

# CIVIL SOCIETY TOOLKIT

for the Conference of the States Parties  
to the United Nations Convention  
against Corruption



CIVIL  
**UNCA** @ **Coalition**  
SOCIETY

*This toolkit has been created by the UNCAC Coalition as a guidance document for civil society organizations on the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC CoSP). This information has been compiled from various sources, both official United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) guidance documents and external sources, and draws upon previous experiences of the UNCAC Coalition. The guide provides information on the rules and practices of the Conference, before, during and afterwards, to help civil society organizations plan their CoSP participation and activities and maximize their impact on its deliberations and outcomes.*

**Disclaimer: This document is not in any way affiliated with nor represents official guidance issued by the United Nations.**

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# Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC

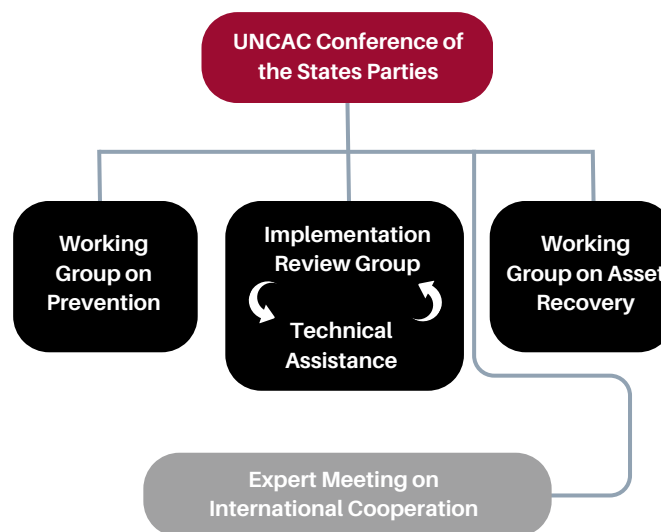
## The Conference of the States Parties

The Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) is the main decision-making body of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). All states that have ratified the UNCAC are automatically part of the Conference of the States Parties. Other states (signatories and non-signatories), intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations can apply for observer status at CoSP sessions. The CoSP convenes every two years and adopts resolutions and decisions aimed at building States Parties' capacity, enhancing their cooperation to achieve the Convention's objectives, as well as promoting and reviewing its implementation. It operates under the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Conference.

The Conference has created subsidiary bodies, operating under its mandate, to assist in carrying out its work. They are meant to advise the Conference and make recommendations to help deliver its mandate.

### Why participate?

- Demonstrate civil society contributions and expertise on anti-corruption.
- Share best practice approaches and lessons learned.
- Impact CoSP resolutions and discussions.
- Monitor States' commitments and positions on anti-corruption.
- Engage with government officials, civil society organizations and international organizations.
- Opportunity for advocacy and strengthening civic space at the UN level.



### Who can attend?



ECOSOC-accredited organizations



Other relevant organizations without ECOSOC observer status



Individuals cannot attend, unless they are part of an organization or a State Party delegation



# Civil Society at the CoSP

## Before the Conference



### 1. Applying to participate in the CoSP

- NGOs with ECOSOC status should receive an invitation to the CoSP.
- NGOs without ECOSOC status must submit an application to UNODC to request participation in the CoSP. If not objected to by any State Party, NGOs that applied will receive an invitation sometime in the fall before the CoSP.
- If necessary, apply for an entry visa to the CoSP host country as soon as possible. Do not wait until your organization receives a formal invitation letter to the CoSP, as this might arrive too late for the visa process.

### 2. Planning special events (side events)

- Organizing and participating in side events at the CoSP are an important way for civil society organizations (CSOs) to raise awareness about key anti-corruption issues. States Parties, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations and CSOs with CoSP observer status are able to propose side events at the CoSP (and must inform their Permanent Missions accredited to the United Nations in Vienna of the application). Topics must be thematically relevant to the UNCAC and the work of the CoSP.
- Since the number of proposed events usually exceeds the number of available slots, side events co-organized by a number of stakeholders, and in particular with States Parties, will have higher chances of being accepted. See the UNODC's guidelines for CoSP10 special events website for details on the application process and further information.

### 3. Check out the UNCAC Coalition's CoSP10 resources and network linked here.

### 4. Make written submissions (to be submitted by 2 weeks before the Conference to uncac@un.org)

- CSOs can provide written reports on UNCAC implementation and their activities. These written submissions should uphold UN standards and will be published on the UNODC's CoSP website:
  - NGOs with ECOSOC status can submit written reports of up to 2000 words.
  - Other relevant CSOs that were accredited to the CoSP (without ECOSOC status) can submit written reports of up to 1500 words.
  - If you want report copies to be made available to delegates, **make sure to bring a sufficient number of copies on the first day of the Conference.**

## Reaching out to governments to influence the CoSP agenda and resolutions

Get in touch with the country delegation (*if you do not have the right contacts, reach out to the UNCAC Coalition at [cosp10@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:cosp10@uncaccoalition.org) or [info@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:info@uncaccoalition.org)*).

