

**Key recommendations for virtual meetings**

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**Purpose:** The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities has provided a quick checklist with key recommendations for UN staff to make virtual meetings accessible for all participants with disabilities. For further information, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Lockwood at [elizabeth.lockwood@cbm-global.org](mailto:elizabeth.lockwood@cbm-global.org)

The first step is to choose a platform that supports accessibility for all persons with disabilities. For details, refer to [Overview on Accessibility of Video Conferencing Apps and Services](http://www.worldblindunion.org/English/resources/Pages/General-Documents.aspx). Below are key recommendations to consider prior, during and after a virtual meeting.

**Prior to the meeting:**

* Add a section for participants to indicate any accessibility requirements in advertisements and registration forms well ahead of time.
* Provide the contact information, including an email address and a phone number of a person in charge of accommodations on all event notices.
* Book a sign language interpreter (International Sign or the local sign language as relevant) or real-time captioning service well ahead of time.
* Provide at least two methods to join the meeting, such as a dial-in number along with the link to the virtual meeting.
* Design and share an accessible meeting agenda with expected outcomes ahead of the meeting.
* Share presentation materials with participants, sign language interpreters and captionists ahead of the meeting.
* Carry out audio/video/visual checks with IT staff, facilitators, presenters, captionists, and sign language interpreters prior to the webinar. Allow sufficient time to work out the technical details.

**During the meeting:**

* Share what accessible services are being provided and how to access the services when the meeting begins.
* Establish rules for participation at the beginning of the meeting.
* Inform everyone that only one person should speak at a time and that all individuals should mute themselves when they are not speaking.
* Participants should say their names prior to each time speaking, to include blind people and those who have low vision.
* Be aware that the raise-hand function does not consistently work for screen readers. As an alternative, for a participant who would like to speak can unmute themselves and say their name and then wait for the host to give them the floor.
* Provide the link for captioning to participants prior to the meeting, or in the chat box in the beginning of the meeting.
* Use a separate link or window for captions to avoid audio interfering with those using screen readers.
* Utilize a well-functioning headset, webcam, microphone with good lighting and strong internet connection when possible.
* Choose a notetaker for meetings to provide notes to participants afterward. Also, captioning transcripts can be requested and shared later.
* The facilitator should periodically read out the comments and questions in the chat box to include those who are using screen reader.
* Be aware that there will be a slight delay in sign language interpretation, and a much longer delay for interpretation for persons with deafblindness.
* Provide additional time for persons with disabilities to respond.

**Tips for creating inclusive presentations:**

* When designing a PowerPoint or other visual presentations, each slide should use plain language[[1]](#endnote-1) in a Sans Serif font with no more than six lines of text per slide.
* Avoid using more than two different fonts, and do not use italics or all caps, but instead bold for emphasis.
* Add good contrast between the text and slide background so that people with low vision can read the slide.
* When using audiovisual media, provide captions or alternative formats for all audio content, including sounds. For persons with deafblindness, this may include descriptions of sounds and images.

**Tips for presenters to be inclusive:**

* Speak naturally and at a regular pace.
* Explain and describe graphics and pictures for blind people and those who have low vision.
* Avoid jargon, idioms, and acronyms.

**After the meeting:**

* Share the notes or captioning transcripts with participants.
* Post presentations and meeting recording online.
* Reach out to participants to get feedback on accessibility features.

**References**

NYC Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. (2020). Accessible virtual meetings guide: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/virtual-meetings-accessibility-guide.pdf>

UNICEF. (2020). Inclusive remote meetings

1. Plain languageis clear, straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary. For example, put information in logical order with the important details first and use active voice. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)