

42nd FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)

Information Note: Online Voting Option

1 June 2021

Introduction

1. This information note outlines the features of the online voting system during the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference, in case it is accepted. It also sets out a step-by-step process to access the system and cast a vote in the online voting system.
2. Delegates are able to vote by following a four-step process: 1) receipt of access credentials; 2) access to the Waiting Room; 3) access to the Voting Room, and 4) casting the vote.
3. The online voting system has been configured to offer significant contingency to manage any risks, such as full access by a second delegate of each Member, and ample time - two days - to test access and resolve any issues before a scheduled vote takes place.
4. The voting system is available in all languages of the Organization.

Overview

5. Members should identify one delegate and one alternate for the purpose of voting in the online system. The two voting delegates will ensure a contingency for each Member in the event of any issue arising that may prevent the delegate from casting the vote.
6. All voting delegates and alternates must be included in the credentials submitted for the 42nd Conference. Names and email accounts of the voting delegates should be communicated not later than Wednesday 9 June 2021 to FAO-C42-voting@fao.org .
7. Credentials to access the online voting system will be sent to the email addresses of the delegate and alternate, as provided by Members, on Tuesday, 15 June 2021, at 12:00 Hours Rome time, two days before the votes of the Conference are scheduled. Voting is scheduled on Thursday, 17 June 2021. The email will be received from odea-do-not-reply@odelections.com.
8. Delegates should open the webpage by clicking on the link provided in the email (<https://seat-fao.odelections.com>) and log in using the credentials provided.
9. Both the delegate and alternate will have the same access rights and voting capabilities in the online voting system. It is the responsibility of the delegations to determine which of the two delegates would cast the vote.
10. The use of the credentials will provide access to the Waiting Room, which will indicate the various votes to be held, i.e. **a)** the nominal vote on the budgetary appropriations; **b)** the secret ballot for the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council, and **c)** a secret ballot for

the election of Council Members, if necessary. From the Waiting Room, voting delegates can access the Voting Room for the scheduled votes once these are opened.

11. The purpose of accessing the Waiting Room before the scheduled votes is to make sure that the credentials and connectivity of delegates are functioning. Moreover, the two-day period will allow Minsait to identify and solve any issues prior to the opening of the vote. Minsait staff will be available to offer any necessary assistance.
12. In order for delegates to cast their vote, they must access the Voting Room from the Waiting Room, using a PIN code. The PIN code is a secondary level of authentication that provides an additional level of security to the online voting system, and provides access to each of the various votes of the Conference.
13. The PIN code will be communicated through the Zoom meeting one hour before the scheduled vote. Delegates must be in the Voting Room once the voting opens. The Voting Room can no longer be accessed once voting has opened. Voting is open for a period of fifteen minutes.
14. The same credentials would be used to access the voting system for the different votes. A different PIN code would be communicated to access the voting rooms of each of the various votes.
15. *In the online secret ballot vote*, once a delegate has voted, a pop-up window will appear asking the delegate to confirm the vote. Once confirmed, the vote is final and can no longer be changed. At this point, the vote of the Member has been cast; neither the voting delegate nor the alternate will be able to change the vote.
16. *In the nominal vote on the budgetary appropriation*, voting delegates can change their vote for the duration of the Voting Period. This is similar to the electronic voting system at FAO headquarters.
17. *In a secret ballot*, when the voting process is completed, the system displays the voting results to the tellers, the Elections Officer and the scrutineers. For the purpose of any investigation, the records of the vote will be saved. It is important to recall that under no circumstances can the vote be traced back to any Member.
18. *In the nominal vote on the budgetary appropriation*, the result will be shown immediately. A record will be included in the Report of the 42nd Conference.
19. To ensure a successful *log in* to the system, it is advised to use Google Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge or Safari. The online voting system is not supported by the Internet Explorer web browser.

