.
- Please use a **WIRED** headset for audio. **DO NOT** use a headset connected through Bluetooth or the computer’s built-in microphone.

![Wired headset](image)

*d) Support*

Please note that connectivity problems are beyond the secretariat’s control. This is an Internet-based platform and if the participant has a connectivity problem the secretariat cannot intervene remotely. Therefore, delegates are strongly encouraged to test the connection. While those with a viewers’ link can easily logout of the meeting and then reconnect, it takes longer for those with a speakers’ link to reconnect as credentials need to be entered again.

e) Participation types and limits

The platform supports around 300 speakers (able to raise their hand and take the floor) and 1,000 viewers (able to follow the session but unable to take the floor). Sessions will have separate links for speakers and viewers. Given the limit of 300 speakers, regional group coordinators, member States and organizations are requested to participate in the discussions through one representative who will take the floor. Remaining delegates will be allowed to follow the sessions as viewers.
5. Recommended practices for participants in meetings with remote interpretation

Remote meetings are very different from in-person meetings. Please bear in mind that communicating through an interface platform adds an extra layer of complexity to any interaction. With the objective of offering the best quality interpretation possible, and helping speakers to communicate their message more effectively, the Interpretation Service has identified a set of practices to contribute to the smooth conduct of meetings.

a) Internet connection

- Use of an ethernet cable, connecting directly to the modem, instead of WiFi, is strongly recommended.
- Participants who wish to take the floor are strongly advised to connect via a computer, not via a tablet or smart phone.

b) Microphone

- Use high quality unidirectional microphones\(^1\) separate or attached to a headset, preferably with a USB connection to the computer used for participating in the meeting.
- Microphones should provide for echo cancellation. Avoid using earbud-type microphones.
- Built-in computer microphones should not be used.
- Position the microphone at a reasonable distance (i.e. not so close that breathing is picked up) and speak directly into it.

c) Setting

- Participate from a quiet room with the doors and windows closed to avoid reverberation, echoes, and other noises that may distract other participants.
- Background noise and interference should be eliminated (turn off loud air conditioning, etc.).
- All sound notifications on all devices should be turned off before the meeting starts.
- All other non-essential applications on the computer should be closed.
- The platform should be open on just one browser.

d) Camera and image

- It is strongly recommended that participants who wish to take the floor have access to a camera as interpreters rely heavily on the facial expressions and body language of participants to do their job properly.
- The camera should provide a clear, front-on view of the speaker, ideally from the waist up.
- Avoid strong backlight, such as from a window.

e) When taking the floor

- Microphone and camera should be turned on only when taking the floor.

---

1 Microphones should reproduce audio frequencies between 125 Hz and 15,000 Hz, with a variation of maximum +/- 10dB. Microphones shall comply with IEC 60268-4.
• Papers should be kept away from the microphone while speaking to avoid rustling that distorts the sound.
• Speak at a moderate pace.
• The microphone should be turned off at the conclusion of each statement, and remain muted, to avoid sound distortion.

*****