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منظمة  
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للأمم المتحدة

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# COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Second Session  
Cent soixante et deuxième session  
162.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 1 July 2019  
Rome, 1 juillet 2019  
Roma, 1 de julio de 2019**

**FIRST PLENARY SESSION  
PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE  
PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

**1 July 2019**

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 9:43 hours  
Mr Khalid Mehboob,  
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 43  
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,  
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 9.43  
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,  
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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**CHAIRPERSON**

I call this first meeting of the 162<sup>nd</sup> Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to welcome Council Members and Observers to this Session. Allow me to express once again my gratitude to all FAO Members for my re-election for a second term of office. This is the first Council meeting after the Conference and, in accordance with the items on the provisional Agenda, it is traditionally a one or even a half day meeting.

I call upon your cooperation to keep our proceedings as focused and concise as possible. I wish to take this opportunity to extend a particularly cordial welcome to Council Members who have begun a new term at this session of the Council. That is, Andorra, Angola, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Germany, Guinea, Kuwait, Monaco, South Sudan, Uganda, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. I should also like to thank the outgoing Council Members who have finished their mandate and vacated their seats.

I wish to reiterate my commitment to continue to serve all Council Members and the FAO Membership at large as Independent Chairperson for my second term of office. I will count on your continued support and cooperation in always driving for our collective objective of reaching consensus, both during our informal consultations as well as during Council Sessions. I will continue to work to facilitate greater openness, solidarity and enhanced cooperation amongst the Members, as well as to build a strong synergy with the Secretariat.

In this regard, I am also aware of the added responsibility we all share at this critical juncture for FAO with the transition from one Director-General to another, and I am confident that we will strive to offer the requisite support to the new Director-General from a governance perspective.

Before we move to our Agenda items, I should wish to bring to the Council's attention that the European Union is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraphs eight and nine of Article II of the FAO Constitution. The statement of competence and voting rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States is contained in information document CL 162/INF/1.

- Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**  
**Point 1. Adoption de l'ordre du jour et du calendrier**  
**Tema 1. Aprobación del programa y el calendario**  
(CL 162/1; CL 162/INF/1)

**CHAIRPERSON**

We can now move to the first Item of our Agenda which is the *Adoption of the Agenda*.

Can I take it that the Council wishes to adopt the Agenda in document CL 162/1?

Thank you. The Agenda is adopted.

- Item 2. Election of three Vice-Chairpersons**  
**Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents**  
**Tema 2. Elección de los tres Vicepresidentes**

**CHAIRPERSON**

Item 2 is the *Election of three Vice-Chairpersons*.

Following consultations amongst the regional groups, we have the following proposals for the three posts of Vice-Chairperson. The first is Mr Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino Bin Anthony of Malaysia. The second is Mr Günter Walkner of Austria, and the third is Ms María Cristina Boldorini of Argentina.

Are there any objections? Can we agree by acclamation?

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

I wish to congratulate the three Vice-Chairpersons on their election.

**Item 3. Election of the Chairperson and Twelve Members of the Programme Committee**  
**Point 3. Élection du Président et des douze membres du Comité du Programme**  
**Tema 3. Elección del Presidente y los 12 miembros del Comité del Programa**  
(CL 162/3; CL 162/LIM/1)

### **CHAIRPERSON**

We will now move to Item three which refers to documents CL 162/3 and CL 162/LIM/1. This is the Election of the Chairperson and twelve members of the Programme Committee. For the Chairperson of the Programme Committee as set out in Paragraph four of document CL 162/LIM/1, there is one candidate for the post, which is Mr Hans Hoogeveen of the Netherlands.

According to paragraph 10(a) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, in the case of an election where there are not more candidates than vacancies, the Chairperson may submit to the Council that the appointment be made by clear general consent. Can I take it therefore that the Council wishes to elect Mr Hans Hoogeveen as Chairperson of the Programme Committee?

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

It is so decided.

I congratulate Ambassador Hoogeveen on his appointment as Chairperson of the Programme Committee. Please accept my best wishes for your work with the Programme Committee.

Regarding the Membership of the Programme Committee there are two seats to be filled and two candidates for the regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East. For the regions of North America and Southwest Pacific, there is one candidate for one post to be filled for each region.

I will now read the names of the candidates listed in Paragraph five of document CL 162/LIM/1.

For Africa: Ms Traore Kone (Mali) and Mr Kayoya Masuhwa (Zambia).

For Asia and the Pacific: Mr Ni Hongxing (China) and Mr Mohammad Rudy Khairudin Mohd Nor (Malaysia).

For Europe: Ms Delphine Borione (France) and Ms Terri Sarch (United Kingdom).

For Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms María Cristina Boldorini (Argentina) and Ms Tamara Villeneuve (Chile).

For the Near East: Mr Mohammad Hossein Emadi (the Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr Salah Yousef Ahmad Al-Tarawneh (Jordan).

For North America: Ms Jennifer Fellows (Canada).

For South West Pacific: Mr Don Syme (New Zealand).

Given that we have the same number of nominations as seats to be filled for all regions, I propose that the Council appoint these candidates by clear general consent.

