

174th Session of the FAO Council

Item 15: Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies

At the 171st Session of the FAO Council, the complexity of the topic of the participation of private sector observers in sessions of FAO Governing Bodies was noted, and the Council requested that a consensus should be reached on general principles for participation.

This document briefly summarizes the analysis of current rules and practices for private sector participation in FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies. The analysis indicates that the current rules for observer participation in FAO meetings are adequate and do not require revision. However, the analysis did find that there are inconsistencies in the application of approaches of the various Governing and Statutory Bodies to the participation of observers that could benefit from further internal guidance.

To respond to this, the Council is invited to recommend that FAO examines possibilities for clearer guidance to the Secretariats of its Governing and Statutory Bodies on the participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), including those classed as private sector, in FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies and develops further proposals for practical modalities for participation, where necessary. The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) will be involved in this process.

FAO will initiate this process in early 2024 and will report back to Members in late 2024.

Ms Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General