



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

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

# COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## Twenty-fourth Session

Rome, 29 September - 3 October 2014

### Proposed Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Agriculture

#### Executive Summary

At its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session in May 2012, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) was invited to review its Rules of Procedure. The Committee did not formally adopt the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure but agreed to "enlarge the COAG Bureau from three to seven Members with one representative from each Regional Group"<sup>1</sup> and mandated the expanded Bureau to develop a proposal for adoption at the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee.

The COAG Bureau met several times and, through negotiation and consultation with its Members during the entire intersessional period, agreed on a number of amendments. This document presents the results of the COAG Bureau's work and the proposed amendments to the COAG Rules of Procedure.

#### Guidance sought from the Committee

The Committee is invited to review the proposal to amend its current Rules of Procedure set out in the Basic Texts, Volume 1, Part K and adopt the amendments to Rule I – "Officers"- , Rule II – Sessions- and Rule VI – "Reports"- .

*Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:*

Robert G. Guei

Secretary of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)

Tel: +39-06 570 54920

<sup>1</sup> Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture, para. 27.

This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
Other documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



m1075e

## I. Introduction and Background

1. In line with the actions regarding the Technical Committees included in the 2008 Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA)<sup>2</sup>, the Council at its 139<sup>th</sup> Session<sup>3</sup> invited the Technical Committees to examine their Rules of Procedure, taking into account the considerations outlined in document CCLM 90/2 and the recommendations of the Report of the 90<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). The Council acknowledged that authority to amend the Rules of Procedure was vested in the Technical Committees but it also stressed the desirability of consistency among the Rules of Procedure of all Technical Committees.

2. In October 2010, the Committee on Forestry (COFO) amended Rules I (Officers), II (Sessions) and VI (Records and papers) of its Rules of Procedure. On the issue of the composition of its Steering Committee, COFO amended Rule I providing that it is composed of a Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons corresponding to the six Chairpersons of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions. Regarding the functions of COFO's Steering Committee, a new paragraph was added to that same Rule (paragraph 4) providing that: "*Between sessions, the Steering Committee shall facilitate consultation with Members in relation to agendas, formats and other matters, and perform other actions relevant for ensuring preparations for the sessions.*"<sup>4</sup>

3. In May 2012, the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) amended Rule I (Officers) of its Rules of Procedure. Concerning the composition of its Bureau, the CCP enlarged it from three to seven Members (a Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons). Regarding its functions, it established that: "*The Bureau shall, between sessions, represent the membership of the Committee, perform functions related to the preparation of sessions of the Committee, and perform such other functions as may be delegated to it by the Committee.*"<sup>5</sup>

4. In July 2012, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) amended Rules I (Officers), II (Sessions), IV (Agenda and documents) and VI (Records and papers) of its Rules of Procedure. On the issue of the composition of its Bureau (formerly called Steering Committee), COFI amended Rule I in order to enlarge it from six to seven Members (a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson and five other Vice-Chairpersons). Regarding the functions of COFI's Bureau, a new paragraph was added to Rule I (paragraph 2) providing that: "*Between sessions, in relation to agendas, formats and other matters, and to perform other actions relevant for ensuring preparations for the sessions, the representatives of the regional groups in the Bureau shall consult with Members in a timely way.*"

5. At its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session in May 2012, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) was invited to review its Rules of Procedure. Not agreeing on all proposed amendments, the Committee did not formally adopt the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure but agreed to "*enlarge the COAG Bureau from three to seven Members with one representative from each Regional Group*"<sup>6</sup> and mandated the expanded Bureau to develop a consensual proposal for adoption at the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee.

6. The COAG Bureau met several times during the intersessional period to consider the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure. During the process, it was considered that in view of the operational similarities between COAG and CCP a harmonized approach to the revision of Rule 1 – Officers of both Committees would be advisable. To this effect, the Bureaus of COAG and CCP agreed to set up an informal joint working group which would examine four elements: a) Size and composition of the Bureau; b) Election of the members of the Bureau *ad personam* or as Member Nations; c) Appointment of a first Vice-Chairperson; and d) Rotation of the office of the Chairperson, and develop a consolidated and consensual proposal for Rule 1-Officers. The proposed amendments by the informal joint working group to Rule I and other amendments to Rules II and VI of the Rules of

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Thirty-fifth (Special) Session of the Conference (Rome, 18-21 November 2008), Appendix E, Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal, paragraph 26 and actions 2.56-2.65.

