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联合国粮食及农业组织 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

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

Hundred and Eleventh Session
Rome, 26-28 October 2020
Working Methods of the Conference: The General Committee

I. Introduction

1. This item has been placed on the provisional agenda of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters ("CCLM" or "the Committee") under Rule XXXIV, paragraph 7 (a), of the General Rules of the Organization ("GRO") whereby it may consider specific items which may arise out of "*the application or interpretation of the Constitution, these Rules and the Financial Regulations or amendments thereto*".

2. The Council, at its 162nd Session in July 2019, "*noted matters arising out of the 41st Session of the Conference* (…) *which required furtherance*"[1]. The Council further "*noted that these would be reviewed by appropriate governing bodies, and/or would be considered at the forthcoming Informal Meeting of the Independent Chairperson of the Council with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups*". Such matters included the working methods of the Conference.

II. Background

3. During consultations in informal meetings convened by the Independent Chairperson of the Council ("ICC") with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups regarding possible adjustments to the working methods of the Conference to increase the efficiency of its proceedings, a proposal to convene meetings of the General Committee of the Conference prior to the opening of the Conference session was raised. The proposal entails such meetings reaching decisions on a provisional basis, subject to confirmation by the General Committee once its members have been formally elected by the Conference. The proposal is presented to relieve pressure on time during the Conference week.

[1] CL 162/REP, paragraph 7

4. This proposal is referred to the Committee in order to seek its views from the perspective of the Basic Texts of the Organization, in particular, with respect to the composition and mandate of the General Committee as set forth in the Basic Texts.

III. The composition and mandate of the General Committee

5. The composition of the General Committee of the Conference is set out in Rule X, paragraph 1, of the GRO, which establishes that:

> "*There shall be a General Committee of the Conference consisting of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference and seven Member Nations elected by the Conference under Rule VIII. The Chairperson of the Conference shall be the Chairperson of the Committee. He shall have, in relation to meetings of the Committee, the same powers and duties as he has in relation to meetings of the Conference. In the absence of the Chairperson during a meeting of the General Committee, or any part thereof, one of the Vice-Chairpersons shall preside. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. Decisions in the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast. No member shall have more than one vote. Meetings of the Committee shall be held in private unless otherwise determined by the Conference*".

6. The Chairperson and the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference, and the seven elected members of the General Committee, are nominated by the Council in accordance with Rule VII of the GRO. Under the current pattern of sessions of the Governing Bodies, the nomination of these candidates is made by the Council at the session held in April of a Conference year, approximately 60 days before the beginning of the session of the Conference. They are elected by the Conference in accordance with Rule VIII of the GRO, upon which they are formally vested with their mandates.

7. The duties of the General Committee are set out in paragraph 2 of Rule X, as follows:

> *"In addition to exercising such duties as are specified elsewhere in these Rules, the General Committee shall, in consultation with the Director-General and subject to any decision of the Conference:*
>
> *(a) arrange the time and place of all plenary meetings and of all meetings of commissions and committees established at plenary meetings during the session;*
>
> *(b) determine the order of business at each plenary meeting of the session;*
>
> *(c) propose the allocation to the different commissions and committees of the Conference of the various items of the agenda and propose the vice-chairpersons of the commissions;*
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> *(d) meet periodically throughout each session to review the progress of the Conference, to coordinate the work of all commissions and committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress; and meet at such other times as the Chairperson deems necessary or upon the request of any other of its members;*
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> *(e) report on any additions to the agenda proposed during the session under Rule II, paragraph 6;*
>
> *(f) fix the date of adjournment of the session;*
>
> *(g) report to the Conference on any request by a participating international nongovernmental organization to speak before a plenary meeting of the session (Rule XVII, paragraph 3);*
>
> *(h) report to the Conference on applications for admission to membership and associate membership in the Organization (Rule XIX);*
>
> *(i) make recommendations to the Conference on the election of members of the Council, formally draw the attention of the Conference to the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4 of*

Rule XXII, and generally carry out its responsibilities with respect to the election of members of the Council as provided for in that Rule;

(j) determine and announce the date of election of the Chairperson of the Council, and of the Director-General, as soon as possible after the opening of the Conference session, and submit to the Conference recommendations with respect to the conditions of their appointment (Rules XXIII, paragraph 1 and XXXVII, paragraph 4);

(k) otherwise facilitate the orderly dispatch of the business of the session".

8. In discharging these duties, the General Committee normally convenes three or four meetings during each Conference session. In addition to addressing the procedural and other matters explicitly identified in Rule X, paragraph 2, the General Committee will, *inter alia*, make recommendations to the Conference on the restoration of voting rights to Members in arrears, in accordance with Article III, paragraph 4 of the Constitution.

IV. Suggested action by the Committee

9. The CCLM is invited to review this document and make such comments and observations thereon as it considers appropriate. In particular, the CCLM is invited to provide its views on the proposal for the General Committee to meet prior to the Conference, in light of the Basic Texts.