



# Rules of Procedure of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The Commission adopted its own Rules of Procedure, pursuant to Article 10 of its Statutes, at its [Twelfth Regular Session](#), in 2009. The Rules of Procedure were amended at its [Fourteenth Regular Session](#) in 2014.

## Rule I - Scope

These rules of procedure shall apply to all sessions of the Commission.

## Rule II - Membership

In accordance with its Statutes, the Commission shall be open to all Members and Associate Members of the Organization. It shall be composed of those Members or Associate Members which notify the Director-General of their desire to be considered as Members of the Commission.

## Rule III - Bureau

1. The Commission shall elect, from among the representatives of its Members, a Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the Bureau"), each coming from one of the following geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and South-West Pacific. In electing the Chairperson, the Commission shall have due regard to the principle of rotation.
2. The Commission shall elect a *Rapporteur* from among the Members of the Bureau.
3. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons shall be elected at the first regular session of each biennium. The terms of office of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons shall commence with immediate effect upon closure of the session at which they are elected.
4. The Chairperson, or in her or his absence a Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at meetings of the Commission and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.
5. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons shall serve as the Bureau and provide guidance to the Secretary with regard to the preparations for, and conduct of, sessions of the Commission.
6. The Chairperson, if temporarily absent from a session or any part thereof or temporarily unable to fulfil her or his intersessional duties, shall designate a Vice-Chairperson from among the Vice-Chairpersons elected in accordance with Rule III.1, to act as Chairperson.
7. If a Bureau Member is unable to temporarily carry out any of her or his functions, the Member of the Commission of that Bureau Member may designate an alternate.
8. If a Bureau Member resigns from her or his position or find herself or himself permanently unable to exercise her or his functions, the Member of the Commission of that Bureau Member shall designate a substitute representative for the remainder of the term.

## Rule IV - Sessions

1. The Commission shall normally hold one regular session each biennium. It may also decide to convene extraordinary sessions as necessary, subject to the approval of the FAO Council. Sessions of the Commission shall normally be held at the Organization's Headquarters. Regular sessions shall be held with timing that enables the Programme and Finance Committees to take into consideration the report of the Commission in formulating advice to the Council. Regular sessions shall normally not exceed five days. Sessions shall normally be preceded by regional consultations with appropriate facilities.
2. All sessions shall be convened by the Director-General in consultation with the Bureau of the Commission.
3. Notice convening a regular session of the Commission shall normally be communicated not less than 90 days, and notices convening a special session not less than 30 days, before the date fixed for the opening of the session, to Members of the Commission and to observers from Members and Associate Members of the Organization that are not Members of the Commission, from states that are not members or Associate Members of the Organization, and from international organizations.



4. Each Member of the Commission shall communicate to the Secretary of the Commission the names of its representative and of alternates, associates and advisers before the opening of each session of the Commission.

#### **Rule V - Attendance**

1. Each Member of the Commission shall be represented by one representative and may appoint alternates, associates and advisers to its representative on the Commission.
1. Members of the Commission should, as far as possible, be represented by delegations consisting of senior officers highly qualified to contribute actively to a multidisciplinary consideration of the subjects on the agenda of the Commission.
1. Meetings of the Commission shall be open to observers from Members and Associate Members that are not Members of the commission, from states that are not Members or Associate Members of the Organization, and from international organizations, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the rules and principles adopted by the Conference.
1. Media representatives may be accredited to attend sessions of the Commission by filing a request to the Secretariat, which will forward the accreditation request to the responsible division within FAO.

