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Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأمم المتحدة  
للأغذية والزراعة

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# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Sixty-eighth Session

29 November-3 December 2021

### Methods of Work for the 168th Session of the Council

#### Executive Summary

This document summarises the standing working methods of the Council, and outlines the special procedures to be applied to the 168th Session of the Council on an exceptional basis in light of the hybrid modality of the Session. These special procedures are the result of consensus arising from informal consultations undertaken with the Membership by the Independent Chairperson of the Council for the 168th Session, and build upon special procedures enacted for the virtual 164th to 167th Sessions of the Council. A written correspondence procedure will be implemented for nine agenda items and two sub-items, in order to streamline the time management of the proceedings. In addition, introductory presentations on all agenda items shall be made available ahead of the Session. Members of the Council will be invited to endorse these special procedures under item 1 of the Provisional Agenda of the 168th Session of the Council. The Report of the Session will record the Council's endorsement of these procedures in order to ensure the integrity of the Report of the Session and all recommendations and decisions contained therein.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

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## **Standing Methods of Work for the Council**

1. The standing methods of work for the Council, originally adopted by the Council at its 60th Session in June 1973<sup>1</sup>, were revised by the Council at its 141st Session in April 2011<sup>2</sup>, its 153rd Session in November/ December 2015, and its 160th Session in December 2018<sup>3</sup>.
2. Between sessions of the Conference, the Council acts on behalf of the Conference as its executive organ and makes decisions on matters specifically entrusted to it, taking into account the advice of subsidiary bodies as appropriate.
3. The Provisional Agenda is prepared in consultation with the Independent Chairperson of the Council and is issued together with the invitation letters 60 days before the date of commencement of the Council Session.
4. Council documents follow a standard format and contain an executive summary with a clear indication of any action the Council is requested to take. Unless the timing of the sessions of the bodies concerned makes it impossible, all documents are despatched at least four weeks before the opening of the session in question.
5. Except as otherwise provided in the Basic Texts, the decisions of the Council are taken by a majority of the votes cast, bearing in mind that the Independent Chairperson of the Council shall take steps to facilitate and achieve consensus among Members.
6. The Chairperson makes concise and focused summaries of the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the debate on agenda items, as an input to form the basis of the draft Council report. The draft conclusions are projected onscreen in plenary to facilitate a better understanding of the proposed text, with some flexibility afforded to the Drafting Committee in finalising the draft report while not reopening substantive discussions which remains the prerogative of the plenary meeting.
7. Verbatim records are kept of Council plenary meetings and accordingly Council reports, while recording in an unambiguous manner all decisions reached by the Council, are as concise as possible.
8. A draft report is normally prepared by the Drafting Committee or through another suitable arrangement agreed by the Council, with Secretariat assistance. Reports consist of the conclusions, decisions and recommendations on matters discussed by the Council.

## **Special Procedures for a Hybrid Meeting of the Council Exceptional to its 168th Session**

9. The Independent Chairperson of the Council has consulted with Members on the modalities of the 168th Session of the Council. The outcome of these consultations are reflected in the procedures detailed in this section.
10. The special procedures outlined in this section apply on an exceptional basis for the 168th Session of the Council in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting hybrid modality, comprising both in-person and virtual elements, of this Council Session. The adoption of such procedures shall not create a precedent for the working methods of the Council for its future Sessions.

## **Functions of the Council**

11. The hybrid modality of the 168th Session of the Council does not alter any of the functions of the Council.

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<sup>1</sup> CL 60/REP, paras 170-179 and Appendix G.

<sup>2</sup> CL 141/REP, para 51 and Appendix G.

<sup>3</sup> CL 160/REP, paras 33 and 34

## Conduct of Debate

12. All meetings of the 168th Session of the Council will be conducted in hybrid modality with both physical presence in FAO headquarters and participation through the Zoom videoconferencing platform. The Zoom meeting will be broadcast on a large screen inside the meeting room so that participants attending the Session physically will be able to see the participants attending the meeting virtually, and vice-versa.

13. Due to the restrictions in place for the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic, a limited number of individuals will attend the meeting in-person. One representative per Member of the Council, as well as the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups and the Chairpersons of the Council Committees and Technical Committees will be invited to attend the meeting in physical modality in FAO headquarters.

14. Members and Observers of the Council attending the meeting virtually will be granted equal accessibility and capability inside the Zoom meeting platform, ensuring their ability to be seen, and to view who is in attendance in the virtual meeting, and to address the Council. These participants will be able to request the floor using the 'raise hand' function in the Zoom platform.