<sup>3</sup> CL 139/REP paras. 55-56

<sup>4</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Forestry, Basic Texts, Volume I, PART J

<sup>5</sup> Report of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems, para. 24 and Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Commodity Problems, Basic Texts, Volume I, Part H.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture, para. 27.

Procedure of the Committee, contained in this document, have been subsequently reviewed and endorsed by the COAG Bureau.

## **II. Issues for consideration**

### **A. Size and composition of the Bureau**

7. In line with guidance provided by CCLM at its 90<sup>th</sup> Session to ensure equal representation of all the regional groups, COFI, COFO and CCP amended their respective Rules of Procedure to broaden membership to seven Members (one per regional group). At its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session in 2012, COAG also agreed to establish a Bureau of seven Members.<sup>7</sup>

### **B. Election of the Members of the Bureau *ad personam* or as Member Nations**

8. The Committee is invited to consider the proposal whereby the Chairperson would be elected by the Committee in his/her capacity while the other six Members of the Bureau would be elected as Member Nations. The election as Member Nations will ensure more flexibility in the management and functioning of the Bureau as it allows for an easier and quicker replacement of Bureau Members when needed, and increase participation as well as representation. Regarding the position of Chairperson, while s/he would still be elected by the Committee *ad personam*, the inclusion of a provision on ensuring rotation of the office among FAO's seven regions is proposed. COFI and COFO have already inserted a similar provision in Rule I of their respective Rules of Procedure. CCP will be considering a similar amendment to its Rules of Procedure concerning this matter at its next 70<sup>th</sup> Session.<sup>8</sup>

The proposed amendment is reflected in Rule I.1 and Rule I.2.

### **C. Appointment of a first Vice-Chairperson**

9. The importance of the function of a Vice-Chairperson who can temporarily replace the Chairperson in an automatic manner when and as needed was recognized by the Bureau. It is proposed that the First Vice-Chairperson be nominated by the Bureau rather than elected by the Committee with the understanding that this function would not have implications for the election of the Chairperson for the next term of office.

The proposed amendment is reflected in Rule I.5 and Rule I.6.

### **D. Functions of the Bureau**

10. Following the IPA call for an enhanced role of the Chairpersons of the technical committees, the CCLM examined the issue of the functions of the Bureaus of the technical committees and building upon the Rules of Procedure of CCP, COFI and COFO recommended that consideration be given to establishing Bureaus that would act both during and between sessions. The proposed provision on the functions of the Bureau is consistent with the approach followed by CCP, COFI and COFO.

The proposed amendment is reflected in Rule I.3.

### **E. Secretary of the Committee**

11. Rule I of all the Technical Committees (CCP, COFI, COFO) specifies that "*the Director-General of the Organization shall appoint a Secretary, who shall perform such duties as the work of the Committee may require*". It is therefore proposed to add this sentence at the end of Rule I in paragraph 7.

---

<sup>7</sup> Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture, para. 27.

<sup>8</sup> Rome, 6-8 October 2014.

## **F. Reports**

12. In order to implement IPA action 2.56 which indicated that Technical Committees would report to the Council on programme and budget matters and to the Conference on policy and regulatory matters, the Conference adopted at its Thirty-sixth Session amendments to the Constitution and to the General Rules of the Organization. The CCLM noted that the implementation of this action involved amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committees. The proposed amendments to paragraph 1 of Rule VI are in line with the text proposed by the CCLM.

## **III. Guidance sought from the Committee**

13. Based on the guidance given by the Council, the recommendations of the CCLM and the deliberations of the COAG Bureau, the Committee is invited to review and adopt the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure set forth in Annex 1 to this document, in accordance with Rule IX – Amendment of Rules – of the COAG Rules of Procedures which reads as follows:

*“The Committee may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, amend its Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendment is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization. No proposal for the amendment of these Rules shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Committee, unless notice thereof has been dispatched by the Director-General to Members of the Committee at least 30 days before the opening of the session.”*

## ANNEX 1 - Proposed Amendments

### K. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

In the text of the draft amendments reproduced below, the proposal regarding deletions are indicated using ~~struck out text~~ and the proposals for insertions are indicated using underlined italics.

