

March 2003



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
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of
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United
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Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Twenty-fourth Session

Rome, 23 – 28 June 2003

Methodology for the Determination of Equitable Geographic Distribution

I. Introduction

1. The principle of appointing staff on a geographical basis in FAO was established in Article VII para. 3 of the FAO Constitution in 1945:

In appointing the staff, the Director-General shall, subject to the paramount importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency and of technical competence, pay due regard to the importance of selecting personnel recruited on as wide a geographical basis as is possible.

2. It is noted that the charters, statutes and constitutions of most organizations and agencies of the United Nations system include similar provisions that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. They also require that due regard be given to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

3. In November 1947 the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established the rationale for this geographic concern. It affirmed that in view of its international character, the policies and administrative methods of the secretariat should reflect, and profit to the highest degree from, assets of the various cultures and the technical competence of all member nations. Fundamental importance was attached to the universal nature of the UN and, hence, to the widest possible representation of all cultures and the diversity characteristic of member nations. In this way the secretariat would operate independently and fully reflect the richness of the UN's many components, while ensuring that no country or group of countries became predominant.

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4. In view of the size of their memberships, the UN system organizations funded from assessed contributions to their budgets have in general found it necessary to develop a formula for the determination of each member nation's representation in the secretariat.

5. In FAO the need to apply geographic distribution to professional staff was emphasized at the Eighth Session of the Conference in 1955 by Resolution 50/55. Subsequently, the system to ensure equitable geographic distribution was adopted at the Twenty-seventh Session of the Council in 1957 and is the basis of the present methodology. It is a weighted system that is based on the assessed contribution of each member nation.

6. In December 1962 the UNGA reviewed its methodology for the calculation of geographic distribution. Three factors which were considered to be essential to the establishment of desirable ranges were agreed upon, namely: (a) membership; (b) population and (c) the assessed contributions to the organization's budget.

7. Subsequently, most of the other specialized agencies of the UN system adopted methodologies similar to that of the UN.

8. At its Thirty-first Session in November 2001 in the context of its review of the Programme Implementation Report 1998-99^{1/}, the Conference noted the request for the preparation of a comparative study of staff recruitment practices of FAO and the United Nations, focusing in particular on geographic distribution aspects which should be submitted to the Council at its Hundred and Twenty-third Session (ref. C 2001/REP, para. 79).

9. At its Hundred and Twenty-third Session, that study was submitted to the Council^{2/} which confirmed that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff should be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with due regard being given to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible. In the light of the various methodologies used in the UN System to determine equitable geographic distribution, the Council requested the secretariat to prepare options for a new FAO methodology. This document responds to that request.

10. In preparing this proposal, the secretariat has, *inter alia*, addressed the number and type of posts to be covered by the geographic distribution system and the upper and lower limits of the desirable range, as well as considered the regional dimension of geographic representation, in particular for high-level posts.

II. Current System

11. The current FAO methodology is based on the assessed contribution percentage of each member nation and:

- is weighted by assigning point values to each grade level;
- provides that each member nation should so far as practicable be represented by at least one professional appointment;
- in general, provides that geographic considerations shall not prejudice the promotion of existing professional staff; and
- excludes linguistic posts and the post of the Director-General.

A. SELECTION OF POSTS

12. The posts covered are those in the professional and higher categories that are funded by the regular programme:

^{1/} C 2001/8; C 2001/8-Corr.1-Rev.1; C 2001/LIM/4, C 2001/II/PV/1, C 2001/II/PV/6; C 2001/PV/14
^{2/} CL 123/18

- including those filled by staff on continuing or fixed-term appointments; and
- excluding linguistic posts.

13. As only filled posts are counted, the number of posts covered by the system fluctuates continually as staff are appointed and separated. As of 31 December 2002, 1025 posts were included in the calculation.

B. DETERMINATION OF THE REPRESENTATION STATUS OF A COUNTRY

14. The proportion of a country's representation is based on the percentage of its assessed contribution to the regular programme. The percentage of representation of each country is obtained by dividing the points of posts occupied by its nationals by the total number of points of all filled posts covered by the geographic distribution system.

