


January 2014

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	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
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NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

TWENTY- SEVENTH SESSION

Madison, Wisconsin, USA, 11 - 13 June 2014

CONTRIBUTION TO FAO GOVERNANCE

Input to the Committee on Forestry and the Regional Conferences

Secretariat Note

I. Introduction

1. FAO has been engaged in a fundamental reform process since 2005 when the FAO Council launched the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of the Organization “*to chart the way forward, to better meet the challenges of the future in an evolving global environment, ... and to make FAO fit for the twenty-first century and the challenges ahead.*”¹ To address the findings of the IEE the FAO Conference established a Conference Committee for IEE follow-up (CoC-IEE) in 2007 to develop an Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) in this regard and approved it at its Special Session in 2008. The implementation of the IPA started in 2009, bringing substantive changes in four thematic areas: planning, delivery, assessment and governance.

2. According to the final report on the implementation of the IPA, considered and endorsed by the Conference² in 2013, the achievements of the reform “*in establishing global direction include changes to the structure of the agendas of Conference, Technical Committees and Regional Conferences to ensure that these bodies systematically review the global situation to provide guidance on areas that require action by FAO. The functions and reporting lines of Regional Conferences were specified, with reporting to Council on programme and budget matters ... and to Conference on policy and regulatory matters. This enhanced regional inputs to the PWB and ensured that Regional views were sought on all major policy issues. Similarly, the role and reporting lines of the Technical Committees was also enhanced to facilitate their inputs to FAO priorities at Council and global policy and regulatory matters at Conference.*”³

¹ Report to the Council of the Inter-Sessional Working Group for the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE), CL 129/10

² C 2013/REP pp. 111. f)

³ C 2013/26 pp. 61

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3. In this new governance structure regional technical commissions, such as the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs), have a key role in identifying issues of primary political and technical relevance on their respective fields and bring them to the attention of the respective governing bodies.

II. The new governance structure of FAO

4. According to the IPA, in the new governance structure the Conference “will remain the ultimate decision making body of the Organization and determine overall policy and strategy. ... The Conference will:

- a) *be the ultimate venue for discussion and decision on global issues of food and agriculture and requirements for regulatory instruments, normally following their discussion in, and the receipt of recommendations from, the Technical Committees and the Regional Conferences;*
- b) *make the final decision on the objectives, strategy and budget of the Organization following receipt of recommendations from the Council*⁴.

5. The FAO Council, performing an executive governance role, was mandated to play “a more dynamic role in the development of the programme and budget, drawing on the advice of the Programme and Finance Committees and ... extend its oversight and monitoring function particularly with regard to extra-budgetary resource mobilization and use and human resource development and utilization”⁵.

6. The IPA further suggested that Regional Conferences play an important role in “governance for: policy coherence for development in their region; discussion of global priorities as they relate to the region; providing inputs to the Council and Conference on FAO priorities and in discussing such issues as intra-regional trade and investment. This role may vary from region to region. They will become a full part of the governance structure, feeding into the Conference and Council”⁶.

7. The IPA further concluded that Technical Committees were fundamental to FAO’s work with the following distinct roles: “developing global information exchange, policy coherence and instruments for their area of competence; and secondly providing proposals to the Council and Conference on the Strategy and Programme of the Organization. Technical Committees, as committees of the whole, deal with world issues as well as FAO’s programme and will report directly to the FAO Conference on global issues and to the Council on FAO programme priorities and performance”⁷.

8. RFCs, as forestry statutory bodies established under Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution, have to advise on the formulation of forest and wildlife management policies and to review and coordinate their implementation at the regional level; to exchange information and, generally through special Subsidiary Bodies, advise on suitable practices and action in regard to technical problems; and to make appropriate recommendations in relation to the foregoing, to the Regional Conferences and to Technical Committees, in particular the Committee on Forestry (COFO).

