



SUMMARY OF MEDICAL GUIDANCE FOR IN-PERSON UN MEETINGS

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on global health. Kenya has not been spared these negative effects as seen in multiple waves of infection since the first case was confirmed in March 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented in the form of several waves of varied duration and impact. In Kenya, the recent Omicron wave has notably declined with the national COVID-19 infection rate under 1% in March 2022. The improved COVID-19 situation is occurring in the background of a high vaccination rate amongst UN personnel in Kenya and a low vaccination rate in the general community (>30%). The WHO has advised on continued vigilance and compliance with public health measures in view of potential risk from new variants and sub-variants.

In view of the improved COVID-19 pandemic situation, the United Nations Office in Nairobi implemented a back to office strategy allowing for increased staff presence in Gigiri and resumption of in-person meetings.

The principles of safe meetings must still be observed as UN Agencies embark on resumption of in-person meetings. UN Meetings are typically held within UN offices or external locations such as Hotels. These facilities- some outside Nairobi, may have varying levels of COVID-19 preparedness and compliance with [preventive measures](#).

The UNON Division of conference services prepared revised in-person meetings guidelines to be applied within Gigiri Complex. UNON JMS also prepared health information briefs for meeting organizers and participants. These online health information packages aim to raise awareness and encourage compliance of COVID-19 prevention measures regardless of an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status. These documents can be used as a guide in preparations for in-person meetings in external UN Offices outside Gigiri.

The essential requirements for safe meetings remain the same- both within and out of UN Gigiri Complex. The meeting organizer and hosting facility (e.g Hotel) have crucial roles in ensuring a safe meeting experience. The following considerations are important when planning for UN meetings:

1. Understanding COVID-19, the country situation and local context at the location of the meeting:
 - a) Whereas a specific COVID-19 risk assessment is no longer required as a precondition for holding in person UN meetings, it is nevertheless important for meeting organizers to



understand the prevailing pandemic context which can vary from location to location within the host country.

- b) The meeting organizers should therefore ensure that they are updated with the latest local information including local public health guidelines and restrictions on in-person meetings.
- c) The organizers are also responsible for ensuring that the meeting participants are aware of the local context of COVID-19 and mitigations put in place at the time of hosting the meeting.

2. **Role of the Host Facility:**

In principle, the facility hosting In-person meetings should be compliant with WHO and local government regulations on COVID-19 and mass gatherings. The facility should demonstrate its capacity for safe meeting practices to the satisfaction of the meeting organizers. The following requirements should be readily demonstrated by the meeting facility:

- a) Availability of a COVID-19 mitigation plan which highlights the measures in place to prevent and respond to a COVID-19 outbreak at the facility.
- b) Compliance with statutory requirements: Notwithstanding the communication from the host Government supporting resumption of in-person UN meetings, each meeting facility should be compliant with any additional statutory requirements from the National or County Governments to facilitate a safe meeting environment.
- c) Comprehensive practical application of COVID-19 preventive measures in meeting spaces and other areas in the chosen facility. These measures are to be applied together to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread during the in-person meetings. COVID-19 prevention measures that the meeting organizers should anticipate include:

3. **Access to meeting venue:** Individuals who are unwell with [COVID-19 Symptoms](#) or who may have been in contact with persons confirmed to have COVID-19 should be informed in advance not to attend the in-person meeting. Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination is required for accessing UN Gigiri complex.

4. **COVID-19 Vaccination:** Access to UN Gigiri complex requires proof of full COVID-19 vaccination. The proof of vaccination is to be shared based on the following categories:

a) Nairobi-based UN personnel working in the UN complex:

Nairobi based UN personnel attending in-person meetings are required to report their vaccination status through the online portal: [COVID-19 Vaccination Self-Reporting](#)



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Once a staff member submits the request and full COVID-19 vaccination is verified, they will receive a notification that their access is approved. The staff member will have access to the complex by swiping their UNON grounds pass at the entry access points including into their respective office building.

b) Members of governmental delegations residing in Nairobi & holding valid UNON ground passes:

Permanent missions shall send a *Note Verbale* addressed to Office of the Director-General of UNON unon-officeofdirectorgeneral@un.org listing the names of all Diplomats, staff and other associated personnel of Permanent Missions who are fully vaccinated^{3*} and can therefore be granted access to the UNON Gigiri Complex. Grounds passes providing access to the complex of listed personnel will be reactivated. Permanent Missions of recently arrived diplomatic fully vaccinated personnel shall request a ground pass through a separate *Note Verbale*.

c) Members of governmental and non-governmental delegations travelling to Kenya for the purpose of participating in an Intergovernmental conference or meeting:

The Secretariat of the conference or meeting is responsible for consolidating and communicating to the UNON Security and Safety Service the list accredited participants for conference specific ground pass issuance. It is understood that the list contains names of fully vaccinated delegates that have as well complied with the Host Government entry requirements as applicable. Nairobi-based permanent missions can submit the names of visiting delegates and attest to their vaccination status via a Note Verbale. A copy of the list shall be sent to MCU < unon-dcs-mcu@un.org > for future reference by the Office of the Director General.