C. SYSTEM OF DESIRABLE RANGES

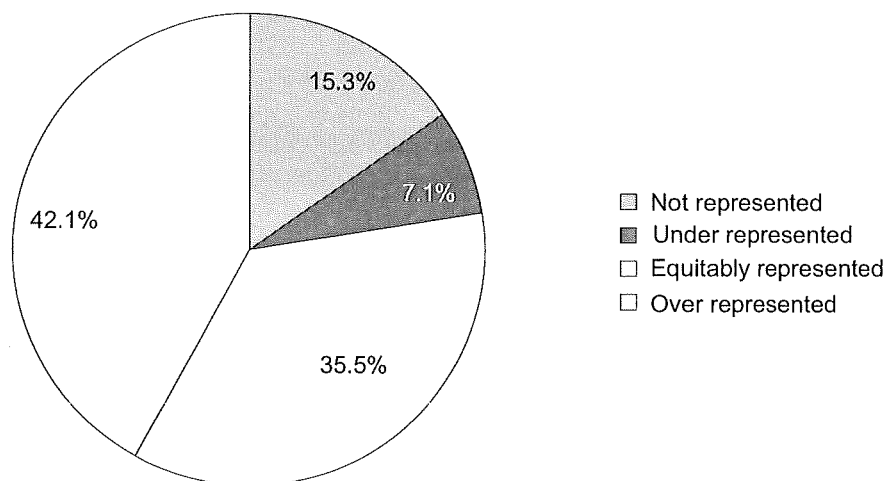
15. A member nation is considered to be equitably represented if the representation percentage is within the following limits:

- if the assessed contribution is 10% or less to the Regular Programme, the equitable range is 25% below to 50% above the contribution percentage (no country is considered over-represented if it has only one staff member);
- if the assessed contribution is over 10% but less than 20% to the Regular Programme, the equitable range is 25% below to 25% above the contribution percentage;
- if the assessed contribution is over 20% to the Regular Programme, the equitable range is 25% below to nil percent above (i.e. to the actual contribution percentage).

Under this system the representation status of member nations as at 31 December 2002 was distributed as follows:

Not represented	28
Under represented	13
Equitably represented	65
Over represented	77
<u>Total</u>	<u>183</u>

**Representation status under current FAO formula
as at 31 December 2002**



III. Considerations for a Revised methodology

A. Number of Posts

16. In considering possible changes to the FAO methodology, an initial critical question to answer is which posts should be covered by the geographic distribution system to form the basis for the determination of the desirable equitable ranges. As noted above, at present only regular programme posts in the professional and higher categories which are filled by staff on continuing or fixed-term appointments are considered.

17. However, the UN and the other large specialized agencies establish a base figure (the number of posts subject to geographic distribution) in relation to the number of posts funded from their Regular Programmes. In order to maintain a certain stability over time, this base figure, once decided, normally remains fixed unless a significant change occurs in the number of Regular Programme posts. In the United Nations, for example, the base figure (originally established at 2 700 posts) is adjusted whenever the actual number of posts subject to geographical distribution increases or decreases by 100.

18. For the purposes of this paper, it has been assumed that one goal of changing the methodology for the geographic distribution calculation would be to expand its coverage to reflect more fully the posts included in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), while maintaining the current exclusions on linguistic posts and the post of the Director-General. For the current biennium the number and grade levels of these posts are detailed in the *Additional Information on the Programme of Work and Budget 2002-03, Annex VI* on the FAO Internet site.^{3/} In practice this approach would mean that the geographic distribution would include:

- established continuing and fixed-term posts funded by the Regular Programme, including those in the FAO Representative Offices, the FAO/WB and FAO/WHO Cooperative Programmes, the Information Products Revolving Fund and the Computer Pool Account; and
- posts formerly funded from Support Costs, as such posts have been incorporated into the PWB and are no longer identified separately for the purposes of the Regular Programme;

But it would exclude:

- temporary posts of less than twelve months; and
- linguistic posts, the post of the Director-General and posts funded from extra-budgetary resources, such as field projects, Trust Funds and Other Funds.

19. Applying this approach to the establishment approved in the PWB 2002-2003 would result in a base figure of 1 362 posts. The use of a fixed figure would ensure the stability of the system, as the base would no longer fluctuate as posts are filled and vacated.

