

42nd Session of the Conference

Introduction to Item 20 – Draft Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization

The Council, at its 162nd Session held immediately after the Conference in 2019, noted matters, such as voting procedures, that required furtherance and that these would be considered by the relevant governing bodies, and/or by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) in his informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups. A draft Code of Conduct for Voting has been discussed in seven of my monthly informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups since September 2019.

In parallel, a number of Governing Bodies have considered this topic and provided their guidance on the development of the draft Code of Conduct for Voting. In particular, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at its 109th Session requested the Secretariat to prepare a comparative study on the rules and best practices of other UN Common System agencies, as well as other relevant best practices. At its 110th Session, the CCLM reviewed this comparative study, and requested the Secretariat to develop a code of conduct “*addressing the candidates, Members and the Secretariat and that is consistent with Rule XII at large and the General Rules of the Organization*” and that “*the development of the code of conduct should be member-led and a participatory process.*”¹ The Council, at its 164th Session, endorsed this request.

The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in November 2020 requested me to expedite my consultations in order to allow the Conference at its 42nd Session to take a decision on the matter and the Council, at its 165th Session, endorsed this request.

Since this request, my consultations have proceeded through i) correspondence, whereby Members have submitted written inputs on a draft Code of Conduct for Voting over a number of months; ii) through separate consultations with each Regional Group of FAO held back to back in order to gather inputs from the various regions and identify points of consensus; and iii) through seven entire-Membership consultations since March 2021.

The first entire-Membership meeting to discuss the Code of Conduct for Voting was held on 4 March 2021, where Members were invited to provide inputs on a draft circulated. At this meeting Members considered that a document could not be submitted to the relevant Governing Bodies before consensus is reached among the Regional Groups on the text. Subsequently, entire-Membership consultations were held on 1, 9, 12, 19 and 23 April 2021 to try to come to an agreement on a draft text for submission to the 166th Session of the Council held on 26 April – 1 May 2021.

¹ CL 164/2, paragraph 11

Due to a lack of consensus among the Membership, a document was not submitted for review by the 112th Session of the CCLM, the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee nor the 166th Session of the Council.

The 166th Session of the Council commended the ICC on his efforts in leading an open, inclusive and transparent consultation process towards the development of a voluntary draft Code of Conduct for Voting, and requested the ICC to continue such consultations with a view to having the draft finalised prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

A further entire-Membership consultation was therefore held on 25 May 2021 in order to finalise the draft for submission to the Conference. However, consensus was not reached at this meeting and therefore, at the time of writing this introduction, a document was unable to be submitted for consideration by the 42nd Session of the Conference.

Mr Khalid Mehboob, Independent Chairperson of the Council