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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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CONFERENCE

Fortieth Session

Rome, 3-8 July 2017

Arrangements for the 40th Session of the Conference

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of arrangements for the 40th Session of the FAO Conference (3-8 July 2017). It contains proposals regarding the Provisional Agenda and Timetable for the Session, the topic for the General Debate, the Biennial Theme for 2018-19, elections, Resolutions and invitations. The Provisional Agenda for the Session is given in document C 2017/1 Rev.1 and the Timetable in C 2017/INF/1.

The Conference is requested to decide on:

- a) The establishment of two commissions:
 - on Substantive and Policy Matters (Commission I)
 - on Programme and Budgetary Matters (Commission II)
- b) Candidates proposed by Council for the following officers of the Conference:
 - Chairperson of the Conference;
 - Chairperson of Commission I;
 - Chairperson of Commission II;
 - Three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference;
 - Seven elected Members of the General Committee; and
 - Nine Members of the Credentials Committee.
- c) The main topic for the General Debate on the State of Food and Agriculture, and a five minute time limit for statements made by Heads of Delegation under this item.
- d) Invitations to observers to attend the Session in an observer capacity.
- e) The Biennial Theme for Governing Body sessions to be held in the 2018-19 biennium.

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Introduction

1. As decided by the 39th Session of the Conference (6-13 June 2015), the 40th Session of the Conference will be held in Rome from 3 to 8 July 2017¹.
2. The Conference is the ultimate decision-making body of the Organization, determining its overall policy and strategy and taking the final decisions on objectives, strategy and budget². The Conference focuses on ensuring coherence in global policy issues and regulatory frameworks, acting normally on the recommendations of the FAO Technical Committees and Regional Conferences and, where appropriate, the FAO Council. More specifically, the Conference approves the Organization's priorities, strategy and budget, having considered the recommendations of the Council.

Agenda, Topic for the General Debate, Biennial Theme and Voting

3. A provisional agenda for the Conference is found in document C 2017/1.
4. Two Commissions will be established:
 - Commission I on Substantive and Policy Matters; and
 - Commission II on Programme and Budgetary Matters.
5. Each session of the Conference usually has one major topic agreed by the Conference, normally on the recommendation of the Council. In this regard, the Council at its 155th Session (December 2016) proposed that the **topic for the General Debate of the Conference** under Item 9: *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*, be "Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security"³.
6. Since only five days are available for substantial work in plenary meetings, and as the majority of Heads of Delegations present at the Conference will wish to make statements under Item 9, the Council recommended that statements be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes each.
7. Following a recommendation from the Conference at its 39th Session (June 2015)⁴, the Council at its 155th Session endorsed the following **Biennial Theme for Governing Body sessions to be held in the 2018-19 biennium**: "Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO"⁵.
8. The election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and of Members of the Council, and the vote on the budget level (by electronic roll call vote) are scheduled to take place on Friday 7 July 2017.
9. In order to streamline procedures and debate, documents for the Session include an executive summary and highlight matters requiring decision by the Conference. Where feasible, this will be done primarily by presenting draft decisions to be taken by the Conference in a form ready for approval and inclusion in the final report of the Session.

Composition of Delegations

10. Delegations are normally headed by Ministers. In accordance with Article III of the Constitution (*Appendix A*), each Member of the Organization may be represented by one delegate who may be accompanied by alternates, associates and advisers. Online registration is accessible through the password-protected FAO Members Gateway at <http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>. Instructions for online registration can be found on the same site. It should be noted that online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph.

¹ C 2015/REP para. 94

² Conference Resolution 7/2009.

³ CL 155/REP, para. 36

⁴ C 2015/REP, Res. 7/2015; C 2015/25 para. 63; C 2015/26 Rev.1 Recommendation 1

⁵ CL 155/REP, para. 37

Constitutional Duties of the Conference

11. In addition to adopting amendments to the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Organization, and approving conventions and agreements, the Conference has the following specific constitutional duties:

Admission of New Members

12. The Conference, as the supreme authority of the Organization, admits new Members and deals with all matters relating to membership. At the date of preparing this document, no application for membership had been received. Under Rule XIX-2 of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO), applications are receivable up to 30 days before the opening of the Conference session, i.e. 3 June 2017. The admission of new Members is decided by secret ballot and requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that the total number of affirmative and negative votes cast shall be more than one half of the Member Nations of the Organization. Membership becomes effective on the date on which the Conference approves the application.

Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council

13. In accordance with Article V-2 of the Constitution and Rule XXIII-1 of the GRO, the Conference appoints the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

14. Rule XXIII-1(b) of the GRO provides that the Council determine the closing date of submission of nominations for the office of Independent Chairperson of the Council by Member Nations to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Council. Likewise, the Council also sets the date by which the Secretary-General circulates these nominations to all Members of the Organization. In this regard, the Council at its 155th Session established 12.00 hours on Wednesday 5 April 2017 as the closing date for submission of nominations for this appointment⁶. Wednesday 12 April 2017 was set as the date by which such nominations are circulated by letter and through the FAO Members Gateway by the Secretary-General (see document C 2017/9).

Election of Council Members

15. In accordance with Article V-1 of the Constitution, the Conference elects the Members of the Council. Conference document C 2017/11 contains information regarding the election of Council Members, including Nomination Forms. In accordance with Rule XXII-10(a) of the GRO, the Conference decides the date of the election and the date by which nominations for election to the Council must be submitted. It is proposed that the election be held on Friday 7 July 2017. As laid down in Rule XXII-10(c) of the GRO, nominations must be supported in writing by the delegates of two Member Nations to the Conference, other than the delegate of the Member Nation nominated, and must be accompanied by a formal written acceptance of the nomination by the delegate of the Member Nation nominated. Rule XXII-10(d) further specifies that the General Committee shall communicate the valid nominations received to the Conference at least three working days before the date selected for the election. The Council at its 156th Session recommended that the deadline for the receipt of nominations be set at 12.00 hours on Tuesday 4 July 2017⁷.

⁶ CL 155/REP, para. 38

⁷ CL 156/REP, para. 17

Officers of the Conference

16. In accordance with Rule XXIV-5(b) of the GRO, the Council nominates candidates for the offices of: (i) Chairperson of the Conference; (ii) Chairpersons of the commissions of the Conference; (iii) three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference; (iv) seven elected Members of the General Committee to the Conference; and (v) nine Members of the Credentials Committee⁸.

17. At its 155th Session, the Council nominated The Honourable Emmanuel F. Piñol, Secretary for Agriculture of the Philippines, as Chairperson of the Conference⁹. This nomination is expected to be endorsed by the Conference at its opening along with nominations for the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference. Nominations for the two Vice-Chairpersons of both Commission I and Commission II will be approved by the Conference through the General Committee.

18. Following past practice the members of the Credentials Committee will commence their work in the 15 days leading up to the Conference.

Conference Resolutions

19. The 148th Session of the Council recommended to discontinue the practice of establishing a Resolutions Committee of the Conference. The Council noted that the editorial review functions of the Resolutions Committee could, if necessary, be taken over by an *ad hoc* committee to be established in accordance with the General Rules of the Organization, or entrusted to the Secretariat. Further to the abolition of the Resolutions Committee, the standard arrangements for the sessions of the Conference examined by the Council and referred to the General Committee of the Conference have been amended accordingly¹⁰. The existing criteria for draft Conference Resolutions are set out in *Appendix B*.

Invitations¹¹

20. The United Nations, its Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency are entitled to be represented at sessions of the Conference, without the right to vote. Other intergovernmental organizations having concluded an agreement with FAO which contains specific provisions to this effect have a right to attend as observers. Those non-governmental organizations which have consultative status are also entitled to send observers to Conference sessions. Other intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations having specialized consultative status or liaison status, may be invited on a provisional basis by the Director-General.

21. *Appendix C* contains the above-mentioned provisions as set out in Rule XVII of the GRO and also in the FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations (FAO Basic Texts, Volume II, Section M).