B. Weighting of Posts

20. Under the current FAO system, the proportion of a country's representation is based on the percentage of its contribution to the Regular Programme. This representation is further refined by assigning point values to grade levels, as follows:

^{3/} http://www.fao.org/pwb/2002/index_en.htm

Grade	Points
DDG/ADG	15
D-1/D-2	10
P-5	8
P-4	6
P-3	4
P-2	2
P-1	1

21. In a report that was submitted to the Council at its Hundred and Twelfth Session in June 1997 (ref. CL 112/INF/13),^{4/} the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommended that the system of grade-weighting applied in FAO merited consideration. Copies of that document will be made available for delegations at the documents desk.^{5/}

22. The percentage of representation of each country is obtained by dividing the points of posts staffed from a country by the total number of points of all filled Regular Programme posts.

23. It should be noted, however, that providing a justification for this particular weighting pattern has been problematic, as there is no apparent basis for the relative "worth" of each grade level. The only explanation would appear to be the fact of having been adopted by the Council in 1957 and that no change has been proposed since then.

24. Other organizations that have applied a weighting system, notably the UN and UNESCO, have based the weights on the salary scale for staff in the professional and higher categories. Were a similar approach to be adopted in FAO, the weighting pattern^{6/} would be as follows:

Grade	Points
DDG	4.3
ADG	3.9
D-2	3.2
D-1	3.0
P-5	2.4
P-4	2.0
P-3	1.6
P-2	1.3
P-1	1.0

IV. Proposed Options

A. OPTION #1: ONE FACTOR (CONTRIBUTION)

25. In light of the above, Option #1 for a new geographic distribution methodology in FAO would be to retain the current system based on the assessed contributions of member nations, applying the adjustments discussed above in paras. 15 – 24 regarding the coverage of posts and the weighting pattern. Accordingly, Option #1 would have the following features:

- all posts included in the PWB regardless of whether they are filled would constitute the base figure for the calculations (currently 1 362); and

^{4/} It is noted that at that time the Council had no specific reaction to the recommendations in the JIU report.

^{5/} Copies may also be obtained from the JIU web site at <http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/Reports.html> (JIU document reference JIU/REP/96/7)

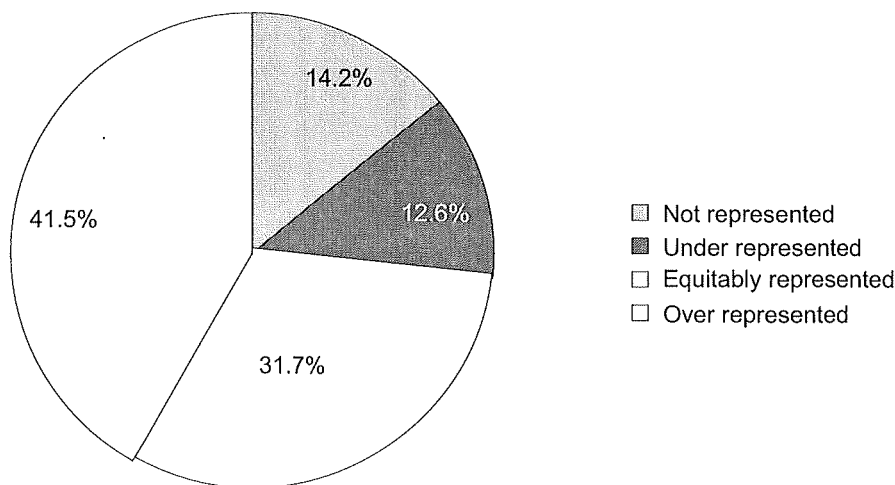
^{6/} Based on the gross salaries at step 1 effective 1 January 2003

- posts weights by grade would be determined on the basis of the salary scale for the professional and higher categories; and
- the existing ranges above and below the contribution percentage (para. 15) would be retained.

26. Under such a system the representation status of member nations would be distributed as follows:

Not represented	26
Under represented	23
Equitably represented	58
Over represented	76
<u>Total</u>	<u>183</u>

Representation Status under Option #1



27. Option # 1 provides greater stability and post coverage in the geographic distribution methodology than the current system.