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

I wish to congratulate the countries elected to the Programme Committee.

**Item 4. Election of the Chairperson and Twelve Members of the Finance Committee**  
**Point 4. Élection du Président et des douze membres du Comité financier**  
**Tema 4. Elección del Presidente y los 12 miembros del Comité de Finanzas**  
(CL 162/3; CL 162/LIM/2)

Now we move to Item four, *Election of the Chairperson and Twelve Members of the Finance Committee*, documents CL 162/3 and CL 162/LIM/2.

As indicated in Paragraph four of document CL 162/LIM/2, there is one candidate for the post of Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic from Uruguay. We mentioned earlier that when there is the same number of candidates for the same number of posts the Council may decide on the appointment by clear general consent. Can I take it that the Council wishes to appoint Ms Imelda Smolcic as Chairperson of the Finance Committee?

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

It is so decided.

Congratulations to Ms Imelda Smolcic on her appointment as Chairperson of the Finance Committee. I wish you success in your work in the Committee.

We now move to Appointment of the Members of the Finance Committee.

For Africa: Mr Mitiku Tesso Jebessa (Ethiopia), and Ms Rahila Rabiou Tahirou (Niger).

For Asia and the Pacific: Mr Manash Mitra (Bangladesh) and Mr Toru Hisazome (Japan).

For Europe: Mr Heiner Thofern (Germany) and Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov (Russian Federation).

For Latin America and the Caribbean: Mr Rodrigo Estrela de Carvalho (Brazil) and Mr Benito Santiago Jiménez Sauma (Mexico).

For the Near East: Mr Haitham Abdel Hady (Egypt) and Mr Sid Ahmed M. Alamain Hamid Alamain (Sudan).

For North America: Ms Emily Katkar (United States of America).

For Southwest Pacific: Ms Linda Hayden (Australia).

Given that we have the same number of nominations as seats to be filled for all seven Regions, can I take it that there are no objections to the Council appointing these candidates by clear general consent?

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

**Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)**

The Basic Texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization states that, quote, “Members of the Finance Committee shall appoint as their representatives individuals who have shown a continued interest in the objectives and activities of the Organization, have participated in Conference or Council Sessions and have special competence in administrative and financial matters.”

As we were reminded by the oath of office taken by the newly elected FAO Director-General last Friday, we do, however, expect ourselves to adhere to certain moral and ethical standards as well. In the words of the famous Article 100 of the Charter of the United Nations which lays out expected qualities for UN staff members, quote, “they shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials.”

We find it deeply regrettable that one of our Regional Groups has proposed a member to represent them who was convicted on charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering related to the United Nation’s Oil-for-Food Programme, while he was previously working at the United Nations in New York. The United Nations itself waived this candidate’s diplomatic immunity given the seriousness of the case. His conviction and his time spent in prison were not disclosed to Member States of the FAO Council, prior to the approval of his initial nomination to the FAO Finance Committee in 2011. As concerning as that original situation was, it is even more disturbing now. We, as Members of the Council, now know of the candidate’s conviction and yet he is a candidate today. I would note that the *Curriculum Vitae* distributed by the Russian Federation once again neglects to note this part which we would view as material omission.

We recognize, even if we do not understand, that other Member States are reluctant to challenge the candidature decisions of other countries and Regional Groups, even in a case like this, whereby the area of conviction has direct relevance to the Office for which the candidate is running.

We ask Council Members to reflect deeply on the action they are taking. This decision tarnishes the reputation of FAO as well as that of the United Nations, and provides evidence for those who question the United Nations as an institution that repeatedly fails to live up to its ideals. We therefore disassociate ourselves from the decision to continue Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov’s service on the FAO Finance Committee. We ask other FAO Council Members to consider taking the same action and we invite them to express their views on the question.

**Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)**

As the Russian Federation, and the Chair of the European Regional Group are aware, the United Kingdom is also concerned that an individual with a conviction for conspiracy to commit money laundering has been nominated to serve on FAO’s Finance Committee. The UK also disassociates with consensus on this election.

**Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)**

First, Canada would like to express its full appreciation and value for the important work that the Finance Committee carries out. As a Member of the Council, we rely heavily on the recommendations of the Finance Committee that assist in the financial administration of the Organization.

We also want to underline the need to continue to have faith in the governance institutions of any international institution, including FAO, and the fact that the actual and perceived absolute integrity of representatives on the Governing Bodies is essential.

As such, we are concerned that the conviction for conspiracy to commit money laundering for activities while working with the UN Oil-for-Food Programme of one candidate was not disclosed to Members of the Council and this should disqualify the candidate from serving on the Finance Committee. Even more so, given the direct relevance between the nature of the conviction and the nature of duties required to serve on the Finance Committee. While we do not oppose consensus, we regret that we will have to disassociate from consensus even though the Regional Groups have proposed a clean slate of candidates, and we hope that the Russian Federation would consider

proposing an alternative candidate to the position, and invite the Member State to continue to consider that option.

**Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)**

First of all, I would like to congratulate you in relation to your reappointment to the position of Independent Chairperson of the Council. FAO Member Countries' support of your candidacy is recognition of the many years of experience and the contribution you have made not only to the Council but to the Organization as a whole. We would also like to welcome the new members of the Council, who have joined the ranks of this Governing Body from July 1st this year.

