

#3. A Practical Guide

Your Guide to COP
Climate Action Network



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1. Introduction

- If this is your first UN event, prepare to have a unique and exciting experience!
- The UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) is a very intensive conference. Preparation is therefore key to getting the most out of the conference and working with others towards an agreement which speeds up the pace of transformation, ensures a just transition, and has the needs of most vulnerable at its core.

- Civil society and NGOs participating at the UNFCCC are recognized as observers and are clustered into '[constituencies](#)'. There are 9 constituencies: Business and Industry (BINGO), Environmental NGOs (ENGO), Farmers, Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPO), Local government and municipal authorities (LGMA), Research and Independent NGOs (RINGO), Trade Unions (TUNGO), Women and Gender, and Youth (YOUNGO).
- You will get the most out of your COP experience by coordinating and collaborating with other NGOs in your constituency. You can find out which constituency your NGO is accredited to [here](#).
- To find out more on how to coordinate with your constituency, contact your constituency focal point [here](#).

2. Preparation (if this is your first UN conference)

- Make sure all travel documents are in order (Visa if required, valid passport, insurances) and, if you have secured UNFCCC accreditation, ensure you have your letter printed.
- Pack sufficiently warm clothes as the weather in Paris is quite cold in December.
- A laptop is recommended as part of your work. Getting a local SIM card is also a good idea to remain in touch with your delegation while avoiding roaming fees.
- Dress code: Professional clothing is the norm, with participants permitted to wear the formal dress from their country.

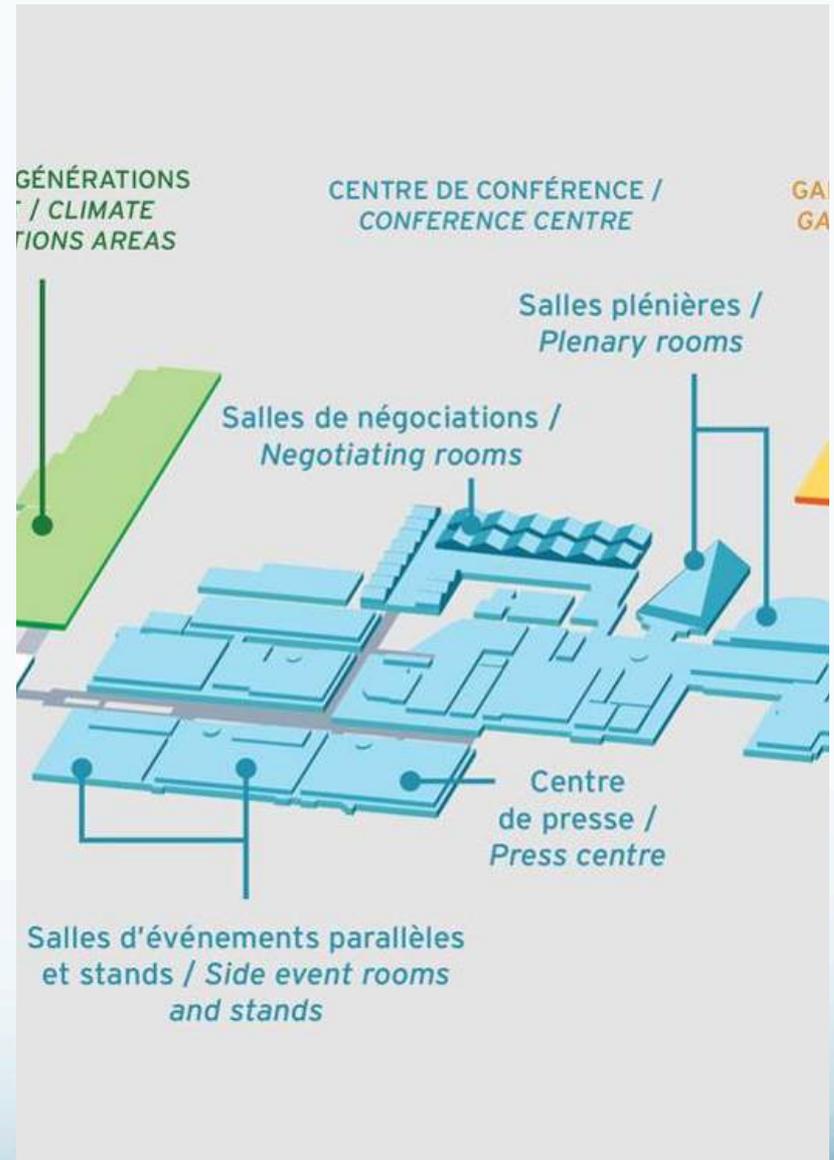
3. Guidelines for NGO Participation at the UNFCCC

- Please read the [Guidelines for the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations at meetings of the bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.](#)
- Actions (such as chanting or holding signs) should receive approval from UN security first and follow the [UN Security Guidelines](#). CAN has a dedicated person to support members and partners in their applications to the UNFCCC for actions, the contact details of whom will be circulated on CAN-Talk prior to the COP.
- Infringement of guidelines may lead to the Secretariat revoking your badge.

4. COP21 Logistics

You can find information about COP21 Logistics at the following websites:

- UNFCCC [website](#)
 - (keep an eye out for updates)
- Host Government [Website](#)
- Le Bourget conference venue [website](#)



Different areas at COP

Most COPs have various different sections. Ensure you pick up a map at the beginning of COP to find your way round. Security guards can also be helpful in giving directions (but don't ask them too much, it's not their job).

