

## Virtual Participation Procedures

The CTCN is exploring measures to enhance the efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of Advisory Board meetings as well as other meetings of the CTCN.

### Background

At the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Board, the CTCN presented a proposal on virtual participation for consideration by the Advisory Board that would eventually enable the possibility of a virtual meeting of the Advisory Board. The proposal further sought affirmation by the COP that virtual participation by members in Advisory Board meetings shall count towards the quorum as described in the rules of procedure of the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board supported the concept of virtual participation but raised concerns regarding challenges (e.g., time zones, duration of meetings, connectivity/technology issues) particularly with a fully virtual Advisory Board meeting. The Advisory Board was not prepared to endorse the proposal but sought to incorporate virtual participation in its work, beginning with accommodating individuals in smaller sized meetings such as Advisory Board Task Forces. The CTCN was requested to prepare a paper on virtual participation procedures for the next Advisory Board meeting.

### Considerations related to Advisory Board Rules of Procedure

The Advisory Board rules of procedure are silent in terms of virtual participation of Advisory Board members in Advisory Board meetings to satisfy quorum requirements. However, the rules of procedure are sufficiently flexible so as to allow decision-making by the Advisory Board to be concluded outside of official Advisory Board meetings using virtual means. Thus, we may deduce that virtual participants in Advisory Board meetings may count towards the quorum providing that the virtual participant is sufficiently engaged and informed on the topic and discussions.

Decision 25/CP.19, Annex II, VI and VII, respectively stipulate the procedures that guide the Meetings of and establish Quorum for the CTCN Advisory Board. Inter alia, it is specified that the Advisory Board shall meet at the premises of the CTC unless otherwise decided by the Board, that facilitating the participation of key stakeholders should be a consideration in the case of venue rotation, and that eleven of the Advisory Board's sixteen government representatives must be present to constitute quorum for the adoption of decisions by the Board.

Furthermore, under section IX on Decision-making, the procedures allow for decisions to be made outside of official meetings on an extraordinary basis when, in the judgement of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a decision should not be postponed until the next meeting of the Advisory Board.

### Virtual Participation Procedures

Virtual participation scenarios

- Advisory Board meetings
  - Provide option for Advisory Board members to participate virtually on a voluntary basis. Virtual participation could be for specific agenda items of interest to the member.
  - Provide option for invited speakers to make interventions virtually.
- Advisory Board Task Forces meetings
  - Most of these meetings will involve virtual participation since a smaller, more manageable group will be involved and the typical duration is one to two hours.
- Other meetings
  - In general, virtual participation could be considered for meetings of smaller groups and of limited duration, taking into account time differences and availability of virtual participation technologies to participants.

#### Virtual participation technologies

The CTCN has a number of virtual participation enabling technologies at its disposal, each with varying degrees of quality, reliability, cost and availability. The CTCN proposes that all technologies available to it should be considered when planning for virtual participation.

Examples of technologies currently used by the CTCN are:

- Telephone (audio only)
- Skype / Skype for business
- GoToMeeting
- Video conferencing services

#### Virtual participation protocols

- Virtual participation at Advisory Board meetings by Advisory Board members shall be carried out on a voluntary basis.
- For the purposes of registering a vote for a decision, the virtual participant must be provided with all relevant information related to the issue, similar to that received by in-person meeting participants. The Chair or Vice-Chair shall confirm that the virtual participant has received all relevant information before receiving the participant's vote.
- The Chair or Vice-Chair shall follow the decision-making rules of procedure such as ensuring quorum and apply them to both in-person and virtual meeting participants.
- Where no Advisory Board voting is involved, greater flexibility may be applied when using virtual participation.

The CTCN will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its approach to virtual participation at meetings and revise the procedures as needed. The CTCN will also remain in close coordination with virtual meeting participation protocols under consideration by the UNFCCC.