In its work in various International Organizations, including FAO, the Russian Federation adheres to the principle of constructive engagement and mutual respect based on consensus and balance of interests. An example of this is the agreement on rotation among the members of the European Regional Group, which serves as a basis for distribution of seats in the Council. Our constructive approach was also the basis for the arrangement that allowed us to avoid a vote on membership of the Staff Pensions Committee during the Conference session that concluded last week. We express our appreciation to the delegations of other countries who demonstrated solidarity and flexibility on this issue.

Against this backdrop, we could not help but be concerned at the position of certain countries with respect to the membership of the Governing Bodies of the Organization, in particular the Finance Committee. We are surprised to hear such objections from representatives of other Regional Groups. We are particularly surprised at the silence of the United Kingdom Representative during the meeting of the European Regional Group. We did not object to the appointment of the Representative of that country to the Programme Committee. At the same time, according to established practice in the Regional Group one seat is allocated to a European Union member country and another to a non-European Union member country. Thus far, we have received no notification that from July 1st this year the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the European Union. This violates the agreement within the Regional Group.

Generally, the Russian Federation is opposed to and warns others against any extension of national jurisdiction to International Organizations, including when selecting national representatives for expert Governing Bodies.

Since I have the floor, I would also like to draw your attention to the following fact. The current geographical balance of the Council can hardly be considered equitable. Specifically, the European Regional Group consists of 48 countries and is allocated 10 seats in the FAO Council. Similar quotas apply to the Africa, Asia, Near East and Latin America Groups. At the same time, the North America Group consists of two countries, with no alternative, and time and again, year in year out, the same two countries are appointed to the Council. The same goes for elections to the subsidiary committees of the Council, including the Programme and Finance Committees. Yet, other countries are obliged to invent rotation systems.

At the next session of the Council, we propose holding informal consultations on striking a more equitable geographic balance, in line with UN principles on electoral processes.

**Mr Dun NIU (China) (Original Language Chinese)**

Concerning the candidate from the Russian Federation, China would like to share the following opinion.

Currently, within our Organization, there may be lots of rumours or lots of opinions. We hope that the opinion expressed by one delegate should be based on legal grounds and evidence to help us make a decision on this issue. Concerning the candidate from the Russian Federation, first of all, we think that the Russian Federation is part of the Europe Regional Group, so the candidate is the candidate from that region. We should respect the decision made by the Regional Group.

Secondly, Rule XXVII of the General Rules of the Organization stipulates clearly that Members of the Governing Bodies can be re-elected. Among the candidates for the new Governing Bodies are the delegates from Germany, Mexico and Sudan who have been re-elected. Concerning the candidate from

the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov, based on his work and expertise, we think he has a rich experience and has served several international organizations. His candidature is in line with the requirement for the Membership of the Governing Bodies and is also in line with the description in Rule XXVII of the General Rules of the Organization, meaning that he has special expertise and competence in administrative matters.

Finally, I would like to say that Mr Kuznetsov started to serve as a Member of the Finance Committee in 2011. His competence was valued and appreciated by other Members. You can see it clearly from the Report of the 161<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council and from the Report of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Conference. We succeeded in making efficiency savings. Based on the above comments we support the re-election of Mr Kuznetsov as Member of the Finance Committee.

**Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)**

Just to clarify, we do not think it is a matter of rumours or opinions about Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov's conviction. We would note that not even the Russian Federation denied his conviction, but our Chinese colleague points out that we do need clarity on this. I have a copy of the indictment of Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov. I also have a copy of the sentencing document of Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov.

I will ask that these documents be circulated as a document of the Council so that colleagues can take a look. It is quite possible, as we have seen, that not everybody has full information. Given that we have discussed it this morning, I think it would be, under a note of a Council document, worthwhile to circulate and further consider the contents. We would be happy to engage with further conversations on this in the future.

**Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)**

Once again, I would like to draw attention to the call to all governments to not extend their national jurisdiction regarding the election of representatives to the Governing Bodies of International Organizations. In regard to the proposal of the distinguished representative of the United States of America, the Russian Federation will also distribute the *Curriculum Vitae* of Mr Kuznetsov.

**CHAIRPERSON**

I think at this stage we can move forward and I wish to congratulate the countries who have been elected to the Finance Committee.

**Item 5. Election of the Chairperson and Seven Members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters**

**Point 5. Élection du Président et des sept membres du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques**

**Tema 5. Elección del Presidente y los siete miembros del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos**

(CL 162/3; CL 162/LIM/3)

**CHAIRPERSON**

We can move on to Item five, *Election of the Chairperson and seven members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*, CL 162/3 and CL 162/LIM/3.

As you will have seen in Paragraph four of document CL 162/LIM/3, we have one candidate for the post of Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. This is Ms Daniela Rotondaro from San Marino. It was previously indicated that when there is the same number of candidates for the same number of posts, the Council may decide on the appointment by clear general consent. Can I take it that the Council wishes to appoint Ms Daniela Rotondaro as Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters?



