

Guidance on the application of the IWC Rules of Procedure and additional measures for the virtual

September 2021 Special Meeting of the Commission

The IWC [Rules of Procedure](#) include measures developed for in-person meetings but that can be adapted to virtual meetings. Some provisions may require consideration prior to their use in a virtual setting for the Special Meeting of the Commission planned for 8-10 September 2021. In addition, new measures are required to ensure a productive and inclusive virtual meeting. Therefore, guidance on the application of the Rules of Procedure and additional measures for the virtual Special Meeting have been drafted.

The virtual Special Meeting of the Commission will be held with participants connected via the Internet. The Secretariat will use Zoom software and simultaneous translation in English, Spanish, and French will be provided through the same software. The Secretariat will provide written instructions on the use of the Zoom software well in advance, in all three languages, on the website and via Circular. Technicians will be readily available to address connection difficulties and their contact information will be included in the written instructions.

1) Rules of Procedure – application in a virtual meeting

This guidance document is intended to facilitate conducting the September 2021 virtual Special Meeting only. This guidance provides a resource for how the existing Rules of Procedure can be applied in a virtual meeting format. This guidance does not modify, alter, or amend the IWC Rules of Procedure, nor does it create any new Rules.

The following section provides instructions to the IWC Chair and to the participants on the application of the Rules of Procedure for this virtual meeting. If a Rule is not mentioned below, it does not require clarification or guidance for adaption to a virtual format and applies in full.

RoP B – Meetings

B.1 – Attendance by a majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

A quorum is required at all times (simple majority of the members of the Commission) for the meeting to be held. For the purpose of this virtual meeting, attendance will be confirmed via connection to the virtual meeting. For each session at the virtual Special Meeting, the Chair, after declaring the meeting open, will verify the attendance of contracting governments and declare whether quorum has been reached.

Should a contracting government be disconnected from the meeting, it is the responsibility of that delegation to notify the Secretariat. The Secretariat will work with the delegation to re-establish the connection.

The meeting will be temporarily suspended should the number of connected contracting governments fall below that required for quorum (45 contracting governments).

RoP D – Credentials

For the purposes of this virtual meeting, the Secretariat requests that Credentials be sent in one of the following formats:

- Original signed hard copy, sent by post or courier service;
- Digital copy digitally signed, sent by email;
- Scanned signed copy, sent by email;

This is to be sent to the Secretariat preferably at least one month, but absolutely no later than 2 weeks prior to the virtual Special Meeting, indicating the two designated speakers, and at least one alternate speaker if applicable, for each delegation and their email addresses/contact numbers. Further instructions regarding credentials will be provided in guidance to be issued shortly on the procedures for connecting to the Zoom meeting.

Accreditation is necessary to gain access to the virtual meeting.

RoP F and G – Chair and Vice-Chair

For the purposes of this virtual meeting, the Chair will assume duties under F.2 on presiding over the meeting from his location and the Vice-Chair will assume duties under G.1 from his location. The Secretariat will provide meeting support for the Chair, Vice-Chair, and participants from its location.

All other Rules of Procedure will be applied in the same manner as for an in-person meeting and therefore there is no need for additional guidance on their application in a virtual format.

2) *Other measures necessary for this virtual meeting*

As indicated above, the Secretariat will provide technical information on the online platform well in advance of the meeting. The Secretariat will also advise delegates of emergency contact information, including landline and mobile telephone numbers, to allow delegates to contact relevant Secretariat staff in case connectivity or interpretation is lost. Additional arrangements are as follows:

- 1) Participation in the Zoom call:
 - a. Each Contracting Government delegation will be provided with two speaking seats on the Zoom call. If neither the Commissioner nor the Alternate Commissioner is available to participate (for example, due to connectivity issues), the delegation can nominate alternate speakers for their delegation, as long as credentials were provided to the Secretariat in advance. The IWC Secretariat must be informed of this substitution by email and provided with the email of the nominated person at least one hour before the substitution is in effect.
 - b. Each Accredited Observer will be provided with one speaking seat on the Zoom call.
 - c. Participants logging on to the meeting platform, must indicate first the Contracting Government or Organisation that they represent and then their first name and last name (COUNTRY/ORGANISATION – NAME). Participants who have not identified themselves in this way will be requested to do so prior to being recognized by the Chair.
 - d. Any non-speaking participants may view the meeting via a live stream.

- 2) Requesting the floor:
 - a. Requests to take the floor will be indicated by making use of the 'raise hand' function, as explained in the technical information provided for participants.
 - b. All RoP provisions regarding order of interventions and the Rules of Debate will continue to apply in full, with the only modification being electronic exchange of documents rather than in hard copy.
 - c. As with in-person meetings, the Chair may request that interventions be limited in length or in number due to time constraints. This may include a request from the Chair for observers to designate one person to provide their joint intervention.