

	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS	ESC: WFS 75/2 February 1975
	ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE	
	ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION	

Item V of the
Provisional Agenda

AD HOC CONSULTATION ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Rome, 19 - 23 May 1975

MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

A COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

1. The World Food Conference (WFC) recommended in Resolution XXII on Arrangements for Follow-up Action Including Appropriate Operational Machinery on Recommendations or Resolutions of the Conference, that the FAO establish a Committee on World Food Security as a Standing Committee of the FAO Council. The General Assembly of the United Nations has endorsed the recommendations of the WFC and invited the organizations of the UN system to take the necessary steps for their effective implementation.

2. According to the WFC Resolution, the functions of the Committee on World Food Security should include the following:

- (a) To keep the current and prospective demand, supply and stock position for basic foodstuffs under continuous review in the context of world food security and disseminate timely information on developments;
- (b) To make periodic evaluations of the adequacy of current and prospective stock levels, in aggregate in exporting and importing countries, for assuring a regular flow of supplies of basic foodstuffs to meet requirements in domestic and world markets, including food aid requirements, in time of short crops and serious crop failure;
- (c) To review the steps taken by governments to implement the proposed International Undertaking on World Food Security;
- (d) To recommend such short-term and long-term policy action as considered necessary to remedy any difficulty foreseen in assuring adequate cereal supplies for minimum world food security.

The Resolution also proposed that the Committee should submit periodic and special reports to the UN World Food Council, which is being established on the recommendations of the World Food Conference.

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3. A Committee on World Food Security, as recommended by the World Food Conference, would be set up as an Article V.6 body under the Constitution. This would require amendments by the FAO Conference to Article V.6 and the insertion of a new rule in the General Rules of the Organization. A draft resolution of the FAO Conference, incorporating the terms of reference proposed by the World Food Conference, will therefore be submitted by the secretariat to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters which will also be able to take into account the views of the ad hoc Consultation. This draft resolution could then be considered by the FAO Council at its 66th session in June 1975 and recommended for adoption by the Conference in November 1975.

4. It is envisaged that the Rule concerning the new Committee on World Food Security would follow the pattern of those governing the Committee on Forestry or the Committee on Agriculture ^{1/}, but would take into account any special requirements concerning its functions, membership, frequency of sessions, reporting procedures, relations with other bodies and submission of information by member governments. The views of the ad hoc Consultation are invited on these questions and other related matters.

5. Functions: The functions of the Committee specified in WFC Resolution XXII are quoted in paragraph 2 above.

6. It will also be recalled that the FAO Conference, in Resolution 3/73 on World Food Security, agreed at its seventeenth session on the usefulness of regular intergovernmental consultations to keep the adequacy of world food stocks under continuing review and to advise governments on action considered necessary to deal with any difficulties which arose in safeguarding world food security. Provision for such consultations is also contained in the International Undertaking on World Food Security which was adopted by the Council of FAO at its 64th session, based on a text recommended by the Committee on Commodity Problems.

7. Membership: The World Food Conference stressed that universal participation of all producing and consuming countries is essential for the achievement of the global objectives of world food security, and urged all governments to cooperate in bringing into operation the International Undertaking ^{2/}. It is suggested, therefore, that membership of the Committee should be open to all States Members of FAO or of the United Nations which notify the Director-General, by a specified date, of their desire to be appointed as members of the Committee.

8. Frequency of sessions: The Committee is charged with certain tasks of a periodic nature, such as reviewing the implementation of the International Undertaking, or evaluations of the adequacy of world stocks, which would seem to require consideration at least once a year. It is also called on to keep the cereals situation under "continuous review", and to be in a position to recommend action to governments if difficulties arise at any time in assuring minimum world food security. A "continuous" review would imply frequent sessions, probably once a month, unless the Committee delegated this function to another body or a subsidiary body which met frequently. To discharge the second function, the Committee would not necessarily have to meet frequently but it would need to be able to meet quickly in the event of urgent or unforeseen situations. This suggests that (a) the Committee should be given considerable flexibility in determining for itself the frequency of its sessions; (b) it might be specified that there should be not less than two sessions during each biennium; and (c) if required to meet an urgent situation, the Committee should be enabled to meet on the call of the Director-General in consultation with the Chairman.

9. Reporting procedures: As a Standing Committee of the Council, the Committee would report to the Council of FAO. To ensure that its recommendations can, if necessary, be considered by governments without delay, copies of its reports could be circulated to governments as soon as they become available.

^{1/} See Basic Texts of FAO, Vol. I and II, 1974 edition, Rules XXXI and Rule XXXII.

^{2/} WFC Resolution XVII.

10. As envisaged in WFC Resolution XXII, the Committee would submit periodic and special reports to the UN World Food Council. Presumably these reports would normally be transmitted through the FAO Council, but in circumstances when this procedure would entail undue delay, they could be transmitted by the Director-General directly to the World Food Council, such action being notified to the following session of the FAO Council.

11. Links with other Standing Committees: The establishment of the committee would have implications for the work of the Committee on Commodity Problems and some of its subsidiary bodies, particularly the Intergovernmental Groups on Grains, and on Rice, and possibly the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal. The CCP has already decided to review its activities and will presumably take this into account.

12. The new rule governing the Committee on World Food Security could provide for it to draw on the advice of the CCP and its subsidiary bodies in their respective field of competence, as well as on the new UN/FAO Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes which is to be set up on the recommendation of the World Food Conference. To avoid unnecessary duplication, presumably the Committee on World Food Security should, in particular, be asked to take into account the responsibilities of the CCP for reviewing commodity and related trade problems of an international character.

13. Special relationships with International Wheat Council: Previous discussions ^{1/} have laid stress on the need to associate closely the International Wheat Council with machinery for consultations on world food security. Alternative means of achieving this have already been considered both within FAO and the IWC. In the light of this, it is suggested that in order to ensure close cooperation, the International Wheat Council should be invited to participate in the proceedings of the Committee. The IWC would also be invited to authorize its secretariat to collaborate with the FAO secretariat in servicing the Committee.

14. Provision of information: The effectiveness of the Committee will depend greatly on the willingness of governments to provide information relating to food security. In order to ensure the effective discharge of the functions of the Committee, members would be expected to furnish all information required for its work, it being understood that where so requested by the government concerned, the information supplied should be kept on a restricted basis in line with paragraph 13 of the International Undertaking.

15. The conclusions reached on these various issues in the course of the ad hoc Consultation will be conveyed to the CGLM to be taken into account in preparing a draft resolution for the consideration of the FAO Council and adoption by the FAO Conference.

^{1/} See reports of the Forty-Eighth and Forty-Ninth Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems, and Report of the ad hoc Working Party on World Food Security.