

# General guidelines for NGO representatives accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva

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The UNOG NGO Liaison Unit is the focal point for matters concerning relations between the UN and civil society in Geneva and remains at the disposal of NGOs who require more details on these guidelines. The Unit can be contacted by email: [unog.ngo@un.org](mailto:unog.ngo@un.org) or by telephone at +41-22-917-1304.

**ECOSOC consultative status enables NGOs to engage with the UN**

**NGOs accredited to UNOG can:**

- Obtain grounds passes
- Participate in UN conferences and events
- Organize meetings at the Palais des Nations
- Use the Centre for NGOs
- Access UNOG services

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) recognizes the [importance of partnering with Civil Society](#) to build a better, safer and more sustainable world. Civil society advances the goals of the UN and helps support the work of the Organization.

Since the adoption of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) in 2015, the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as partners to the UN has become ever more important. The UN system relies on their expertise and active engagement across different sectors, including education, health, poverty eradication, human rights, gender equality, indigenous issues, and other areas.

In [Our Common Agenda](#), the Secretary-General called for inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism, which entails the inclusion of a diverse range of actors and increased cooperation with civil society. The [Pact for the Future](#) stresses the need to strengthen partnerships with a wide range of actors, including civil society and NGOs to ensure effective responses to emerging and existing global challenges. In the document, the Member States of the United Nations committed to facilitate more structured, meaningful, and inclusive engagement of NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and to encourage consultations with civil society and NGOs in peacebuilding activities.

In line with the UN's global efforts to promote civil society engagement based on [ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31](#), the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) facilitates the work of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC - a status that enables NGOs to engage in multiple ways with the UN, including, as appropriate:

- To designate official representatives to UNOG who will be issued NGO grounds passes to the Palais des Nations.

Safe, respectful and inclusive participation for all is a core priority.

- To participate in UN events, international conferences and other activities open to NGO participation, and make written and/or oral statements at such events in accordance with their status.
- To organize stand-alone meetings related to the work of the NGO and consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN.
- To organize side events in the margin of meetings convened by the UN.
- To use the Centre for NGOs at UNOG for informal discussions.
- To access UNOG press documentation and library services.

For more information on the services provided by the NGO Liaison Unit, please visit the [Civil Society pages on the UN Geneva website](#).

As different UN entities may have different modalities for NGO participation, for more specific and detailed information on how to engage with relevant intergovernmental bodies and mechanisms, please refer to the respective Secretariat servicing them (e.g. [OHCHR](#) for the [Human Rights Council](#), [WHO](#) for the [World Health Assembly](#), etc.).

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## PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Guidelines is to encourage and facilitate the effective participation of civil society in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and principles of the Organization, and to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, supportive of constructive discussions at intergovernmental and other meetings convened at UNOG. This document provides guidance for appropriate conduct at the Palais des Nations based on and in accordance with existing standards, procedures and established practices. These guidelines serve to compile and explain applicable United Nations regulations, rules, and other guidance instruments. The present guidelines shall not be construed as superseding, amending, or otherwise affecting UN regulations, rules and other guidelines.

2. The terms of these guidelines apply to all NGO representatives accessing UNOG premises and/or UN meetings. UNOG reserves the right to bar NGO representatives from accessing UNOG premises in cases of non-

The dress code is business casual or formal. Security Officers may deny access on the basis of clothing.

**A passport is needed to obtain a UNOG grounds pass. Passes are personal and non-transferable.**

compliance with the standards set out in these Guidelines, including but not limited to cases where NGO representatives abuse their privileges or put their accreditation to improper use.

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## GENERAL PROVISIONS

3. All activities of NGOs must be in line with the Organization's objectives, purposes and principles, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, the dignity of the Organization must be safeguarded at all times on UN premises. It is the responsibility of the UN to promote a work environment free of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, in which all people are treated with dignity and respect. It is the responsibility of all persons on UNOG premises to conduct themselves accordingly, to display a courteous approach, and not to engage in any aggressive behavior, verbal or physical intimidation, any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, as well as racism and racial discrimination. Please also refer to the [UN Code of Conduct](#) which applies to all participants at events at UN premises, including UNOG premises.

4. Conduct that is inconsistent with the principles governing consultative status, including abuse of consultative status by engaging in a pattern of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and may be reported DESA's NGO Branch.

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## SAFETY AND SECURITY

5. Practical information pertaining to directions and access is available on the [UN Geneva website](#).

6. Representatives of NGOs are subject to security scrutiny in accordance with applicable UN standards and policies. Access to some areas or events may be restricted for security and/or safety purposes. Please consult the [UNDSS website](#) for the rules governing entry to the UNOG Premises / Palais des Nations and the list of [prohibited items](#).

**Demonstrations are  
not permitted on  
UNOG premises**

7. All persons within UNOG premises are required to comply with instructions given by relevant UNOG Officials, especially security officers in the exercise of their functions. In line with the provision of [ST/AI/2019/5](#), UN Security Officers may, inter-alia, temporarily constrain or remove persons from, or deny their access to, UN premises.

8. Information on obtaining annual and temporary [accreditation and grounds passes](#) is available on the [Civil Society page of the UN Geneva website](#). UNOG grounds passes are issued to individual representatives strictly for access in connection with their official business and for the purpose of identification at UNOG premises. The use of grounds passes for other purposes, including outside UN premises, and any other misuse may result in the cancellation of the grounds pass and suspension of access. Grounds passes are non-transferable. Any attempt to access as – or facilitating the access of a – non-accredited individual using the pass of an accredited NGO representative will result in the cancellation of the relevant grounds passes and may lead to the suspension of access of the person to whom the grounds pass was issued.

