



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
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

Hundred and Fourth Session

Rome, 13 - 15 March 2017

"PaperSmart" approaches and editorial adjustments to the Basic Texts

I. Introduction

1. At its 100th Session, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (hereinafter "CCLM or "the Committee") reviewed some clerical errors and editorial inconsistencies in the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) which could be corrected.¹ At that time, it was considered appropriate to bring a number of proposed corrections and adjustments to the attention of the CCLM for endorsement. Some of the adjustments were consequential to amendments to the Constitution which had been made further to the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal and were endorsed by the CCLM.² Other proposals were deemed to involve issues of substance.

2. One of the proposed adjustments related to Rule XXV, paragraph 6 (a) of the GRO which reads as follows:

"The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, and having regard to suggestions made by any Member Nation or Associate Member acting within the limits of its status, shall prepare a provisional agenda and dispatch it to Member Nations and Associate Members by airmail not less than 60 days in advance of the session. Documentation shall be circulated with the provisional agenda or as soon as possible thereafter."

3. It was proposed to delete "by airmail", in light of the increased reliance by the Organization on modern communication technology for the dispatch of the provisional agenda to Member Nations and Associate Members. The CCLM agreed to reconsider the matter at a future session.³

¹ See CCLM 100/4 Rev.1 "Correction of errors and editorial adjustments to the Basic Texts".

² See FAO Conference Resolution 1/2008.

³ See Council Document CL 151/2, paragraphs 13-15.

II. The “PaperSmart” Approach

4. The Organization is currently in the final stages of development of the new FAO Members Official Contact System (MOCS) platform to support the PaperSmart approach to the production and dispatch of official correspondence through the FAO Members Gateway. The PaperSmart approach is in line with measures presently being introduced throughout the United Nations System to increase efficiency and accessibility and reduce the amount of paper used for documentation and correspondence.⁴ It was successfully implemented by the Organization at the recently concluded 155th Session of the Council (December 2016), which applied a “print-on-demand” approach for all documents.

5. Following the example of the majority of United Nations bodies which have already adopted a “PaperSmart” approach to correspondence, the Organization intends to move away from dispatching hardcopy (paper) correspondence to both Permanent Representatives and Government officials based in the capitals. Instead, correspondence would be uploaded electronically to the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway. This would reach recipients in real time and be accessible to all Government officials authorized to access the “mail box” of the Member concerned, through the “My messages” page, which also offers an archive of correspondence issued by the Organization.

6. The progressive implementation of the PaperSmart approach will result in the increased use of modern communication technology to dispatch letters of invitation and other official meeting documentation for Sessions of the Governing and Statutory Bodies of the Organization. Consequently, this will result in the elimination of “airmail” as a method of dispatch, including for the letters of invitation (transmitting the provisional agenda) to the FAO Conference and FAO Council.

III. Proposed Amendment to the General Rules of the Organization

7. Against this background, it is proposed to formally amend Rule XXV, paragraph 6(a) of the GRO as follows:

“The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, and having regard to suggestions made by any Member Nation or Associate Member acting within the limits of its status, shall prepare a provisional agenda and dispatch it to Member Nations and Associate Members ~~by airmail~~ not less than 60 days in advance of the session. Documentation shall be circulated with the provisional agenda or as soon as possible thereafter.”

8. This is the only Rule in the Basic Texts which refers to a specific means of dispatch for official documents.

9. Consistent with the PaperSmart approach, it is anticipated that wherever reference is made in the Basic Texts to the dispatch,⁵ circulation,⁶ or communication⁷ of documents to Members, such action will include distribution by electronic means. It is also anticipated that references in the Basic Texts to procedural steps involving the transmittal of information by the Organization shall be deemed to include distribution by electronic means.

⁴ The United Nations was responding to General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/285, which called for enhanced use of modern technology and information technology to enhance efficiency in the working methods of the United Nations.

⁵ E.g. General Rules of the Organization Rules I, paragraph 3, II, paragraph 1, 3 and 9, III, XLIX, IV, VIII, etc.

⁶ E.g. General Rules of the Organization Rules IV, paragraph 2, XI, paragraph 2, XVIII, paragraph 2; Rules of procedure of the Programme Committee, Rule III, paragraph 1; etc.

⁷ E.g. Rules of procedure of the Council of FAO, Rule II, paragraph 4, Rule VI, paragraph 2 (Basic Texts, Section D); Rules of procedure of the Programme Committee, Rule III, paragraph 6; etc.

IV. Related Considerations

10. The United Nations General Assembly has paid close attention to the potential of modern technologies to enhance the effectiveness of servicing intergovernmental processes.

11. Recently the expansion of modern information and communication technology (ICT) tools, including the proliferation of mobile devices (laptops, tablets or smartphones), has opened new opportunities for managing conference documentation in a more effective and cost-efficient way and, at the same time, facilitating the flow of information.

12. Meeting participants increasingly expect digital access to information. Also, in applying the PaperSmart approach, the Organization is building a foundation for the future, enhancing its capacity to respond to global digital trends. This will allow materials (reports, documents, etc.) for Sessions of the Governing and Statutory Bodies to be readily accessible on a permanent basis, facilitating preparations for those Sessions, including by simplifying engagement of Government officials in the capitals.

V. Suggested Action by the Committee

13. The CCLM is invited to review this document, in light of the practice followed to date and the considerations set out above, and make such observations as it deems appropriate.

14. Subject to such views as it may hold, the CCLM is, in particular, invited to endorse the draft Conference Resolution for the amendment of Rule XXV, paragraph 6(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, and to forward it to the Council for endorsement and subsequent transmission to the Conference.

Conference Resolution __/2017

Amendment to Rule XXV, paragraph 6(a) of the Rules of the Organization

THE CONFERENCE

Recognizing that the enhanced use of modern technology and information technology, including through the implementation of a PaperSmart approach, would support the efforts of the Governing, Statutory and other bodies of the Organization to enhance the efficiency of their working methods;

Acknowledging that the FAO Members Gateway portal provides secure, password-protected, web-based access to documents, statements and other meeting information in all six (6) official languages of the Organization;

Having taken note of the views of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), at its Hundred-and-Fourth Session (Rome, 13-15 March 2017) on the proposed amendment to Rule XXV of the General Rules of the Organization;

Considering that the Council, at its Hundred and Fifty-sixth Session (Rome, 24-28 April 2017), endorsed the proposed amendment;

1. **Decides** to adopt the following amendment to Rule XXV, paragraph 6(a) of the General Rules of the Organization:

“Rule XXV

Sessions of the Council

6.

(a) The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, and having regard to suggestions made by any Member Nation or Associate Member acting within the limits of its status, shall prepare a provisional agenda and dispatch it to Member Nations and Associate Members ~~by airmail~~ not less than 60 days in advance of the session. Documentation shall be circulated with the provisional agenda or as soon as possible thereafter”.

2. **Further decides** that, whenever the General Rules of the Organization or the Rules of Procedure of Governing or Statutory Bodies refer to dispatch, circulation, or communication of correspondence and documents in connection with meetings, or to any procedural steps involving the transmittal of information by the Organization, those references shall include distribution by electronic means, including uploading on dedicated platforms and other means using widely available modern information technology.