*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

It is so decided.

I congratulate Ms Rotondaro on her appointment as Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and wish her success with the work of the CCLM.

We now have to appoint members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. As indicated in Paragraph five of document CL 162/LIM/3, there is one candidate for one post to be filled for all regions.

For Africa: Mr Charles Essonghe (Gabon).

For Asia and the Pacific: Mr Theodore Andrei Bauzon (Philippines).

For Europe: Mr Rafael Osorio de Rebellón Villar (Spain).

For Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms Monica Robelo Raffone (Nicaragua).

For the Near East: Mr Ali Al Bsoul (Jordan).

For North America: Ms Emily Katkar (United States of America).

For Southwest Pacific: Mr Esala Nasayi (Fiji).

Given that we have the same number of nominations as seats for all seven regions, can I take it that there are no objections to the Council appointing these candidates by clear general consent?

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

I should like to recognize the work carried out by the outgoing Council Committees. To the Members of the Programme and Finance Committees and the CCLM for their contributions to the work of the Committees, and to the Chairpersons of the Finance Committee, Mr Lupiño Lazaro, and the Chairperson of the CCLM, Ambassador Magwenzi, for the excellent collaboration we have had.

**Item 6. Matters Arising out of the Conference Session**  
**Point 6. Questions découlant de la session de la Conférence**  
**Tema 6. Cuestiones planteadas en el período de sesiones de la Conferencia**

## **CHAIRPERSON**

Now we can move to item 6, *Matters Arising out of the Conference Session*.

The matters arising from the Conference will be handled by the relevant Committees or the Secretariat and Council will follow up on their implementation. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to make reference to the Conference's endorsement of the fourth Report of the General Committee.

Specifically, the Conference requested the Independent Chairperson of the Council to carry out an inclusive consultation process with the view to defining consistent and sustainable conditions for the award of prizes, with the outcome of this process being referred for approval by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Conference.

I wish to inform Members that I will commence this process of consultation by adding the matter to the Agenda for our next informal meeting with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups.

Does any Council Member wish to take the floor and make comments under this item?

**Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)**

We thank you very much and we want to congratulate you for having been elected for a second term of office as the Independent Chairperson of the Council, and we appreciate this inaugural day of this second term, and we wish you every success in delivering on Council matters.

I think we were expecting a kind of road map on this and I am not sure that that came. You failed to tell us exactly how you intend to conduct it during this biennium. How it is going to take place? What kind of discussion we are going to have? In what settings? And a proper calendar? I thought this could be done. Unless you want to do it with the Chair of the Regional Groups. They would have loved a more open discussion on this, because it concerns almost all regions. When I look at the awards that concern many regions and I anticipate that there could be some misunderstanding in the way the procedures take place. Could you please give us some details on how to handle that?

**Ms Satu LASSILA (Finland)**

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, on your re-election. We are pleased that the Council can continue to benefit from your great knowledge and experience in the coming two years. You can count on our full support in your endeavours to lead our discussions.

Thanks to the solid preparatory work carried out by the 161<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council, the Conference was able to formulise a number of important decisions. Aside from the Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium, the adoption of the Resolutions on “Antimicrobial Resistance” and on “Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO” are key outcomes of the Conference. We look forward to engaging in the follow-up process on those Resolutions. Likewise, we welcome the endorsement by the Conference of the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers and the decision to mandate the Council to work towards the adoption, by 2020, of the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors.

Last but not least, we very much welcome Management’s commitment to implementing the recommendations of gender evaluation and we look forward to concrete proposals for updating FAO’s policy framework on gender equality.

Overall, the Conference succeeded very well and resulted in excellent outcomes but there is always room for improvement. A lessons learned exercise on the working methods of the Conference would be definitely useful, including on time management. We propose to have an inclusive discussion on this issue under your leadership.

Lastly, as became apparent from our exchanges with you in the run up to the Conference and the interventions at its closing Sessions, we believe that the Organization would benefit from an assessment and further clarification of certain aspects of the voting procedure. We believe that the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters could look into these questions in order to benefit from best practices in other UN agencies, and to assess whether there is a need for any regulatory adjustments and, as appropriate, to prepare a proposal for Council decision.

**CHAIRPERSON**

In light of some of the points made by Finland and the delegate of Cameroon, what we were going to do, since we have time until the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Conference, is bring these items to the informal meeting with the Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs, which will happen soon. From there, we will devise a timetable on how to proceed and engage all the Membership, not just Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council.

When I said it would be on the Agenda of the next meeting of the Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regions it was as a first port of call and then we will devise a process to involve all Members in these issues.

I hope that I have your consensus to move forward in that fashion.

**Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)**

Yes, we have full trust in you.

**M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)**

Je veux seulement saluer votre réélection, car vous avez fait un premier mandat avec succès et je suis sûr qu'avec votre expérience, le second en sera un également. J'aimerais aussi féliciter les nouveaux membres des Comités et leurs Présidents.