9. Identity documents required to obtain a UNOG grounds pass include valid passports issued by a Member State or Permanent Observer State of the United Nations, or a travel document recognized by the United Nations. Schengen national identity cards are also accepted. Other forms of identification are not accepted. Fraud and other illicit activities in connection with identification documents, authentication features, and any other information provided as part of the application for a grounds pass will lead to denial of access to UNOG premises and may be brought to the attention of DESA's NGO Branch.

10. UNOG grounds passes must be worn visibly at all times.

11. At all UN duty stations, it is required to dress in a way that respects the professional working environment of the UN. Persons who dress in a manner which is intended to, or has the effect of, disturbing the orderly conduct of business on UN premises may be denied entry or removed from the premises.

NGOs may not use the UN flag or emblem in their activities, including in social media posts and in promotion of events taking place on UNOG premises.

12. Rallies and/or demonstrations of any kind are not permitted on UNOG premises.

13. UNOG reserves the right to refer any illicit activities of NGO representatives to the relevant authorities.

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## USE OF THE UNITED NATIONS NAME AND EMBLEM, AND REPRESENTATION OF THE CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC

14. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC are not considered part of the UN system. As such, their staff are not representatives or personnel of the UN, nor are they authorized to act on behalf of the Organization or use the UN's name or emblem for their activities.

15. The flags and any officially recognized symbols of the UN and of its Member States shall not be treated with disrespect.

16. The name and emblem of the United Nations is reserved for the Organization's official use, protected under international law, and cannot be used for commercial purposes in accordance with the [General Assembly resolution 92\(I\) of 7 December 1946](#). It is not permissible to use the UN emblem in a manner that creates the misleading impression of an NGO's official affiliation with the UN or the UN's endorsement of the activities of the NGO and any use of the UN emblem is subject to the authorization of the UN. The unauthorized use of the UN emblem on documents and publications of NGOs, including social media posts, print or virtual publications and other materials (stationery, business cards, websites, meeting banners, cars, office buildings, etc.) is therefore expressly prohibited.

17. The use of the UN flag at meetings, conferences and events is reserved for those convened by UN entities. NGOs cannot display the UN flag at meetings or events they organize.

**NGOs may advertise their organizations' consultative status, but may not present themselves as part of the UN**

18. NGO representatives must not use titles that may misrepresent the nature of the association between them and/or their organization and the UN.

19. Consultative status does not entitle NGOs and its representatives to any privileges or immunities and related facilities accorded to the UN, including those afforded to UN personnel.

20. Misrepresentation of consultative relationship, including on internet and social media, can result the loss of accreditation, and referral of the matter to DESA's NGO Branch.

21. If NGOs wish to display their organization's consultative status on their letterhead or signature, the following statement is to be used: "Organization in (category of status) with the Economic and Social Council since (year status granted)", for example "Organization ABC in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1997".

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## **USE OF PREMISES, CONFERENCE ROOMS AND RELATED FACILITIES**

22. As per [ST/IC/Geneva/2020/2](#), only meetings, conferences, events and exhibits that are fully consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN and are justified by their relevance to the work of the Organization may be held on UN premises.

23. Meeting and conference facilities and services at UNOG are intended primarily for meetings and conferences listed in the official UN Calendar of Conferences approved by the General Assembly. At UNOG's discretion and subject to availability of rooms and services as well as any other relevant considerations, UNOG premises and services may be made available for conferences and meetings of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. Specific instructions and procedures for requesting, organizing and conducting meetings or conferences in conference rooms at the Palais des Nations are available on the [UN Geneva website](#). All NGO requests for meetings and services are subject to approval by the NGO Liaison Unit.

All activities on UNOG premises must be strictly non-commercial.

## INFORMATION MATERIALS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

24. NGOs may not use the UN premises for press conferences or interviews. NGOs may seek to arrange their press briefings, and the dissemination of press releases and media advisories, through the Association of Correspondents Accredited to the United Nations ([ACANU](#)).

25. At UNOG, NGO representatives can only be accredited by the NGO Liaison Unit. The [UNOG Information Service](#) can only accredit professional journalists working for bona fide media organizations to cover activities taking place at UNOG. Such activities fall under the [UNOG guidelines on media access to the Palais des Nations](#). The information channels of NGOs (newsletters, magazines, YouTube channels, podcasts, etc.) are not regarded as bona fide media for accreditation purposes.

26. The use of photographic, filming, recording, or other audio-visual equipment by NGO representatives is not permitted at UNOG, unless explicitly authorized.

27. NGOs authorized to organize a meeting/event at UNOG may bring media equipment only for the purposes of the event, under the following conditions:

- The NGO may film and take pictures of the event inside the allocated conference room only.
- Participants may make visual recordings during the events only with prior approval from the organizing NGO. Photography and video equipment must not disturb the viewing angle of the participants or disturb the progress of the event.
- Filming is not permitted outside the conference room or elsewhere within UNOG premises.

28. Only UN conference officers may distribute materials during calendar meetings. NGO materials (leaflets, publications, boards, banners, etc.) relevant to the meeting, conference or event may be displayed only when



**NGOs organizing a meeting at UNOG can film and take pictures only inside the assigned conference room.**

tables or/and boards are clearly marked for this purpose. Materials should clearly indicate the logo and full name of the NGO.

29. During authorized NGO meetings:

- Participants may distribute documents in the meeting room where an NGO meeting takes place, with the prior approval of the organizing NGO.
- Organizing NGOs are responsible for removing any materials left in the meeting or conference room at the end of the meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the NGO organizing a meeting to ensure that the distribution of any materials is fully compliant with the requirements set out in the Guidelines.

30. Publishing, distributing, or disseminating material or information containing defamatory, abusive, or offensive language or images is not permitted on UN premises.