#### Rule I

##### Officers

1. At the first session in each biennium, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, ~~a first Vice-Chairperson and six Members~~ a second Vice-Chairperson from among the representatives of its Members, who shall remain in office until the election of a new Chairperson and new Vice-Chairpersons, which collectively shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee. The representatives of the elected Members shall act as Vice-Chairpersons.
2. When electing the Chairperson, the Committee should ensure the equitable rotation of the office among the regions. The Chairperson shall not be eligible for election for two consecutive terms in the same office. The term of office shall expire at the end of the Committee meeting where the election of a new Chairperson is held.
3. The Bureau shall, between sessions, represent the membership of the Committee, perform functions related to the preparation of sessions of the Committee, and perform such other functions as may be delegated to it by the Committee.
4. The Chairperson and the Members shall be elected for a period of two years and remain in office until the election of a new Chairperson and new Members at the end of the next session of the Committee. The Chairperson and six Members shall be elected from the following regions: one each from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America and South West Pacific.
5. The Bureau shall appoint a first Vice-Chairperson from among its six Members. S/he shall remain in office until the election of a new first Vice-Chairperson. If due to any reason, the Chairperson is prevented from exercising his or her functions for the remainder of the term of office, these functions shall be exercised by the first Vice-Chairperson for the remainder of the Chairperson's term of office. The Bureau shall appoint a new first Vice-Chairperson from among its Members for the remainder of the Vice-Chairperson's term of office.
- 2.6. The Chairperson, or in his or her absence, ~~one of the first~~ one of the first Vice-Chairpersons, shall preside at meetings of the Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event of the Chairperson and the first Vice-Chairpersons not being able to preside at a meeting, the ~~Bureau Committee~~ shall appoint one of the other five Vice-Chairpersons to take the chair or, failing this, the Committee shall appoint a representative of ~~one of~~ its Members to take the chair.
7. The Director-General of the Organization shall appoint a secretary, who shall perform such duties as the work of the Committee may require.

#### Rule II

##### Sessions

1. The Committee shall hold sessions as provided in Rule XXXII, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the General Rules of the Organization.
2. Any number of separate meetings may be held during each session of the Committee.

3. Sessions of the Committee shall normally be held once in each biennium, preferably early in *non-Conference* years. Sessions shall be convened by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee taking into account any proposals made by the Committee.
4. If required, the Committee may hold additional sessions on the call of the Director-General in consultation with its Chairperson, or on request submitted in writing to the Director-General by the majority of the Members of the Committee.
5. Notice of the date and place of each session shall normally be communicated at least two months in advance of the session to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization, and to such non-member States and international organizations as may have been invited to attend the session.
6. Each Member of the Committee may appoint alternates, associates and advisers to its representative on the Committee.
7. Presence of representatives of a majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for any formal action by the Committee.

### **Rule III**

#### **Attendance**

1. Participation of international organizations in an observer capacity in the work of the Committee shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization<sup>9</sup>, as well as by the general rules of the Organization on relations with international organizations.
2. Attendance by non-member States of the Organization at sessions of the Committee shall be governed by the principles relating to the granting of observer status to nations adopted by the Conference.
  - a) Meetings of the Committee shall be held in public, unless the Committee decides to meet in private for discussion of any items on its agenda.
  - b) Subject to the provisions of subparagraph (c) below, any Member Nation not represented on the Committee, any Associate Member or any non-member State invited to attend in an observer capacity a session of the Committee may submit memoranda and participate without vote in any discussion at a public or private meeting of the Committee.
  - c) In exceptional circumstances, the Committee may decide to restrict attendance at private meetings to the representative or observer of each Member Nation of the Organization.