15. The draft conclusions of agenda items will be displayed to all Members and Observers of the 168th Session of the Council through the 'share screen' function on the Zoom videoconferencing platform. The conclusions will also be visible on the large screen in the meeting room for participants attending the meeting in-person. Any adjustments to the draft conclusions will be made on the screen in real time.

16. The meetings of the Drafting Committee of the 168th Session of the Council will be held in hybrid format in the same manner as its Plenary meetings. The 'share screen' function on the Zoom platform will be used to facilitate any adjustments to the conclusions considered necessary.

## Written Correspondence Procedure

17. The following items on the Agenda of the 168th Session of the Council shall be addressed through a written correspondence procedure:

- **Item 4** – FAO's Response to COVID-19: Building to Transform
  - **Item 4.1** – Food Coalition
- **Item 5** – The Hand-in-Hand Initiative
- **Item 12** – Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies Collaboration
- **Item 14** - Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 166th Session of the Council (26 April – 1 May 2021)
- **Item 16** - Report of the 18th Session of the Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) (27 September – 1 October 2021)
- **Item 17.2** – World Food Programme – Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2020
- **Item 18** – Progress Report on Multilingualism at FAO
- **Item 19** - Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO
- **Item 20** – Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2021-23
- **Item 21** - Tentative Agenda for the 169th Session of the Council

18. The standing item on *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO* will be addressed through a written correspondence procedure. Concept Notes on the relevant *fora* addressed under this item will be circulated in lieu of a presentation by the Secretariat to Council Members.

19. The written correspondence procedure aims to allow more time during the discussions of the Council in Plenary and to allow the Council to address all items on its Agenda in a timely manner.

20. Under the written correspondence procedure, Members will be asked to submit any comments and questions in writing to the Secretariat; and will be provided with written responses where applicable.

21. Members are invited to submit written inputs by Friday 19 November 2021 (or immediately feasible thereafter), to [FAO-Council@fao.org](mailto:FAO-Council@fao.org). All inputs received will be published on the website of the 168th Session of the Council. The Secretariat will provide written responses, where necessary, which will be made available ahead of the Council's discussion in Plenary. Members shall be notified when the FAO Secretariat has provided written responses.

22. The Independent Chairperson of the Council will draft summary conclusions for the agenda items considered through the written correspondence procedure on the basis of this written exchange. The Council will address these draft conclusions at a Plenary meeting of the Council as indicated in the Timetable, and in line with the procedure described in paragraph 15 of this Note. As per established practice of the Written Correspondence Procedure, the sovereign right of Members to discussion of agenda items in Plenary meeting is not strained.

23. The draft conclusions for the items to be addressed through the written correspondence procedure will also be addressed by the Drafting Committee at its meeting(s) following the closure of debate on all agenda items by the Council.

### **Reports and Records**

24. The Draft Report for Adoption will be prepared by the Drafting Committee of the 168th Session of the Council, and will be circulated to the Members of the Council as soon as possible before the Adoption of the Report, in accordance with established practice.

25. The Report of the 168th Session of the Council will be communicated in accordance with Rule VI.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

26. The Report of the 168th Session of the Council will record the Council's consensus on the amended modalities for the Session outlined in this Note.

27. The Report of the 168th Session of the Council will record the Council's agreement that participation by virtual means constituted attendance at the Session, which is convened at the seat of the Organization in accordance with Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council."

28. The verbatim records of the 168th Session of the Council shall be made available in line with Rule VI.1 of the Rules of the Procedure of the Council.

### **Other Matters**

29. All documents for the session are prepared and disseminated by the Secretariat as per established practice, in all six languages of the Organization. An Order of the Day will be circulated, in all languages of the Organization.

30. In order to streamline the proceedings of the 168th Session of the Council in light of the exceptional circumstances and the hybrid modality, introductions to agenda items are circulated in writing to Members and Observers of the Council in advance of the Session.

31. In addition, interventions by Members will be limited to a maximum of three minutes and multi-Member statements will be limited to a maximum of five minutes. Statements by Regional Groups will be given priority in the speaking list.

32. The time zone applicable to the Council's 168th Session Timetable will be Central European Time (UTC +1).

33. The meetings of the 168th Session of the Council will be scheduled from 9.30 to 12.00 in the morning, from 14.00 to 16.30 in the afternoon, and from 17.00 to 19.30 in the evening.

34. The Independent Chairperson of the Council may call for a short break of up to ten minutes at any time during the meeting.

35. The Drafting Committee of the 168th Session of the Council will convene its meeting after the conclusion of the Council's consideration of all agenda items.

36. Simultaneous interpretation in all six languages of the Organization will be provided for all Plenary meetings of the 168th Session of the Council.

37. A mobile application for the 168th Session of the Council will be made available and will communicate any changes to the schedule of items for discussion.