B. OPTION #2: THREE FACTORS (CONTRIBUTION, MEMBERSHIP & POPULATION)

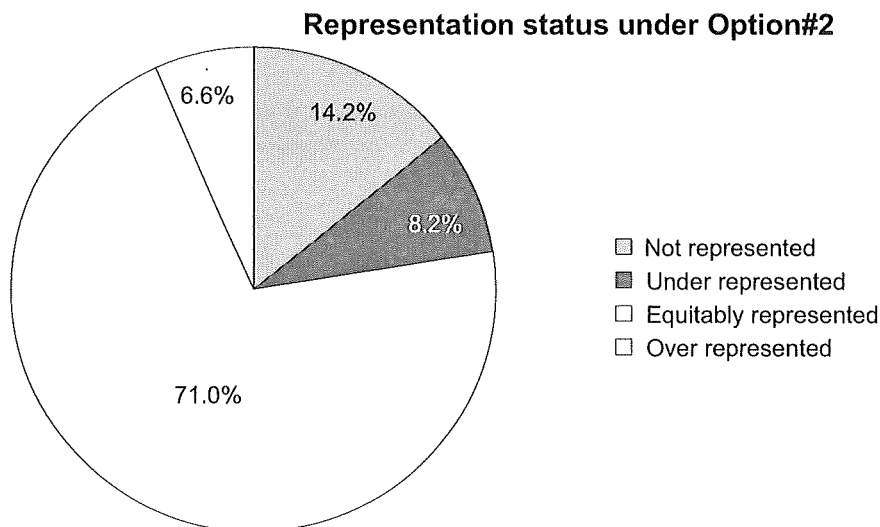
28. Some organizations (e.g. UN, WHO and UNIDO), however, have added a further refinement to their systems and base their geographic distribution on three factors: (1) the membership factor, i.e. the fact of membership in the organization, (2) the contribution factor and (3) the population factor. Under this methodology, a proportion of the posts (or points) in the base figure is assigned to the membership factor and equally divided among all member nations. Each member nation is allocated a share of the posts assigned to the population factor, in accordance with the proportion of its population to the total population of the member nations. The remaining posts are divided in accordance with the percentage of assessed contribution. The sum of the three amounts is the mid-point of each member nation's desirable equitable range, which is defined as a fixed percentage above and below the calculated mid-point. In addition, certain absolute minimum and maximum criteria for the range are also defined.

29. Accordingly, Option #2 would have the following features:

- As in Option #1, the base figure for the calculations is established as 1 362 posts and posts are weighted on the basis of the salary scale;
- The weight of the membership factor is 40 per cent of the base figure;
- The population factor, which is allotted a weight of 5 per cent, is directly related to the total population of all the member nations and distributed among member nations in proportion to their population;
- The contribution factor is based on the distribution of the remaining posts among member nations in proportion to the scale of assessments;
- The mid-point for each member nation is calculated by adding the three factors;
- The upper and lower limits of the equitable range are based on a flexibility of 15 per cent upwards and downwards from the mid-point, but not less than 2.4 posts up and down, the upper limit being not less than 7.4 posts.

30. Under such a system the representation status of member nations would be distributed as follows:

Not represented	26
Under represented	15
Equitably represented	130
Over represented	12
<u>Total</u>	<u>183</u>



31. As indicated above, the adoption of the methodology described under this option would lead to a more equitable geographical representation of member countries among the staff of the Organization.

V. Regional Dimensions

32. It is recalled that in requesting the secretariat to prepare this proposal, the Council indicated that consideration also be given to the regional dimension of geographic representation, in particular for high-level posts. It is evident that, if greater equity were achieved in the overall

representation status of member nations, then that of each region would also be improved to the same extent.

33. Given the complexity of these various methodologies, it would be quite difficult to add a “regional” component to the calculations. It is noted, however, that in its 1996 report, the JIU did recommend “At the very least, high-level managerial posts should be distributed equally among the geographical regions of the world, as determined by each organization. Given the dwindling number of posts at the top of the administrative pyramid, the application of a principle of rotation, particularly in the higher categories, is desirable.” The regional component could be considered in this context.

VI. Recent Developments

34. The question of geographic distribution remains of interest to member nations within the United Nations system. As in FAO, other organizations are considering further refinements to their existing geographic distribution methodologies. For example, The UNGA at its Fifty-seventh session in the latter part of 2002 considered the ramifications of changing the relative weights of the population, membership and contribution factors (ref. A/57/414, paras. 38-59). Detailed discussions of this matter were, however, postponed to a resumed session in March 2003.

