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COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

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Regional Conference for Europe – Proposed change of name

I. Introduction

1. In October 2021, the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan formally requested the Director-General to bring to the CCLM, for its consideration, the question of the change of name of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) to “FAO Regional Conference for Europe and Central Asia”, reiterating a request initially made in 2008 by Central Asian countries.
2. Such a change to the name of the ERC would require an amendment of Rule XXXV, paragraph 1 of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO), which lists the five Regional Conferences.¹

II. Background

3. In 2009, the item “*Proposal to Change the Name of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe*” was included in the provisional agenda of the CCLM for discussion at its 87th Session.² This proposal had been made by the Delegation of Kyrgyzstan at the 26th Session of the ERC in 2008, with support from the Delegations of Tajikistan and Armenia.³ In the report of its 26th Session, the ERC had noted this proposal and had indicated that it would be forwarded to the FAO Council for decision.⁴ In its report of its 87th Session, the CCLM noted that it had been informed that consultation on the question was still required, in particular with the Europe Regional Group (ERG). The CCLM decided to defer consideration of the item and the matter has never been formally discussed in the CCLM.⁵

¹ Basic Texts, GRO, Rule XXXV, paragraph 1 provides as follows: “*There shall be Regional Conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East, which shall normally meet once every biennium in non-Conference years*”.

² [CCLM 87/6](#) “*Proposal to change the name of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe*”.

³ [ERC/08/REP](#), see page V of the “Summary of Main Recommendations”, item “Any other business”, and paragraph 47 of the report.

⁴ [ERC/08/REP](#), see page V of the “Summary of Main Recommendations”, item “Any other business”, and paragraph 47 of the report.

⁵ See [CL 136/20](#), paragraph 2 and [CL 136/PV](#), section IV, pages 134-135.

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

4. In 2014, at its 29th Session, in the context of discussions on the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) 2014-2015 of the ERC, noting the need to “include Central Asia in the name of the Regional Conference for Europe”⁶ the ERC reiterated the proposal and “requested to include Central Asia in the name of the Regional Conference for Europe”.⁷ The ERC report was submitted to the Council at its 149th Session⁸ and the ERC Vice-Chairperson presented, at that session, the outcomes of the 29th Session of the ERC, referring *inter alia* to this request.⁹ The Council endorsed the overall conclusions and recommendations of the five Regional Conferences as contained in their respective reports¹⁰ and the Conference, at its 39th Session in 2015, similarly generally “endorsed the [ERC] report and took note of the recommendations presented therein”.

5. In October 2021, the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan formally requested the Director-General to insert this item in the provisional agenda of the CCLM. The Minister indicated that, at the 32nd Session of the ERC hosted by Uzbekistan in 2020, he reiterated the request made by Central Asia countries back in 2008.

III. Practice followed for changes of name of other Regional Conferences

6. Two examples of similar requests are known at FAO, i.e. the change of the name of the “Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East” to “Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific”, and that of the “Regional Conference for Latin America” to “Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean”. The process that was followed in the two cases is similar.

A. Change of the name of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East to Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

7. In the report of its 75th Session held in June 1979, the Council “noted that at the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East in Manila in 1976, and subsequently, the governments of this region had urged that a change be made in the titles of both the Regional Conference and the Regional Office” and that “[t]hese changes in title would reflect the geographical reality of the region, the actual membership of governments in the Regional Conference and, in addition, the new titles would correspond with those of other regional bodies”.¹¹ The Council agreed and invited the Conference to endorse these changes.¹²

8. At its 20th Session in November 1979, the Conference “noted that the proposed changes in title were designed to reflect the present-day realities in the region concerned and the increasing number of Member Nations that were situated in the area covered by the Pacific Ocean” and that “the changes in title were intended to harmonize the nomenclature with that used in other international organizations and bodies - including FAO bodies - operating in the region; in this connexion special attention was drawn to the fact that the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) had been renamed United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)”.¹³ Noting that “[s]ome Member Nations whose western coastlines bordered the Pacific Ocean considered that a reference in the titles to ‘Western’ Pacific would make it clear that their countries were not included in the region, thus obviating any possible confusion”, the Conference “recognized that the changes in title of the Regional Conference and the Regional Office were neither intended to, nor in fact could affect the distribution of Member Nations by Region for the purpose of receiving services from the Regional Office, their participation-in the Regional Conference, or elections to the Council”.¹⁴ The Conference “[a]ccordingly, (...) endorsed the

⁶ [ERC/14/REP Rev. 1](#), paragraph 35.