### **Rule IV**

#### **Agenda and Documents**

1. The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, shall prepare a provisional agenda and shall normally circulate it at least two months in advance of the session to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and to all non-member States and international organizations invited to attend the session.
2. All Member Nations of the Organization and Associate Members may request the Director-General normally not less than 30 days before the proposed date of the session to insert an item in the provisional agenda. The Director-General shall thereupon circulate the proposed item to all Members of the Committee, together with any necessary papers.

---

<sup>9</sup> It is understood that in this context the terms "Constitution" and "the General Rules of the Organization" are to be taken to include all general rules and policy statements formally adopted by the Conference and intended to supplement the Constitution and the Rules, such as the "Statement of principles relating to the granting of observer status to nations", and the general rules regarding relationships between the Organization and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

3. The Committee in session may by general consent amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item, provided that no matter referred to it by the Council or on request of the Conference be omitted from the agenda.

4. Documents not already circulated shall be dispatched with the provisional agenda, or as soon as possible thereafter.

## **Rule V**

### **Voting**

1. Each Member of the Committee shall have one vote.

2. The decisions of the Committee shall be ascertained by the Chairperson, who shall resort, upon the request of one or more Members, to a vote, in which case the pertinent provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

## **Rule VI**

### **Reports**

1. At each session, the Committee shall approve a report embodying its views, recommendations and decisions, including, when requested, a statement of minority views. *The Committee shall make every effort to ensure that recommendations are precise and can be implemented. Policy and regulatory matters shall be referred to the Conference whereas programme and budget matters shall be referred to the Council.* Any recommendations adopted by the Committee which affect the programme or finances of the Organization or concerning legal or constitutional matters shall be reported to the Council with the comments of the appropriate subsidiary committees of the Council. ~~The reports of the Committee shall also be placed before the Conference.~~

2. Reports of sessions shall be circulated to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and to non-member States invited to attend the session, as well as to interested international organizations entitled to be represented at the session.

3. The comments of the Committee on the report of any of its subsidiary bodies and, if one or more Members of the Committee so request, the views of those Members shall be incorporated into the Committee's report. If any Member so requests, this part of the Committee's report shall be circulated as soon as possible by the Director-General to the States or international organizations which normally receive the reports of the subsidiary body in question. The Committee may also request the Director-General, in transmitting the report and records of its proceedings to Members, to call particular attention to its views and comments on the report of any of its subsidiary bodies.

4. The Committee shall determine the procedures in regard to press communiqués concerning its activities.

## **Rule VII**

### **Subsidiary Bodies**

1. In accordance with Rule XXXII, paragraph 12 of the General Rules of the Organization, the Committee may, on an exceptional basis, establish subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies where it considers that such action is conducive to facilitating its own work and will not adversely affect the multidisciplinary consideration of questions submitted to the Committee for examination. The Committee may include in the membership of such subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies Member Nations that are not Members of the Committee and Associate Members. The Council may admit to membership of such subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies established by the Committee States which, while not Member Nations or Associate Members of the Organization, are members of the United Nations, any of its specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency.

2. Before taking a decision on the establishment of any subsidiary or *ad hoc* body, the Committee shall examine the administrative and financial implications of such a decision, in the light of a report to be submitted by the Director-General.

3. The Committee shall define the terms of reference, composition and, as far as possible, the duration of the mandate of each subsidiary or *ad hoc* body. Such subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies shall report to the Committee. The reports of the subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies shall be made available for information to all members of the subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies concerned, all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization, non-member States invited to the session of the subsidiary or *ad hoc* bodies, and to interested international organizations entitled to attend such sessions.

### **Rule VIII**

#### **Suspension of Rules**

The Committee may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, decide to suspend any of the foregoing Rules of Procedure, provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given and that the action contemplated is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization.<sup>10</sup> Such notice may be waived if no Member objects.

### **Rule IX**

#### **Amendment of Rules**

The Committee may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, amend its Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendment is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization. No proposal for the amendment of these Rules shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Committee, unless notice thereof has been dispatched by the Director-General to Members of the Committee at least 30 days before the opening of the session.

---

<sup>10</sup> See footnote to Rule III, paragraph 1.