35. The 55th session of the World Health Assembly in May 2002 adopted Resolution WHA55.24, which stated in part:

4. *[The WHA] UNDERLINES that country ranges for appointments in the Secretariat should, in principle, be based on membership, equitable geographical representation, population criteria, and balance between developed and developing countries, with less emphasis on financial contributions to the Organization;*

5. *REQUESTS the Director-General to ensure that the principles of equitable geographical representation, gender balance and a balance of experts from developed and developing countries are respected in making appointments in the Secretariat...*

8. *REQUESTS the Director-General to submit a report to the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly on implementation of this resolution, including different alternatives to the current representation formula in the Secretariat.^{2/}*

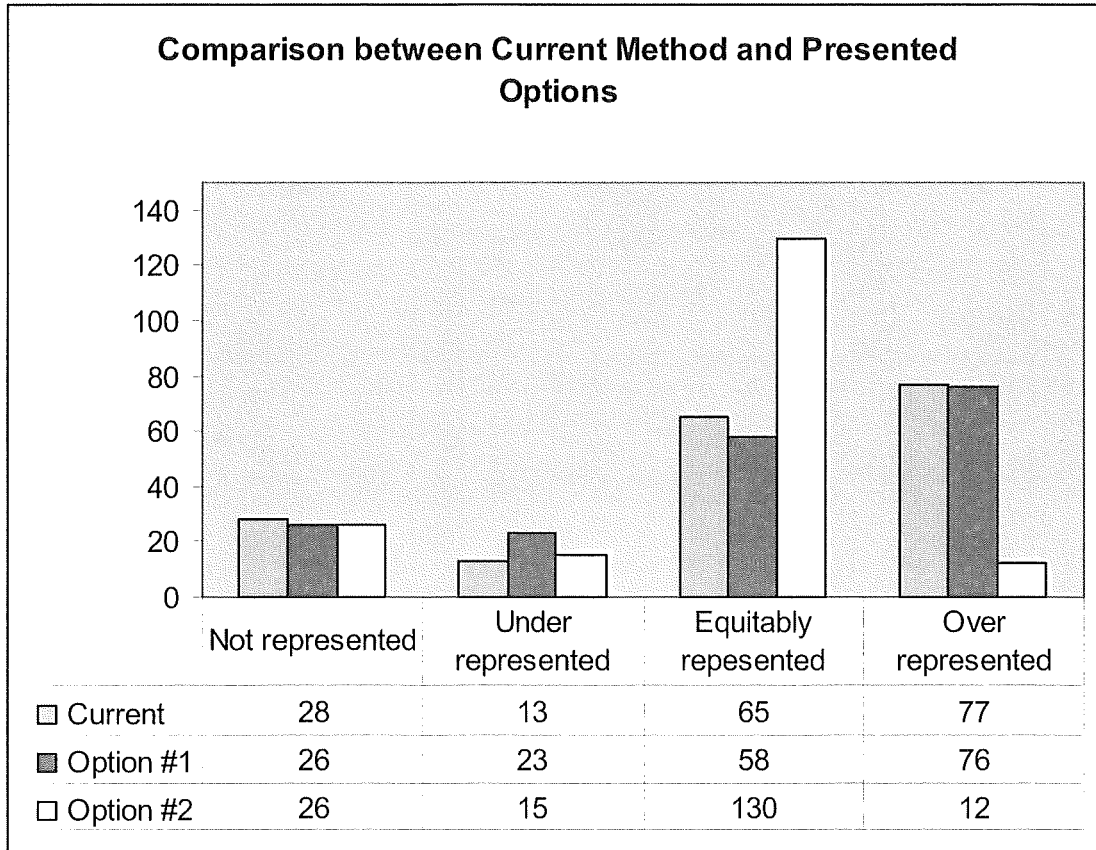
The outcome of the above-mentioned discussions is not known at this writing. The secretariat will provide an oral update at the time of the Council’s consideration of this matter.

VII. Conclusion

36. The impact of the two options discussed in this paper, as compared to the methodology currently in use in FAO is summarized in the following chart:

^{2/}

Copies of these UN and WHO documents will be made available for delegations at the documents desk.



37. In light of the foregoing, the Council may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate to amend the geographic distribution methodology and, if so, to provide guidance to the secretariat regarding which elements of the options outlined above should be included in the development of a new geographic distribution formula.