Je prends la parole surtout pour m'associer à l'Union européenne sur la nécessité d'une action pour revoir le format de la Conférence. Nous savons qu'il y a longtemps la durée de la Conférence était de 30 jours, puis elle a été diminuée à 15 jours et nous sommes maintenant à une semaine. Dans tous les cas, nous observons un manque d'interactions entre les pays membres, les ministres qui viennent à la Conférence. Il y a une certaine répétition du travail des Comités du Programme et financier et les Conseils qui les suivent.

Nous observons que les ministres prennent la parole en plénière et repartent après deux ou trois jours, ils restent peu de temps. Et ce sont les mêmes personnes qui discutent ici au sein des Comités et se retrouvent en Commissions. C'est pour cette raison, je pense, qu'il faut rechercher plus d'efficacité, et je suis d'accord avec l'Union européenne, Monsieur le Président, pour qu'avec un groupe de travail peut-être pourriez-vous faire une proposition au Conseil pour changer le format de la Conférence.

**CHAIRPERSON**

As I mentioned before, we will raise all these issues at our first meeting of the Regional Groups and from there we will proceed on how to tackle each issue to make proposals to the Council, and perhaps to the Conference.

**Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)**

Let me apologize for not congratulating you on your re-election in my first intervention this morning, congratulations.

I want to align myself with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. I would like to follow up because in that statement the European Union and its Member States made two proposals, one of which was to have a discussion with you about time management and other issues around the organization of the Conference.

The second was a more specific request for the CCLM to look at voting procedures, and I just wanted to ask if you are proposing to tackle both requests in the next informal meeting or if there should be a different process for the second request.

**CHAIRPERSON**

In fact, as an initiation, I was going to put both these issues before the Regional Groups. However, regarding the second issue, apart from the European Union, there have been other Members who also requested that and I believe there is a process for going to the CCLM and that will be followed.

However, as an initial step we thought we could have a discussion in the Regional Groups to clarify ideas and move forward, but perhaps I can give the floor on the second item, which is the voting procedures, to the Legal Counsel who could clarify this.

**LEGAL COUNSEL**

In fact, I do not have much to add. The topic could be the subject of discussion in your informal meetings with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups. However, after that, because the Session of the CCLM will take place at the end of October, we can also prepare a paper for our first discussion at the CCLM.

- Item 7. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2019-2020**  
**Point 7. Calendrier 2019-2020 des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO et des autres réunions principaux**  
**Tema 7. Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO y otras reuniones importantes en 2019-2020**

(CL 162/2)

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

With this, we can move on to item 7 which is *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and Other Main Sessions for 2019 to 2020* and the document is CL162/2.

This document has been prepared to avoid overlaps with the dates of IFAD and WFP Governing Body Sessions. The dates given for the sessions in 2020 are for information only at this stage as they will be submitted for approval at the next Council session in December 2019.

If there are no comments, I take note that the next session of Council will take place from 2 to 6 December 2019.

If there are no comments we can move to item 8.

- Item 8. Provisional Agenda for the 163rd Session of the Council (December 2019)**  
**Point 8. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent soixante-troisième session du Conseil (décembre 2019)**  
**Tema 8. Programa provisional del 163.º período de sesiones del Consejo (diciembre de 2019)**

(CL 162/INF/2)

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

I see no requests so we can move to item 8 which is *Provisional Agenda for the 163<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council*, document CL 162/INF/2. An information document has been tabled under this item, which I have just quoted.

#### **Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)**

We would like to include on the Agenda at the next meeting of the Council, discussions and reflections on the joint Rome-based Agencies (RBA) meeting which is taking place in September. We would like that to be included in the agenda for the Council. I realize that it could well become an agenda item through the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee. I know we have discussed it in those Joint Meetings previously, but we would like it to be included in the agenda.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

We take note of that.

#### **Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)**

First of all I would like to congratulate you on re-election as Independent Chairperson of the Council. As the United Kingdom has just pointed out, we think RBA collaboration is very important and it should be monitored, reported and discussed periodically. Therefore, we would like to support the idea the United Kingdom has just raised.

#### **Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)**

First of all, I would like to congratulate you for your re-election. You can count on our full support for your work during this period. I would like to remind you that, in the discussions that took place, first informally and then formally on the Programme Committee and then on the Resolution that was

adopted by the Conference, that one of the proposals is that this matter also be discussed in the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). Therefore, we understand we do not have any opposition to the proposal being discussed in the Programme and the Finance Committee but, we understand it is also important to have a technical discussion in the COAG.

**CHAIRPERSON**

I give the floor to the Secretary-General for clarification.

**SECRETARY-GENERAL**

In fact, this is absolutely correct. The guidance coming out from the Conference does envisage the Programme Committee and COAG being involved and I think you were referring to agroecology, maybe that was not quite clear.

**CHAIRPERSON**

We will follow the guidance of the Conference in this regard.

**Item 10. Any Other Matters**  
**Point 10. Questions diverses**  
**Tema 10. Asuntos varios**

**CHAIRPERSON**

If there are no other comments we can move to item 10 which is *Any Other Matters*.

Does any Member wish to take the floor? I see not requests so, we can close this item.

**Item 9. Develoments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO**  
**Point 9. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO**  
**Tema 9. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandata de la FAO**  
 (CL 162/INF/3)

**CHAIRPERSON**

We now move to item 9 which is *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO* which is document CL 162/INF/3.

