



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
SPECIAL SESSION

10 September 2020

Subject: Upcoming plenary meeting of the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to inform you that pursuant to decision 74/544 entitled, “*Procedure for taking decisions of the General Assembly during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic*” the General Assembly should take note of all the decisions adopted under its mechanism at the first plenary meeting to be held as soon as circumstances allow. To take this requisite action and perform other pertinent tasks, I would like to inform you that I am scheduling a plenary meeting of the special session in the afternoon of Friday, 11 September 2020, to be held immediately following the adjournment of the 64th plenary meeting of the seventy-fourth regular session of the Assembly.

The Secretary-General’s letter dated 7 July 2020 regarding the reopening of the UN Headquarters states that in the event that a meeting is to be held, “Occupational safety experts will be asked to complete a risk assessment of such requests and prepare mitigation measures to minimize the risks to staff and delegates.” The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) team concluded that the proposed meeting is at low risk if the following precautionary measures aimed at mitigating the spread of COVID-19 are put in place:

- Access to the United Nations complex during the plenary meeting will be restricted.
- To ensure the effectiveness of physical distancing in the General Assembly Hall, only one delegate per Member State and a delegate each from the Holy See, the State of Palestine and the European Union will be allowed in the Hall.
- Upon arrival at the United Nations Headquarters, one ticket will be issued by the Safety and Security Service per Member State and for the Holy See, the State of Palestine and the European Union.
- Access to the General Assembly Hall will require a regular delegate’s pass and the ticket.
- The seating plan will be slightly amended to ensure physical distancing and the affected MS will be reminded accordingly.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

- The proceedings of the meetings will be webcast live and on-demand on UN Web TV, allowing representatives of intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers to do so through webcast.
- All statements will be made by delegations from their national seats.
- Furthermore, the Secretariat will actively manage the exit by calling each row for departure in a staggered manner.
- Additional measures are in the enclosed Annex.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all had to work under extraordinary conditions to overcome the myriad of challenges facing us. I urge all to follow the guidelines, including not to congregate, to maintain the recommended physical distancing, and to have a face covering on the day of the meeting.

The items for considerations by the Assembly at this plenary meeting of the special session will be announced in the Journal of the United Nations in due course.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long, sweeping horizontal stroke followed by a circular flourish.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MITIGATION OF COVID-19 EXPOSURE DURING MEETINGS IN THE UNHQ COMPLEX

UPDATED 27 AUGUST 2020

This guidance is the agreed minimum standard required to be met for meetings and is in accordance with current New York City and State requirements regarding public gatherings, and the Phase Two restrictions for activity in the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ) complex as detailed in the Crisis Operations Group Reintegration Plan.

Note that whilst not required under the Organization's privileges and immunities, New York State guidelines do not currently support large scale indoor gatherings such as this meeting.

ATTENDANCE AND ENTRY

Attendance in the meeting room is restricted to delegates and those staff members with a direct role. Increasing numbers introduce complexity and increase the likelihood of interactions and exposure.

By swiping their United Nations issued ID card on entry, all attendees and support staff declare as a condition of their entry that they:

- Have completed quarantine if in the last 14 days they have arrived from a country or US State that is considered elevated risk^{1 2}.
- Have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days;
- Have not had symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in the last 14 days; and
- Have not had close contact with someone with COVID-19 or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Face coverings: All meeting attendees are required to wear a face covering at all times whilst in public spaces, and in the meeting room except when directly addressing the meeting. All UN staff will wear face coverings at all times. Disposable face masks will be made available if needed. All delegates and staff will be offered a disposable surgical face mask if needed as part of meeting registration or entry.

Gloves: Gloves and other protective equipment are not required for most attendees. Hand-sanitizing solution will be available on entry to the meeting room. All surfaces will be deep cleaned prior to the meeting commencing.

Physical distancing: All attendees are to refrain from direct contact including handshakes and other physical contact during greetings in recognition of the physical distancing requirements. All attendees should remain conscious of COVID-19 hand sanitizing and contact precautions. To support contact precautions, no food or drink / glassware will be provided in meeting rooms.

¹ <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

² <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

MOVEMENTS

All movement and if necessary queuing requires 2 meter physical distancing, and attendees are requested to minimize activity until seated in the meeting room. Wherever practicable, waiting and queues should be outside rather than indoors.

INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Simultaneous interpretation will take place using multiple booths as determined by DGACM staff.

There will be a single interpreter at a time in each interpretation booth, and each interpreter will occupy their own dedicated workspace. Doors are to remain open.

In accordance with DGACM requirements interpretation service shifts will be limited to 3 hours..

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND CONTACT TRACING

DGACM staff will record the participants and support staff present at each meeting and forward this to the DHMOSH Occupational Safety and Health team as a record in support of contact tracing.

Emergency medical support is available to any attendee from security staff and from medical staff located in the Secretariat building.

Any attendee who begins to feel unwell (non-emergency) should immediately leave the UN complex and return to their accommodation and to seek medical care,

Should any attendee become unwell with or be diagnosed with COVID-19 during or within 14 days of the meeting, they are strongly encouraged to contact DHMOSH medical staff through the confidential address osh@un.org. Contact tracing will take place and testing may be offered to those considered contacts.