#### **Rule VI - Agenda and documents**

1. The Director-General, in consultation with the Bureau of the Commission, shall prepare a provisional agenda. The provisional agenda shall be communicated with the notice referred to in Rule IV.3.
2. Any Member of the Commission may request the Director-General normally not less than 30 days before the date fixed for the opening of a session, to include an item in the provisional agenda. The Director-General shall thereupon circulate the proposed item to all Members of the Commission, together with any necessary documents.
3. After the agenda has been adopted, the Commission may, by consensus, amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item.
4. Documents to be submitted to the Commission at any session shall be published on the website of the Commission and be made available at the request by Members as hard copies, at the time the agenda is published, or as soon as possible thereafter, but always at least six weeks prior to the opening of the session.
5. "Documents to be submitted to the Commission" shall comprise the working documents of the session. They should include a summary if they exceed 5 000 words.

#### **Rule VII - Decision-making**

All decisions of the Commission shall be taken by consensus unless by consensus another method of arriving at a decision on certain measures is reached.

#### **Rule VIII - Intergovernmental Technical Sectoral Working Groups of the Commission**

1. The Commission may establish intergovernmental technical sectoral working groups ("Sectoral Working Groups"), with appropriate geographical balance, to assist it in the areas of plant, animal, forestry and fisheries genetic resources.
2. The purpose of the Sectoral Working Groups shall be to review the situation and issues related to agro-biodiversity in the areas under their respective competences, to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters, and to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission.
3. The Sectoral Working Groups, where established, shall hold no more than one regular session annually.
4. The composition and terms of reference for each Sectoral Working Group shall be established by the Commission. Rules of procedure of Sectoral Working Groups shall be approved by the Commission, and shall be in conformity with the rules of procedure of the Commission and the General Rules of the Organization.

#### **Rule IX - Other Subsidiary Bodies**

The Commission may establish such other Subsidiary Bodies as it may deem necessary for the effective discharge of its functions.



### **Rule X - Funding of Sectoral Working Groups and other Subsidiary Bodies**

1. The establishment of any Sectoral Working Group or other Subsidiary Body shall be subject to the determination by the Director-General that the necessary funds are available in the relevant chapter of the budget of the Organization or from extra-budgetary sources.
2. Before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of Subsidiary Bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the programme, administrative and financial implications thereof.

### **Rule XI - Reporting**

1. The Commission shall report to the Director-General, who shall bring to the attention of the Conference through the Council any recommendations adopted by the Commission, which have policy implications, or which affect the programme or finances of the Organization. As soon as they become available, copies of each report of the Commission will be circulated to Members and Associate Members of the Organization and also to international organizations and agencies that are concerned with genetic resources.
2. The Commission shall make every effort to ensure that recommendations are precise and can be implemented.

### **Rule XII - Secretariat and expenses**

1. The Secretary of the Commission shall be appointed by the Director-General and shall be administratively responsible to him. The Secretariat of the Commission will monitor and coordinate the preparations for the Commission meetings and the work for the Sectoral Working Groups, where established. The expenses of the Secretariat of the Commission shall be determined and paid by the Organization within the limits of the relevant appropriations in the approved budget of the Organization.
2. Secretariat services for each Sectoral Working Group, where established, will be provided by the respective technical divisions of FAO as part of its annual programme of work.
3. Expenses incurred by representatives of Members of the Commission and its Working Groups, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Commission, its Sectoral Working Groups or other Subsidiary Bodies, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.

### **Rule XIII - Languages**

1. The languages of the Commission shall be the languages of the Organization.
2. Any representative using a language other than one of the languages of the Commission shall provide for interpretation into one of the languages of the Commission.
3. Documents to be submitted to the Commission shall be translated into all languages of the Commission, in accordance with Rule IV.2 and XLVIII of the General Rules of the Organization.

### **Rule XIV - Amendment of the Rules of Procedure**

1. The Commission may amend its Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendment is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization and the Statutes of the Commission.
2. No proposal for the amendment of these Rules shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Commission unless notice thereof has been given by the Director-General to the Members of the Commission at least 30 days before the opening of the session.

### **Rule XV - Application of the General Rules of FAO**

The provisions of the General Rules of FAO shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all matters not specifically dealt with under the present Rules.