Step-by-step process

STEP 1: Credentials

1. Each delegation will identify a voting delegate and an alternate. Delegations are asked to send the names and individual email addresses of their voting delegate and their alternate to the Secretariat at FAO-C42-voting@fao.org by Wednesday, 9 June 2021. It is important to double check that the email address is correct for the receipt of the access credentials. FAO will collect, compile and communicate this information to Minsait.
2. The online voting system will generate the log-in credentials for each delegate in the form of a username and password. These credentials are issued on Tuesday, 15 June 2021, at 12:00 hours Rome time, by email to the voting delegates at the email addresses provided to the Secretariat. It is important to ensure that the email from the voting system does not land in any spam folder of the delegate's email account. Please contact FAO-C42-voting@fao.org if the email is not received on Tuesday, 15 June 2021.
3. Voters can log into the online voting system at link included in the credentials email. Enter the username and password and click the "Log in" button.
4. At the log-in page, the official FAO language of preference can be selected from a drop-down menu.
5. The same credentials would be used to access the various scheduled votes, i.e. the nominal vote on the budgetary appropriation, the secret ballot election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the secret ballot for the election of Council Members. A different PIN code would be communicated to access the voting rooms of each of the various votes.

STEP 2: *Waiting Room*

1. Upon logging in, delegates will enter the Waiting Room. The Waiting Room will be opened from the moment the access credentials are sent on Tuesday, 15 June 2021, at 12:00 hours Rome time. From then on, access and connectivity can be confirmed, and any technical issues may be resolved, if necessary with the assistance of Minsait.
2. From the Waiting Room, Members can access the Voting Room in order to cast their vote.

STEP 3: Voting Room

1. To access the Voting Room, voting delegates are asked to enter a 4-digit PIN code. Voting delegates will be prompted to enter the PIN code after pressing the button labelled "Access to the Voting Room."
2. The PIN code will be communicated to Members on the Zoom platform during the Conference one hour before the scheduled time of the vote.

3. The Voting Room will indicate the various votes to be held, i.e. a) the nominal vote on the budgetary appropriations; b) the secret ballot for the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council, and c) a secret ballot for the election of Council Members, if necessary. Only the vote that is scheduled will be accessible.
4. It is essential that all voting delegates are in the Voting Room before the voting opens. Once the voting is opened, it will not be possible to access the Voting Room anymore. If a delegate is not present in the Voting Room before the vote opens, the delegate will not be able to cast the vote.

STEP 4 - A: Casting the vote (secret ballot)

1. When the voting opens, the voting system will display a message stating “*The voting process is open.*” The voting process will be open for fifteen minutes. At the relevant time during the voting period, an announcement will be made through the Zoom meeting that voting will be open for a further five minutes.
2. On the voting ballot for the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council, three options for each of the three candidates for the vacancy and one option to abstain from the vote will be displayed.
3. Not casting a vote will not count as an abstention (cf General Rule XII-4 (b) (iv)). The only way to abstain from the vote is to click the button labelled “Abstain.”
4. The vote is cast by selecting one of the options and clicking on the “Vote” button.
5. Both the voting delegate and the alternate have identical access and voting capabilities in the online voting system. It is the responsibility of the voting delegation to determine who will cast the vote in the Voting Room on behalf of their Member’s delegation.
6. Once the vote has been selected and cast, a pop-up window will ask the voting delegate to confirm the vote once again (“*Remember that the vote you cast cannot be changed. Are you sure you want to confirm?*”). Once the confirmation is made, the vote has been cast by the Member and changes can no longer be made.

STEP 4 - B: Casting the vote (nominal vote)

1. When the voting opens, the voting system will display a message stating “*The voting process is open.*” The voting process will be open for fifteen minutes. At the relevant time during the voting period, an announcement will be made through the Zoom meeting that voting will be open for a further five minutes.
2. In the case of a nominal vote on the budget, the voting options would be “Yes” “No” or “Abstain”.
3. Not casting a vote will not count as an abstention (cf General Rule XII-4 (b) (iv)). The only way to abstain from the vote is to click the button labelled “Abstain.”

4. The nominal vote can be changed by the delegates for the duration of the voting period and the result will be shown in real time. This is similar to the electronic voting system at FAO Headquarters. A record will be included in the Report of the 42nd Conference.
5. Also for a nominal vote, both the voting delegate and the alternate have identical access and voting capabilities in the online voting system. It is the responsibility of the voting delegation to determine who will cast the vote in the Voting Room on behalf of their Member's delegation.