22. The 155th Session of the Council recommended that, following previous practice, Palestine be invited to attend the 40th Session of the Conference in an observer capacity¹².

⁸ CL 156/REP, paras. 19-22

⁹ CL 156/REP, para. 18

¹⁰ CL 148/REP, para 20(c)

¹¹ C 2017/13

¹² CL 155/REP, para. 41

Appendix A**Extract from Article III of the Constitution of FAO****The Conference****[Provisions regulating composition of delegations]**

1. There shall be a Conference of the Organization in which each Member Nation and Associate Member shall be represented by one delegate. Associate Members shall have the right to participate in the deliberations of the Conference but shall not hold office nor have the right to vote.
2. Each Member Nation and Associate Member may appoint alternates, associates and advisers to its delegate. The Conference may determine the conditions for the participation of alternates, associates and advisers in its proceedings, but any such participation shall be without the right to vote, except in the case of an alternate, associate, or adviser participating in the place of a delegate.
3. No delegate may represent more than one Member Nation or Associate Member.
4. Each Member Nation shall have one vote. A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a Member Nation to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member Nation.

Criteria for Conference Resolutions

Criteria for the Formulation of Resolutions:

Resolutions should be confined essentially to the following formal matters:

- i) Amendments to the Constitution, the GRO, and the Financial Regulations.
- ii) Approval or confirmation of conventions or agreements and of amendments thereto.
- iii) Establishment of bodies under Article VI of the Constitution and adoption or amendment of the Statutes of such Bodies.
- iv) Adoption of the Programme of Work and Budget for the ensuing biennium.
- v) Decisions regarding financial matters such as the Working Capital Fund, the scale of contributions, and adoption of audited accounts.
- vi) Major programme and policy matters.
- vii) Recommendations to Member Nations or to international organizations.
- viii) Matters relating to the appointment of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Council.
- ix) Tributes and commemorations of special importance to FAO.

Appendix C

**FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations
Rule XVII of the General Rules of the Organization
Participating International Organizations**

1. A representative of the United Nations and a representative of any specialized agency of the United Nations, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any commission, of any committee of a commission, and of any committee established under Rule XV. Such representatives may, without vote, speak and participate in the discussions and may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
2. An observer of any other intergovernmental organization with which an agreement has been concluded providing for representation, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference, and the meetings of any commission, of any technical committee of a commission and of any technical committee established under Rule XV. Such observer may, without vote, speak and, upon the request of the Chairperson, participate in the discussions. They may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
3. An observer of any international non-governmental organization having consultative status, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any commission, of any technical committee of a commission and of any technical committee established under Rule XV. Such observers may, without vote, speak before such commissions and committees, participate in the discussions therein upon the request of the Chairperson and, with the consent of the General Committee, speak before plenary meetings of the Conference. They may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
4. The Director-General shall determine provisionally what other international organizations shall be invited to any session of the Conference and shall submit the list of such organizations to the Conference for approval.

**Extract from the FAO Basic Texts, Volume II, Section M
FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations**

General Arrangements

5. The Organization established relationships with certain international non-governmental organizations in order to secure their advice and to associate them effectively with the work of the Organization.

Organizations eligible for consultative status

6. In order to be eligible for consultative status, an international non-governmental organization shall:
 - a) be international in its structure and scope of activity, be sufficiently representative of the field of interest in which it operates, and be of a recognized standing that renders its views on policy a matter of great interest to governments and to FAO;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a substantial portion of FAO's field of activity;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.

Organizations eligible for specialized consultative status

7. In order to be eligible for specialized consultative status, an international non-governmental organization shall:
- a) be international in its structure and scope of activity, and representative of the specialized field of interest in which it operates;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a particular portion of FAO's field of activity;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.

Organizations eligible for liaison status

8. In order to be eligible for liaison status an international non- governmental organization shall:
- a) be international in its structure and scope of activity and be sufficiently representative of the field of interest in which it operates;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a portion of FAO's field of activity and be in a position to give practical assistance in that field;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.