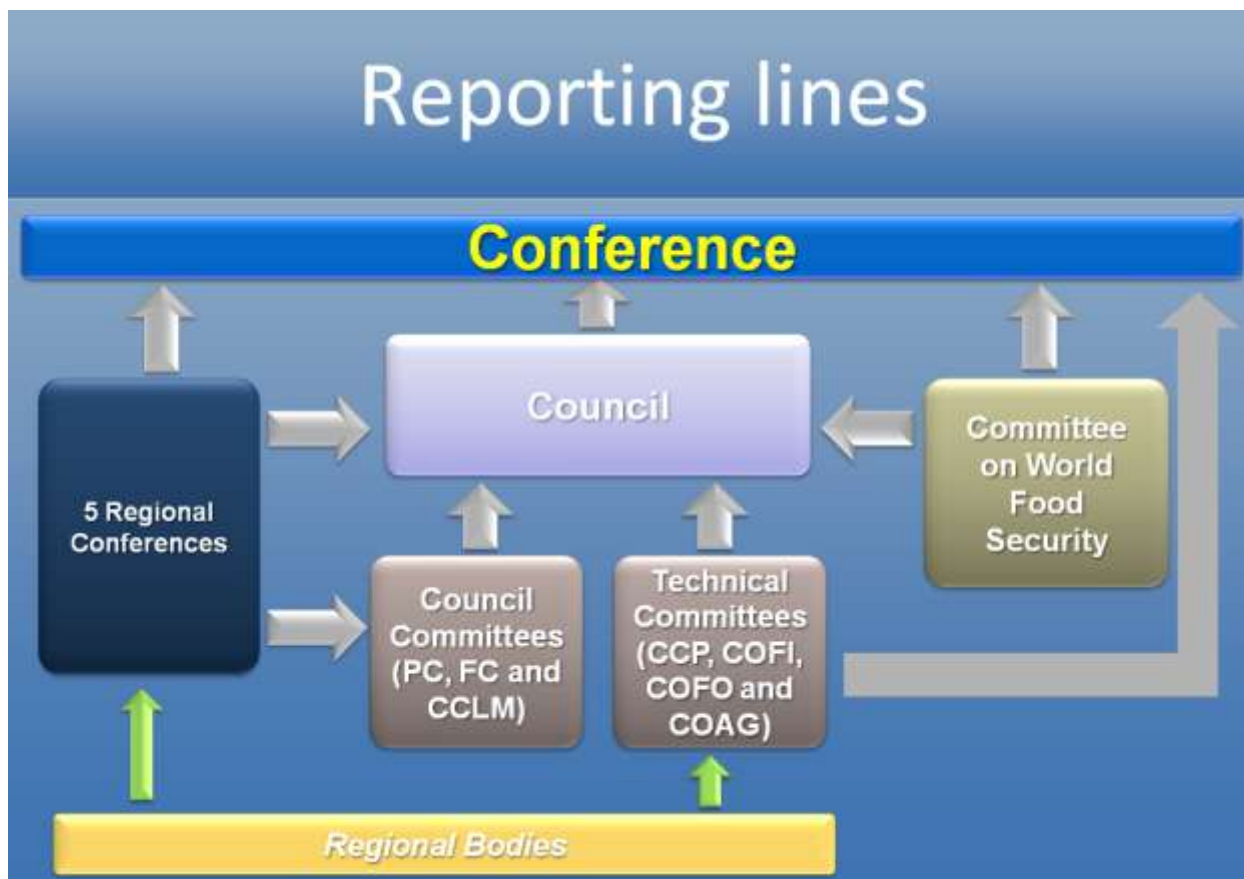
9. The IPA established the following reporting lines for the different governing and statutory bodies of the Organization:

⁴ C 2008/REP Annex F, pp. 21

⁵ C 2008/REP Annex F, pp. 22

⁶ C 2008/REP Annex F, pp. 25

⁷ C 2008/REP Annex F, pp. 26



III. Actions in Forestry to promote the new governance structure

10. At its 20th session COFO decided to review its Rules of Procedure, and following the practice established in the preceding two sessions resolved that its Steering Committee would be composed of the COFO Chairperson and the Chairpersons of the six RFCs, who serve in the Steering Committee as long as they hold office in their respective commissions. Through this arrangement the linkages between the RFCs and COFO have been strengthened and the inputs from the RFCs into the Regional Conferences reinforced⁸.

11. In order to allow for thorough preparations and timely input to both COFO and the Regional Conferences the meeting calendar of the RFCs had been adjusted in consecutive steps during the last two biennia so that their reports can be incorporated in the documentation of all relevant governing bodies. Similar steps were taken for COFO, and as a result the following meeting calendar has been established for the current cycle:

Commission/Committee	Time	Location	RC
Latin America and Caribbean	9-13 September 2013	Guyana	22-25 April 2014
Africa	30 September-04 October 2013	Namibia	24-28 March 2014
North America	15-19 October 2013	USA	15-16 April 2014
Asia-Pacific	4-8 November 2013	New Zealand	10-14 March 2014
Europe	9-13 December 2013	Finland	01-04 April 2014
Near East	26-30 January 2014	Jordan	23-27 February 2014

⁸ COFO 2010/REP pp. 37. and Annex 1.