- Media zone (including press conference rooms)
- Delegation offices
- IT zone (where you can use the computers, print etc)
- Plenary and negotiation rooms – various
- Civil society zone (where you can find stalls, side events etc)

What do the different colour badges mean?

Categories of participants can be recognized by the colour of their badge. The colour of badges signifies the status of participants as follows:

- Pink: National delegates
- Yellow: NGOs
- Blue: UN organizations, including the Secretariat and its consultants
- Green: intergovernmental organizations (IGOs, e.g. OECD, IEA)
- Orange: media

5. A Day at COP

Extract from SustainUS 'A Youth Guide to Engaging in Climate Negotiations':

Here are examples of what NGO delegates can do on a typical day..

- Attending and leading constituency meetings
- Tracking policy developments of the official UNFCCC working group meetings
- Developing policy position papers and distributing them to government delegates outside of meetings
- Attending or holding side events put on by civil society or developing countries
- Writing press releases, blogs, letters to the editor, and participating in interviews
- Meeting with government delegates from the U.S. and abroad
- Attending meetings hosted by other NGOs, such as the Climate Action Network (CAN)
- Engaging in actions and visuals

Example of overview schedule of first 2 days of COP20 Lima

FIRST WEEK	
Monday, 1 December	
10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	
Welcoming event	
COP	
Opening of the session	
CMP	
Opening of the session	
Lunch break	
3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	
SBI	SBSTA
Opening of the session	Opening of the session
Evening	
Tuesday, 2 December	
10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	
ADP	Informal groups of the Convention and Protocol bodies
Opening of the session	
Lunch break	
3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	

6. Planning your day

Before you get to COP

- Determine what your objectives are for going to COP. Discuss them with someone who has been to COP before.
- There are 189 official side events at COP21. You won't have time to go through [the list](#) during COP. Pick them and add them to your agenda now.
- [Subscribe to ECO](#) – CAN's daily insider newsletter.
- [Subscribe to ENB](#) – IISD's daily summaries of the negotiations

During COP

- Ensure you leave enough time to take public transport to the COP venue. You may also have to queue to enter the venue.
- Your constituency might have daily coordination meetings. Go to those!
- A daily program is available each morning at the document center or online.
- Check the TV screens for changes to meeting rooms during the day.
- The Daily Tck and CAN Daily are good moments to keep tabs on negotiations. If you are not a CAN member, you can still apply to become an observer of the CAN Daily meetings. To apply, contact the CAN Secretariat at administration@climatenetwork.org

7. Calendar – Key Dates (COP21)

Date	Event	Description/Notes
Nov 21+	Registration	Pick up your badge as early as possible to avoid long waiting lines. Make sure you bring your letter and ID.
Nov 26-28	COY11	11 th Conference of Youth (website)
Nov 28-29	Global Climate March	Large march in Paris and other capitals
Nov 30	Arrival of Heads of States	
N30-Dec 6	Week 1	Good opportunities to lobby text
Dec 5	CAN's NGO Party	
Dec 7-13	Week 2	
Dec 11	End of COP21	Technically the end of COP, but COPs are notorious for going on a few days after the official end.
Dec 12	Mass Mobilization	Rallies, actions, workshops

8. Health and Safety Tips



Many people have schedules starting at 8AM with events running all the way to 10PM! Negotiations can run even longer.

- Make sure you get enough rest. Try disciplining yourself and your team to go to sleep at a reasonable time. Power naps during the day are also a good strategy.
- Make sure to eat and drink regularly. Often with back-to-back meetings people forget to eat. Some side events have free food and coffee!
- Check the UNFCCC website for the latest list of prohibited items to take into the COP venue to avoid any nasty surprises. Even items you don't expect, such as large banners for your stall or action, may not be allowed.
- Prepare to get 200-300 emails a day. Filter emails or deal with them in bulk.
- Stress and exhaustion during COP can make people grumpy. Be patient, avoid bickering over small mistakes, bring a smile to others, and keep in mind we are all working towards a good climate agreement!
- Avoid leaving your belongings unattended even inside the venue. Phone thefts are common.
- Unfortunately sexual harassment can happen. The UNFCCC Secretariat has a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment. To report a case of sexual harassment, contact the focal point within your observer constituency .
- Find healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress: mediate, exercise, and socialise.

9. Tips to Navigate COP

1. COP is very busy! Keep your objectives in mind.
2. Do not try to do everything – prioritize!
3. Don't spend your whole day in meetings.
4. Take time to look after yourself! Take a break, nap or day off.
5. Look after each other. Your friends and team are a great support.
6. See the big picture. Ask yourself what you are doing.
7. It's a great opportunity to network!
8. Plan your day (prioritize, triage, schedule, communicate).
9. Get involved, learn and have fun!
10. Reflect back after the conference and keep the momentum.

TIP: Go back through this list after the middle of COP, or even every day!

10. Questions and Other Resources

- If you have any questions, please refer to your [constituency focal point!](#)
- SustainUS: A Youth Guide to Engaging in International Climate Negotiations ([link](#))
- YOUNGO: Utilizing a day at COP effectively ([link](#))
- To find out more about what CAN's activities at COP please see presentation 4 – what CAN does at COP