The Council will be provided, through the following presentations, with information on developments taking place in other international fora which are of importance to FAO's mandate. Namely, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference and the outcome of the Seventh Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the outcome of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and the Conference of the Parties which took place in Geneva from 29 April to 10 May.

I propose that questions from the floor be taken after all speakers have made their presentations.

I will now ask Mr Dan Leskien, Senior Liaison Officer, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department, to introduce the first presentation on the UN Biodiversity Conference and outcome of the seventh Plenary Session of IPBES.

**Mr Dan LESKIEN (Senior Liaison Officer, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water)**

I have the distinct pleasure to brief you on these two relatively recent developments: the United Nations Biodiversity Conference held last November in Sharm El-Sheikh, and; the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

The UN Biodiversity Conference was comprised of the governing body meetings of three different instruments: the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

The Conference was preceded by a high-level segment hosted by the government of Egypt and the segment adopted the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration which calls for, inter alia, biodiversity and health mainstreaming across relevant sectors, and commits to accelerating efforts to implement the conventions' strategic plans on biodiversity and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) targets.

One could feel a sense of disillusionment in Sharm El-Sheikh, given that it is quite clear that most of the IAEG targets will not be achieved by 2020. The high-level segment invited the UN General Assembly to convene a biodiversity summit at a Heads of State level to be held next year in Kunming, China, on the occasion of the COP (Conference of the Parties) to address the urgency of action in support of a post-2020 biodiversity framework.

FAO and the Convention on Biodiversity have a long standing partnership built on mutual respect of their mandates and the understanding that progress in many areas addressed by the IAEG targets depends on cooperation and collaboration.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Convention's Conference of the Parties dealt with a plethora of issues relevant to FAO. These included marine and coastal biodiversity, including the issue of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs); the issue of invasive alien species, where the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) have been collaborating for a long time; pollinators and soil biodiversity, where FAO and the Convention collaborate in the implementation of international initiatives; sustainable wildlife management; and, a relatively new issue, digital sequence information on genetic resources, a topic the Convention, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture are currently struggling with.

COP14 welcomed action and proposed close collaboration on a number of issues including the joint implementation of the pollinators and soil initiatives; on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, an issue which the Council is likely to address at its next Session; on the development and implementation of a policy response to FAO's landmark report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture; and, on the Global Forestry Resources Assessment. These are just a few of the issues mentioned.

Most importantly, next year the Convention is expected to adopt a new global biodiversity framework, which is expected to replace the IAEG targets and the strategic plan. Consultations at regional levels have already started. The first meeting of the open-ended working group on the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be held at the end of August and consultations will continue into 2020. The framework is expected to be adopted at COP15 in Kunming, China. Obviously it will be crucial for the agriculture sectors, including forestry and fisheries, to be involved in the preparation of this framework.

I now move to the second item, the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

As you may recall IPBES, like the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, aims to provide a science policy interface. A platform with the aim to improve and strengthen policy and decision making by providing the necessary scientific information. The key function of the IPBES is the preparation of assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services. However, capacity building for that purpose, the development of science policy tools and, in some cases, also catalyzing efforts to generate new knowledge, will be important to fulfil this function.

IPBES is hosted by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), however, it is operationally quite independent and has its own governing body, its own Plenary, a bureau and a multi-disciplinary expert panel, providing scientific and technical advice. Many of you will recall FAO, UNEP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concluded a collaborative partnership arrangement with the Plenary of the IPBES, quite a while ago, and we have reported on this several times.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Plenary of IPBES was held earlier this year at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, to finalize and launch the so called “Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”. This global assessment is based on regional assessments and was widely covered by the media. Some of you may have attended the side event last week where the global assessment, as well as FAO’s report on the State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, were presented.

The two reports, even though they are quite different in scope, also in the approach and methodology, have significant parallels. They both conclude that biodiversity is essential, that biodiversity is declining in many areas at an unprecedented scale and pace. Both reports also acknowledge that efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity are increasing in many parts of the world, even though these efforts are not sufficient. Transformative fundamental changes are required to halt the loss of biodiversity. The IPBES Plenary also adopted a new work plan, in addition to the ongoing assessment of invasive alien species and sustainable use of wild species, three assessments are of particular relevance to FAO: the nexus assessment; the assessment of determinants of transformative change; and the business and biodiversity assessment.

FAO is a partner of IPBES because it has a lot to contribute and to benefit. IPBES assessments will likewise benefit from the perspective FAO may provide. FAO is a key provider of data, experience and knowledge including for the IPBES assessment and we stand ready to contribute to these assessments as time and resources allow.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Ms Mette Wilkie, Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division, will present the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

#### **Ms Mette WILKIE (Director, Forestry Policy and Resources)**

It is my great pleasure to be here this morning to provide you with some information on the forthcoming United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/284 was put forward by El Salvador and co-sponsored by more than 70 countries. It was adopted by consensus on 1 March this year, and it proclaimed 2021 to 2030 as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The aims of the Decade are to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse degradation of ecosystems worldwide and to raise awareness on the importance of ecosystem restoration.

