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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

Thirty-ninth Session

Rome, 6-13 June 2015

Arrangements for the 39th Session of the Conference

Executive Summary

This document gives an overview of arrangements for the 39th Session of the FAO Conference (6-13 June 2015). It contains proposals regarding the Provisional Agenda for the Session, the theme for the General Debate, elections, resolutions and invitations. The Provisional Agenda for the Session is given in document C 2015/1 and the Timetable in C 2015/INF/1.

The Conference is requested to decide on:

- The establishment of two commissions:
 - on Substantive and Policy Matters (Commission I)
 - on Programme and Budgetary Matters (Commission II)
- 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.
- The main theme 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.
- Invitations to observers to attend the Session in an observer capacity.

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Introduction

1. As decided by the 38th Session of the Conference (15-22 June 2013), the 39th Session of the Conference will be held in Rome from 6 to 13 June 2015¹.
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, Theme for the General Debate and Voting

3. A provisional agenda for the Conference is found in document C 2015/1.
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 theme agreed by the Conference, normally on the recommendation of the Council. In this regard, the Council at its 150th Session (December 2014) proposed that the theme for the General Debate of the Conference under Item 10: *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*, be "Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty and Hunger by Strengthening Rural Resilience: Social Protection and Sustainable Agricultural Development"³.
6. Since only five days are available for work in plenary meetings, and as the majority of Heads of Delegations present at the Conference will wish to make statements under Item 10, the Council recommended that statements be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes each.
7. 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 12 June 2015.
8. 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

9. 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.

Constitutional Duties of the Conference

10. 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:

¹ C 2013/REP para 132

² Conference Resolution 7/2009.

³ CL 150/REP, para. 28

Admission of New Members

11. 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. Thursday 7 May 2015. 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 Director-General

12. The procedures regarding the nomination and appointment of the Director-General are set out in Rule XXXVII of the GRO. The term of office of the present Director-General will expire on 31 July 2015. Pursuant to the relevant provisions of Rule XXXVII of the GRO, the 149th Session of the Council set 1 November 2014 to 31 January 2015 as the period in which nominations for the post of Director-General for the period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2019 were receivable⁴. The sole nomination received by the established deadline was circulated on 2 February 2015 by circular letter and through the FAO Members Gateway⁵.

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 150th Session established 12.00 hours on Wednesday 8 April 2015 as the closing date for submission of nominations for this appointment⁶. Wednesday 15 April 2015 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 2015/9).

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 2015/11 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 12 June 2015. 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 150th Session recommended that the deadline for the receipt of nominations be set at 12.00 hours on Monday 8 June 2015⁷.

⁴ CL 149/REP, para. 27

⁵ C 2015/7

⁶ CL 150/REP, para. 29

⁷ CL 150/REP, para. 27b)

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 151st Session, the Council nominated The Honourable Le Mamea Ropati Mualia, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Agriculture Store Corporation of Samoa, 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 that the 39th Session of the Conference 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 will be 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 150th Session of the Council recommended that, following previous practice, Palestine be invited to attend the 39th Session of the Conference in an observer capacity¹².

⁸ CL 151/REP, para. 28

⁹ CL 151/REP, para. 24

¹⁰ CL 148/REP, para 20(c)

¹¹ C 2015/13

¹² CL 150/REP, para. 32

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.

Appendix B**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.