- d) Meeting participants from any other categories would similarly be required to present proof of COVID-19 vaccination to the meeting organizers in advance of the actual in-person meeting. The meeting organizers will receive and verify the relevant COVID-19 vaccine certificates from persons not already cleared or represented in note verbale communications.
- e) Participation in meetings at the UN Complex in Gigiri is approved on the basis of confirmed full COVID-19 vaccination status. In situations where full vaccination status is not clear or available, the meeting organizers will need to consider carefully whether such meetings should take place at all in view of the higher risk vs available mitigations. Indoor meetings carry a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission in this context.



5. **COVID-19 Testing:** The Kenyan Government has recently waived the requirement for negative COVID-19 PCR tests for travelers coming into Kenya as long as they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. For UN meetings, the organizers may consider requiring all meeting attendees to provide negative COVID-19 test results based on the prevailing risk situation as advised by WHO and the UNON Joint medical Service. Examples of such testing is the COVID-19 rapid antigen test conducted using the lateral flow devices.
6. **Face Mask use:** It is crucial that meeting participants wear a well-fitting mask (cloth face covering or face mask) that fully covers your mouth AND nose when in shared, public spaces in line with local public health requirements. COVID-19 vaccination does not preclude the need for participants to wear face masks when in situations of COVID-19 risk as described above. Exceptions to this requirement would include mealtimes
7. **Physical distancing** (Minimum 1 Meter separation) as reflected in the seating plans and signage/markings. Meeting areas, corridors and similar spaces should be devoid of crowding at all times. Unidirectional movement should be applied in meeting areas with clear entry and exit points to avoid crowding and physical contact.
8. **Adequate ventilation** as reflected in the end to end natural airflow into indoor facilities or mechanical ventilation that draws air out of the indoor seating areas. It is important to avoid the use of AC that re-circulates room air within an enclosed indoor space.
9. **Adequate hand hygiene** facilities(Hand washing points with soap and running water, Alcohol-based hand sanitizers at the meeting venue)
10. **Health awareness:** Reminding meeting participants to observe COVID-19 preventive measures through visual cues such as COVID-19 posters and other communication modalities.

d) **Medical response capacity:**

The chosen facility should demonstrate capacity to respond effectively to COVID-19 incidents amongst meeting participants. The meeting organizers should therefore confirm that the following is available as part of risk mitigation against COVID-19:

- i. A COVID-19 emergency response plan. This should detail the availability of medical assistance on site including the availability of medical personnel, access to emergency responses resources including an Ambulance to evacuate sick participants to hospital.
- ii. Confirmation of capacity to perform mitigation measures such as contact tracing and COVID-19 PCR or Rapid antigen testing with availability of isolation facilities for confirmed COVID-19 cases and quarantine facilities for direct contacts.
- iii. In such instances, liaison is to be anticipated between the meeting facility and the UNON Joint Medical Service, the Kenyan Ministry of Health, Local County



authorities and Private medical and laboratory providers to facilitate COVID-19 testing.

11. COVID-19 Meeting Coordinator:

The meeting organizers should assign a COVID-19 meeting coordinator to support the in-person meeting. The meeting coordinator should be introduced to the participants at the start of the meeting. Specifically, the meeting coordinator is expected to play the following key roles during the meeting:

- a) To act as a liaison and reference point for any COVID-19 issues arising from the meeting. The COVID-19 meeting coordinator is expected to liaise with the facility focal point, medical focal points and other stakeholders to ensure safe meeting conditions are in place and continually monitored for the safety of all participants.
- b) To Share essential COVID-19 health information with meeting participants:
 - i. The COVID-19 meeting coordinator should share health information from reliable sources such as the UNON Joint Medical Service, the Ministry of health and WHO. The meeting participants will need to know in advance that they should not attend the meeting if they are unwell or have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive person.
 - ii. The meeting coordinator should also inform the meeting participants of the requirement to share their contact and residential information in advance of meeting as part of the formal registration process. This is important in case contact tracing is required following a COVID-19 outbreak during the in-person meeting.
- c) To act as the link between meeting participants and any required COVID-19 guidance or support:
 - i. The meeting coordinator should inform the meeting participants about the availability of medical assistance during the meeting.
 - i. The meeting facility should have systems in place to respond to both COVID-19 and Non-COVID-19 related emergencies. Availability of an on-site ambulance team is important in facilitating prompt medical emergency response.
 - ii. The UNON Joint Medical Service is available to support the meeting coordinator while operating from the UN Complex in Gigiri. The UNON Joint Medical Service is also available to liaise with the assigned facility medical focal points for coordination of contact tracing, testing, medical referral, emergency response, Counseling support and other activities related to COVID-19 response.



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d) Monitoring of Compliance:

- ii. Prior to the start of the meeting , the meeting coordinator should confirm that all the COVID-19 precautions agreed with the facility are in place. A customized checklist can be used to ensure this requirement is enforced.
- iii. In the course of the planned meeting, it is important that the meeting coordinator monitors the COVID-19 compliance of meeting participants and takes corrective action to ensure continuation of a safe meeting environment.

12. Additional information:

- a) The 24hr contact for the UNON Joint Medical Service is provided below:

24hr Emergency Cell: +254 724 255 378

24hr Emergency email: unon-jms-medicevacuation@un.org

- b) Additional information and resources on safe meetings can be found in the health information package provided by UNON Joint Medical Service, from the UNON [JMS Website](#) and the [WHO resource page](#)
- c) *Definition of "Full COVID-19 vaccination"- Completion of 14 days after the last dose of COVID-19 vaccine i.e 14 days after single J&J COVID-19 Vaccine or 14 days after second dose of other COVID-19 vaccines