It covers all terrestrial and marine ecosystems and builds on existing commitments such as the Land Degradation Target, the Bonn Challenge to restore 350 million hectares of degraded lands by 2030, the regional initiatives such as the 20x20 in Latin America, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) and other similar initiatives in other regions.

It encourages Member States to take appropriate measures, including by mainstreaming ecosystem restoration in national policies and plans, and importantly it asks FAO and United Nations Environment Programme to lead the implementation in collaboration with real conventions and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations systems and within existing mandates and voluntary resources.

Now why do we need the Decade? Because we know that land degradation is negatively affecting about 3.2 billion people worldwide and the value of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services is equivalent to 10 percent of the global GDP. We have lost more than 70 million hectares of forest since 2000 and 70 percent of our wetlands in the last century. We have also seen a very drastic decline of coral reefs and sea grass beds, but we can change that. The benefits of ecosystem restoration extends across Agenda 2030. We have heard about the biodiversity crisis and clearly by restoring ecosystems, we will enhance the habitat for our wildlife and for the plants that we share this planet with. It will also contribute to climate change, land restoration and avoid the degradation of forests, wetlands, grasslands and crop land and could provide more than one third of the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions that we need by 2030 in order to stay below the two degree warming.

Restoration of ecosystems also increases resilience to climate change. However, the benefits extend beyond biodiversity conservation and climate change. Ecosystem restoration also means restoring the productive capacity of our landscapes and seascapes. This translates into jobs, livelihoods, food and water security and human health. We also know that there is a strong economic argument for restoration. For every dollar you put into it, you can get between ten and fifteen dollars back and the cost of action versus inaction is one to three. So it is much cheaper to restore than to bear the environmental and economic costs of letting the land further degrade.

In fact, restoring the three hundred and fifty million hectares of degraded land by 2030 could generate up to USD 9 trillion in net benefits. The decade starts in 2021 and before that we in FAO, together with our partners in UN Environment Programme, are listening and learning. We are looking to draw lessons from previous Decades, raise awareness and consult stakeholders. A public survey will be launched in all of the UN languages fairly soon. We want to hear from you, how you can help, how we can help you, how we can engage all the stakeholders in this decade.

We will also be preparing an implementation and communication strategy and setting up a monitoring system and we are working to setup interactive platforms to help provide technical assistance and knowledge sharing.

Lastly, and importantly, we are exploring investment opportunities for both public and private sectors. We are helping to create a mass movement. We want to involve everyone, from the very young to the very old, from cleaning the village pond to planting trees in the schoolyard, to large-scale investments by governments and the private sector, and we look forward to be working with all of you to make that happen.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Mr Hans Dreyer, Director of Plant Production and Protection will deliver a presentation on the outcomes of the Conferences of the Parties (COP), Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

#### **Mr Hans DREYER (Director, Plant Production and Protection)**

As the Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, it is my pleasure to provide you with some updates on key outcomes of the 2019 Meetings of the Conferences of Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, (the BRS Conventions). These three Conventions are also known as Chemicals and Waste Conventions and they work closely together since 2010, ensuring synergies and complementarities among the three conventions. Accordingly, the Conferences of Parties of these three Conventions was held together as a triple COP over two weeks.

This year, this triple COP met in Geneva, Switzerland from 29 April to 10 May and the theme during the triple COP was Clean Planet, Healthy People. I will not go into the details of the two other COPs, the Basel Convention and the Stockholm Convention. Just one word about the Basel Convention. You all know about the problems we have worldwide with plastic waste and the Basel Convention is the Convention that deals with plastic waste. Plastics was the overriding theme during that COP, among others. But, plastic seems to become more and more important, also, in agriculture.

All three conventions aim for the same thing, as I said, the protection of human health and the environment, and they promote sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle. My focus will be on the Rotterdam Convention, for which FAO provides the Secretariat services.

Considered as a corporate technical activity (CTA) within FAO, the Rotterdam Convention receives financial support from the FAO Regular Programme of USD 1.5 million per biennium. This amount is used to provide mainly technical assistance to the currently 161 Parties of the Rotterdam Convention. This helps countries to increase their capacity to implement the Convention, including through the reduction of risks stemming from hazardous pesticides.

Among the decisions adopted by the Rotterdam Convention COP this year was the listing of further chemicals in Annex III of this Convention. I would like to remind you that the listing in Annex III is not a ban of the chemical, as such. But, it triggers important decisions.

Some decisions were made regarding the mechanisms of compliance as well as enhancing the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention. A Memorandum of Understanding between FAO, the



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Conference of Parties to the Rotterdam Convention was approved. With regards to technical assistance, the Rotterdam Convention COP further agreed on a Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium which includes technical assistance for the implementation of this Convention.

The next triple COP will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2021 and all the Sessions of the Meeting Report will be available soon on the websites of the Conventions.

Now, given the limited time, I will focus on those decisions with immediate relevance to FAO. First, the decision of the COP to list Forate which is an insecticide in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention. The COP agreed to include the substance in the prior informed consent procedure, the so called PIC Procedure. This means that the communication and information sharing on the trade of this pesticide will be facilitated. It is not a ban of Forate but it is facilitating information sharing regarding trade between exporting and importing countries.