Arrange a coordination meeting with the delegation to:

1. Discuss their priorities, and encourage them to share information on:

- UNCAC implementation & national anti-corruption efforts (emphasizing on their impact).<sup>1</sup>
- Efforts to implement recommendations from their country review (look up the country profile and our UNCAC Review Status Tracker and familiarize yourselves with the official UNCAC review documents available online).
- Measures taken to implement the UNGASS Political Declaration.
- Whether they will introduce or support resolutions on specific topics.

2. Encourage them to publicly report on their efforts to promote transparency and inclusiveness of civil society (including in the country review). If they have signed the Transparency Pledge, remind them of their commitments.

3. Encourage them to support actions to advance priority issues (i.e., by introducing or supporting relevant and meaningful resolutions).

4. Encourage the government to take an active stand to defend the CoSP civic space in case politically-motivated objections to certain NGOs' participation arise.

5. Encourage the inclusion of a CSO representative in the official country delegation.

Make sure your government actively supports civil society's involvement:

- Refer to the UNCAC Coalition's Guide for Governments.<sup>2</sup>

1. See UNCAC Coalition parallel reports for recent information about implementation: <https://uncaccoalition.org/uncac-review/cso-review-reports/>

2. UNCAC Coalition Guide for Governments: <https://uncaccoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/UNCAC-Coalition-guide-for-governments-September-1-2023.pdf>

# Civil Society at the CoSP



## During the Conference: Modalities of Participation

### Formal Modalities<sup>3</sup>

#### Attend plenary meetings and side events of the conference

- CSOs accredited to participate in the CoSP are able to attend the plenary meetings of the CoSP, as well as all of the CoSP side events.
  - CSOs cannot attend the meetings of CoSP subsidiary bodies (*Implementation Review Group, Working Group on Asset Recovery, Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption and Expert Meetings to enhance International Cooperation under the UNCAC*).

#### Oral statements in the plenary

- CSOs can make oral statements under each agenda item, after the States Parties have spoken.
- In-person or pre-recorded video statements can be submitted in advance.
- Statements must uphold UN standards and avoid abusive language (de facto, this means avoid discussing specific country situations in oral statements).

#### Other

- CSOs can receive conference documents.
- CSOs can hold meetings, including with country delegations, on the margins of the CoSP.

UNODC holds an annual civil society briefing on the outcomes of the review process, and CSOs are invited to discuss their activities regarding UNCAC implementation. The “NGO briefing” is typically held in June, on the margins of the formal UNCAC Implementation Review Group (IRG) session. CSOs that were accredited to the previous CoSP receive an invitation to attend this briefing.

### What is meant by ‘meaningful’ CoSP resolutions?

A meaningful CoSP resolution:

- Strengthens & raises the bar of existing commitments;
- Elaborates on necessary actions rather than reiterating a general call for implementation;
- Provides mandates for States Parties to share information and for UNODC to do research, reporting and develop up-to-date guides;
- Sets the agenda for CoSP subsidiary bodies’ discussions;
- Influences technical assistance provided to requesting States Parties .

## After the Conference



- Prepare a statement to send to the media and other stakeholders about the outcomes of the CoSP, particularly related to the priorities of your organization.
- Promote States Parties’ accountability: follow up on commitments that were made at the CoSP, such as in plenary statements, and in the adopted resolutions.
- Review the report by UNODC summarizing what was discussed at the CoSP and the resolutions adopted to see how CSOs’ views and priority issues were addressed.
- Attend the annual “NGO briefing” and the CoSP inter-sessional meetings, if such meetings are scheduled, which are open to you if you were admitted to attend the CoSP.
- Become part of the UNCAC Coalition (if you are not yet) and participate in our [regional meetings](#) and [working groups](#) to build upon what was achieved at the CoSP, and to promote the effective implementation of commitments in CoSP resolutions on priority issues.

3. UNODC Guidance Note on the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and its subsidiary bodies: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session8/Guidance\\_note\\_participation\\_of\\_NGOs\\_in\\_COSP\\_and\\_subsidiary\\_bodies.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session8/Guidance_note_participation_of_NGOs_in_COSP_and_subsidiary_bodies.pdf)

# Other Useful Information

## Resources



[UNCAC Coalition Webpage on CoSP10](#)



[UNCAC Coalition Guide for Governments](#)



[UNCAC Coalition Newsletter](#)



[UNCAC Coalition CoSP Thematic Mailing Lists](#)



[UNODC CoSP Webpage](#)



[UNODC Civil Society for Development: Opportunities through the United Nations Convention Against Corruption](#)



[UNODC Guidance note on the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and its subsidiary bodies](#)



The UNCAC Coalition is a global network of over 350 civil society organizations (CSOs) in over 100 countries, committed to promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Established in 2006, it mobilizes civil society action for UNCAC at international, regional and national levels.



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Association for the Implementation of the  
United Nations Convention against Corruption

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