Commission/Committee	Time	Location	RC
PC-FC	26-30 May 2014	FAO HQ	
Council 149	16-20 June 2014	FAO HQ	
COFO	23-27 June 2014	FAO HQ	
PC-FC	03-07 November 2014	FAO HQ	
Council 150	01-05 December 2014	FAO HQ	

12. To facilitate the coordination among the RFCs further, the COFO Steering Committee initiated a mechanism to channel recommendations for the agenda of COFO and for the FAO Forestry programme so that commissions could benefit from, and build on the recommendations of other commissions. These coordinated inputs were brought to the attention of the Steering Committee to develop the draft agenda for the next session of COFO.

13. The mechanism had been first used in the course of the preparations for the 21st session of COFO. The experiences were reviewed at the meeting of the Bureaux of the Regional Forestry Commissions in 2012. The Bureaux concluded that this was a very promising initiative that could be developed further and noted in particular that:

- regional coordination among RFCs as well as with other relevant bodies within the regions would be beneficial;
- RFCs should set clear priorities rather than create all-inclusive list of issues and actions;
- there is a need for a systematic monitoring of implementation;
- coordination should start on country-level among various areas of FAO's mandate to allow for synergies and cross-sectoral thinking.
- more attention should be given to the input to Regional Conferences. Forestry often remains marginal in their agendas therefore clear messages regarding key issues and priorities are needed for supporting corresponding programmatic and budgetary decisions;
- Commission Chairs and senior officers should pay particular attention to seeking ways for actively contributing to Regional Conferences.

14. The Strategic Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Forestry, that was presented to the 21st session of COFO, noted the need for greater coordination among the various statutory bodies and recommended, among others, that FAO "*should lay the groundwork for greater and more effective interaction and collaboration between the various statutory/advisory bodies of FAO that will contribute to strategic priority setting.*"⁹

15. FAO management welcomed this recommendation and committed to take action on the following areas:

- *Strengthen linkages between the regional forestry Commissions to both COFO and the Regional Conferences.*
- *Set-up coordination between the related thematic WG of regional forestry commissions themselves and correspondent units at headquarters.*¹⁰

16. To facilitate this process, templates for input to the Regional Conferences, COFO, and to the FAO Forestry programme, revised on the basis of the experiences gained in the 2011-2012 biennium, are attached as Annex 1, Annex 2 and Annex 3, respectively.

IV. Points for consideration

17. The Commission may wish to consider the results of the implementation of the IPA as well as documents FO:NAFC/2014/2 "The new strategic framework for FAO" and FO:NAFC/2014/3

⁹ Strategic of FAO's Role and Work in Forestry. Final Report, p. xvi, pp. ES33.

¹⁰ PC112/3 Supp. 1 p. 4

“Strategic evaluation of FAO’s role and work in forestry: Management Response” and develop its recommendations:

- for the agenda of the 22nd session of COFO;
- for the attention of the Regional Conference;
- for the priorities of the FAO Forestry programme, taking into account the outcome of its deliberations on the new Strategic Framework and the Strategic Evaluation
- for reviewing the activities and modalities of working groups and seek consistency across regions.

18. In doing so, the Commission may wish to:

- consider similar recommendations from fellow RFCs and build on them to develop synergies and help establish clear priorities;
- request the secretariat to share its recommendation with other RFCs;
- request its Chairperson to facilitate the work of the COFO Steering Committee by actively representing the Commission’s recommendations.

19. The Commission may wish to invite the Chairperson of the Regional Conference to give adequately attention to the issue of forests and forestry in the Conference’s agenda and take into account the recommendations of the Commission.

Annex 1

RFC recommendations for the attention of COFO

(Issues to be considered for inclusion in the Agenda)

<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome of the considerations (information/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for COFO and FAO (link to Annex 2)</i>
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Annex 2

RFC recommendations for the attention of COFO regarding FAO Programme of Work

<i>Priorities for the FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Objectives for work on the priorities</i>	<i>Level of action (nat./reg./global)</i>	<i>Strategic Objective (1-5)</i>
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Annex 3

RFC recommendations for the attention of the RC

<i>Priority issues for the RC to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome of the considerations (information/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for FAO (link to Annex 2)</i>
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