No consensus was reached on the listing of Carbosolfan, Fenthion and Paraquat formulations which will be further discussed during the next COP in 2021.

A Memorandum of Understanding between FAO, UNEP and the Rotterdam Convention COP was signed by the FAO Director-General in May 2019 and this is a key achievement. It clarifies the responsibilities of UNEP and FAO in their capacity as providing the Secretariat functions of the Rotterdam Convention towards the Conference of Parties.

The delegates of the Conference of Parties to the Rotterdam Convention acknowledged and then emphasized the key role that FAO has in providing technical expertise to countries and assisting countries in how to manage better the risks of highly hazardous pesticides and hazardous pesticide formulations.

Important elements of the Programme of Work of the next biennium will be to enhance information dissemination to promote alternatives to hazardous pesticides, which is very important, to continue to foster global south cooperation, strengthen legal frameworks in the countries and cooperate with partners including the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and, finally, of course, to further increase FAO's visibility in this Convention.

To conclude, I would like to say that the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, located here at FAO, reached out to nearly 1 400 participants at the COP in order to highlight this important contribution of FAO to the capacity building of countries. Such increase of visibility was one of the results of the COP with an impressive reach to around 1 400 delegates from 180 countries and the certainty has been confirmed that FAO remains the first address for countries to request technical assistance in reducing risks in pesticide management and use .

I would like to thank FAO for the financial contribution to the Rotterdam Convention which goes directly back to its Member Countries as technical assistance, in response to the needs expressed by Parties, in particular, for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Finally, as the Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, I thank you for your attention and invite you to comment on the outcome of the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties of the Rotterdam Convention.

## **CHAIRPERSON**

I will now open the floor to Members who wish to speak on these presentations.

### **Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)**

Since I am speaking for the first time, I wish to congratulate you for your election.

I have three points to raise, all three deal with biodiversity. Two of the points are questions and one is a request.

First, the questions. In what exact state is FAO in mainstreaming biodiversity? Question number two, in terms of governance of biodiversity, which department in FAO is responsible to direct and lead the biodiversity issues within the Organization?

Now, to the request. Regarding, the comprehensive Report that was submitted to the Plenary Session of the IPBES held in Paris between 29 April and 4 May this year, two points were outstanding. These points relate to the following findings. One, it says that one million animals and plant species are now threatened with extinction, and two, it says that ecosystem species, wide population and domesticated plants and animals are shrinking with direct effect on human dwelling.

Chairperson, because of the importance of these findings, we would appreciate if, in the next Session of the Council, we could have a briefing on this Report.

**Mr Dan LESKIEN (Senior Liaison Officer, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water)**

I thank the distinguished delegate of Afghanistan for these two very interesting questions.

I think FAO is in a process of mainstreaming biodiversity across all its programmes, policies and activities that are relevant to biodiversity. As you probably know and as it has been discussed in the Programme Committee, FAO is currently working on a strategy on mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural sectors and we hope that from the implementation of this strategy, FAO and its Membership will benefit in terms of biodiversity mainstreaming.

With regard to the governance question, related to biodiversity. Biodiversity is, obviously, a cross-sectorial issue but, as you are aware, there is a department in FAO which is called the Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department. I would say that, to some extent, this department has a coordinating role. It is also coordinating the current activities related to the biodiversity mainstreaming strategy and this department also hosts two Secretariats. One Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources. It also holds the GIAHS Secretariat.

Therefore, this department is in what I would call a coordinating role. On the other hand, it is very clear that all the departments whether it is the Forestry Department or the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, are actively working on biodiversity issues, and are actively working on genetic resources. When it comes to biodiversity related to those sectors, it is the responsibility in the governance role of those departments to deal with biodiversity.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

With that, we can come to the end of our Session. But, before I conclude the Session, I should like to draw attention to an oversight which was in welcoming the new Members of the Council. I would like to express my apologies for having overlooked the name of Peru in my opening remarks. I welcome Peru to the Council as they commence their term with this Session of the Council and my apologies, again.

This concludes the work of this 162<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Council. Before closing the Session, I would like to once again express my appreciation to the outgoing Council Members for their active participation and contribution to the work of the Council during their term. I also wish to welcome the incoming Council Members and I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the coming Sessions.

Allow me to convey appreciation to the FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva for his support to the Council and to myself as Independent Chairperson of the Council over the past two years. My relationship with Mr Graziano goes back some years to when he was Regional representative for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago and I have always valued our collaboration. I wish Mr Graziano all the best in his future endeavours.

The next Council Session will take place under the leadership of the incoming Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu and I look forward to continuing with the same spirit of cooperation. I also wish to recognize the support of all the Secretariat, in particular the interpreters, the translators, meeting facility staff, reports office, verbatim hub, protocol and security who, collectively, have ensured that the Council Session has run smoothly.

For those travelling back to your countries, I wish you a safe journey. For those remaining in Rome, I wish you a good rest and an enjoyable summer.

I declare the 162<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Council adjourned.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

*The meeting rose at 11:08 hours*

*La séance est levée à 11 h 08*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 11.08*