⁷ [ERC/14/REP Rev. 1](#), page ii of the “Summary of Main Recommendations”.

⁸ [C 2015/16 Rev. 1](#).

⁹ [CL 149/PV](#), page 20.

¹⁰ [CL 149/REP](#), paragraph 8.

¹¹ [CL 75/REP](#), paragraph 203.

¹² [CL 75/REP](#), paragraph 204.

¹³ [C 79/REP](#), paragraph 458.

¹⁴ [C 79/REP](#), paragraphs 459-460.

proposed changes” deciding, “[a]t the same time, in order to prevent any uncertainty in the future, (...) that the list of Member Nations to which the term ‘Asia and the Pacific’ currently referred should appear in its Report”.¹⁵

B. Change of the name of the Regional Conference for Latin America to Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

9. In 1980, at its 17th Session, the Regional Conference for Latin America “recommended that in future the Region should be known as Latin America and the Caribbean, and that the Regional Conference be called Regional Conferences [sic] for Latin America and the Caribbean”.¹⁶

At its 82nd Session in 1982, the Council “agreed with the proposal”, and noted that “[t]he Region would thus be known as ‘Latin America and the Caribbean’; the Regional Conference, ‘Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean’; and the Regional Office for Latin America ‘Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean’”, and invited the Conference to endorse the changes.¹⁷

10. At its 22nd Session in 1983, the Conference “endorsed the change in the title of the Region”, noting that “[t]he Region w[ould] thus be known as ‘Latin America and the Caribbean’; the Regional Conference, ‘Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean’; the Regional Office, ‘Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean’” and that “some countries [had] proposed that, in due course, the distribution of Council seats for the Latin America and the Caribbean region should be consistent with the increased membership of the Region”.¹⁸

IV. Legal framework

11. The two prior examples reflect a procedure by which there was a referral of the matter from the concerned Regional Conferences to the Council and, subsequently, a referral by the Council to the Conference for decision. The related decisions of the Conference were then reflected in Resolution of the Conference No. 14/69 entitled “*Authority, terms of reference and constitutional status of Regional Conferences*”,¹⁹ the content of which has since been incorporated into Rule XXXV of the GRO through Conference Resolution No. 6/2009 entitled “*Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (2009-11) – Amendments to the General Rules of the Organization and to the Financial Regulations*”.²⁰

12. As indicated at paragraph 2 above, the change of name of the ERC would require an amendment to Rule XXXV, paragraph 1 of GRO to read as follows:

There shall be Regional Conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East, which shall normally meet once every biennium in non-Conference years.

13. This change would need to be reflected in Volume II of the Basic Texts, under Section B, Definition of Governing Bodies, which incorporates the definition of Governing Bodies as per the decision of the 36th Session of the Conference.²¹

¹⁵ C 79/REP, paragraph 461.

¹⁶ LARC/82/REP, paragraph 3 of the “Summary of the main Recommendations” and paragraph 56.

¹⁷ CL 82/REP, paragraphs 241-243. See CL 82/PV, pages 356-357.

¹⁸ C 83/REP, paragraphs 325-326.

¹⁹ See Resolution 14/69, CCLM 87/6, paragraph 2, and CCLM 84/5, paragraph 12.

²⁰ See CCLM 84/5; CL 136/11, section V, in particular paragraphs 44-45; CCLM 85/3; CL 136/13, section II (b), in particular paragraph 13, and appendix to the report, page 14; CL 136/REP, paragraphs 92-95; CL 137/5, page 31; CL 137/REP, paragraph 48, and appendix E to the report, in particular page E16; C 2009/REP, in particular paragraph 140 concerning the adoption by the Conference of Resolution No. 6/2009 “Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (2009-11) – Amendments to the General Rules of the Organization and to the Financial Regulations”, and page 43.

²¹ The last paragraph of Section B Definition of Governing Bodies provides as follows: “The Governing Bodies comprise the Conference, the Council, the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, the Technical Committees referred to in Article V, paragraph 6(b) of the Constitution and the Regional Conferences (i.e. for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East)”. See C 2009/LIM/8, page 38, and C 2009/REP, paragraph 142.

V. Suggested action by the Committee

14. The Committee is invited to review this document and the above proposal and, within the context of its mandate, make such comments and observations thereon as it considers appropriate. In particular, the Committee is invited to consider inviting the Council to recommend to the Conference that Rule XXXV, paragraph 1 of GRO, be amended to read:

There shall be Regional Conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East, which shall normally meet once every biennium in non-Conference years.