



# COUNCIL

## NOTE ON THE METHODS OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL

1. The text of this Note, originally adopted by the Council at its Sixtieth Session in June 1973<sup>1</sup>, was updated at its Hundred and Nineteenth Session in November 2000<sup>2</sup>. As a result of amendments to the Basic Texts adopted by the Conference at its Thirty-sixth Session in November 2009, the Note was updated again by the Council at its Hundred and Fortieth Session in November 2010, in light of the recommendations made by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at its Ninety-first Session in September 2010<sup>3</sup>.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

2. As the executive organ of the Organization, the Council shall, between sessions of the Conference, act on behalf of the Conference and make decisions on matters specifically entrusted to it, taking into account the advice of the Programme and Finance Committees as might be necessary. In particular, the Council should:

- I) Regarding the world food and agriculture situation and related matters –
  - a) draw up a provisional agenda for review by the Conference of the state of food and agriculture;
  - b) examine and advise on issues pertaining to the world food and agriculture situation and related matters, especially urgent issues calling for action by the Conference, the Regional Conferences, the Technical Committees or the Director-General.
- II) Regarding the current and prospective activities of the Organization –
  - a) consider and make recommendations to the Conference on the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, including on the level of the budget;

<sup>1</sup> CL 60/REP, paras 170-179 and Appendix G.

<sup>2</sup> CL 119/REP, para 77 and Appendix D.

<sup>3</sup> [Add reference to CCLM doc].

- b) decide on any required adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget, in the light of the decisions of the Conference on the budget level;
  - c) review the reports on programme and budget matters of the Committee on Commodity Problems, the Committee on Fisheries, the Committee on Forestry, the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on World Food Security;
  - d) review the reports on programme and budget matters of the Regional Conferences.
3. The Council should focus on its functions relating to administrative matters and financial management of the Organization, as well as constitutional matters, including making recommendations to the Conference on amendments to the Basic Texts of the Organization.
4. The Council should also elect members of Programme Committee, Finance Committee and CCLM, and propose candidates for the offices of the Conference.
5. In reviewing the activities of its subsidiary bodies, the Council should ensure that:
- a) they give the necessary attention to the matters falling within their respective mandates;
  - b) they do not duplicate each other's work; and
  - c) their discussions are not repeated in the Council, except when this is necessary to enable a decision to be reached.

#### **AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION**

6. The Provisional Agenda should be issued together with the invitation letters 60 days before the date of commencement of the Council Session and documents for Council sessions should be issued in sufficient time for Members to examine them before the session (see paragraph 9 below), and in a form that shall facilitate the Council's consideration.
7. A Provisional Annotated Agenda should be issued prior to the Council Session providing under each proposed agenda item the following information:
- a) the documentation required for the discussion of that item;
  - b) an indication whether the item is submitted to Council for decision, discussion or information.
8. The length of Council documents should normally not exceed 5,000 words. All documents should be issued in the languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).
9. Unless the timing of the sessions of the bodies concerned makes it impossible, all documents should be dispatched at least four weeks before the opening of the session in question.
10. Sessions of other bodies whose reports must be considered by the Council should, as far as possible, be held in sufficient time to meet the deadline in the previous paragraph.

## CONDUCT OF DEBATE

11. The summaries contained in the documents should provide adequate introductory material. Oral introductions should be concise and highlight any important new developments that have occurred since the documents were issued.
12. The Chairpersons of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and the CCLM should be invited to introduce their reports.
13. Lengthy and/or repetitious statements should be avoided and speakers should not restate views already expressed by others, unless extended debate is required to develop a consensus. In these cases, speakers should confine themselves to indicating their agreement with a previous speaker, and not repeat what has already been said.
14. In respect of items on which a decision is required, if preliminary debate indicates that there is likely to be difficulty in reaching agreement, the Independent Chairperson should suspend the debate and allow for informal consultations or set up a sessional working party to examine the matter and make recommendations to the Plenary.
15. With the exception of the provisions of the previous paragraph, debate on any item should normally be completed before debate on the next item begins.
16. Information items or documents will be listed at the end of the Agenda. Any delegation wishing to refer to these items or documents may do so under the agenda item “Any other Matters”.
17. Committee Chairpersons and the Secretariat should have the right of reply to the points made in the debate.
18. At the end of the debate on each item, the Chairperson should as far as possible highlight the main trends apparent in the debate. This should be taken into account by, but should not be binding on, the Drafting Committee.

## COUNCIL REPORTS AND RECORDS

19. Verbatim records shall be kept of Council Plenary meetings and accordingly Council reports, while recording in an unambiguous manner all decisions reached by the Council, should be as concise as possible.
20. A draft report should normally be prepared by a Drafting Committee with Secretariat assistance.
21. The reports of the Council should be written in clear and unambiguous terms to avoid potential misunderstandings on the type of follow-up action required.
22. Reports should make clear reference to the conclusions, decisions and recommendations on matters discussed by the Council. The action taken by the Council should be clearly specified using the formula “The Council agreed/decided/recommended/requested/urged, ...” and the verb should be underlined in the report.
23. If the views of “some” or “many” members are included in reports, the verb should not be underlined to ensure that they are not mistaken for decisions of the Council. To the extent possible, these expressions or variations thereof (“a few”, “several”) should however be avoided.
24. Reports should not generally record the views of individual delegations by name, since the verbatim records include all interventions made in Plenary meetings.

25. The Secretary-General of the Conference and Council should provide the Council at each session with an information document regarding the implementation of decisions taken at the preceding session.

#### **ADHERENCE TO THE METHODS OF WORK**

26. These methods of work should be available to delegations during the sessions of the Council.

27. The Chairperson should draw this Note to the attention of Members at each session, and at the first meeting of the Drafting Committee its members should be apprised of the guidelines listed in the section "Council Reports and Records" (paras. 19 to 25 above).

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**ANNEX**  
**RULES APPLICABLE TO COUNCIL PROCEDURES**

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The main rules pertaining to the structure, functions and procedures of the Council are to be found in Article V of the FAO Constitution, in Rules XXII to XXV of the General Rules of the Organization, and in the Council's Rules of Procedure. However, other provisions of the *Basic Texts* of the Organization are also relevant. Therefore, a detailed list of the appropriate subject matters and relevant provisions is provided below.<sup>4</sup>

AGENDA	GRO XXV.6 ; RC II
AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS	Const. XIV, XV; GRO XXI
ALTERNATES	Const. V.1
CHAIRPERSON	
• Appointment	Const. V.2; GRO II.2(c)(viii); GRO X.2(j); GRO XII.10(a); GRO XXIII
• Functions	GRO XXVI.6; GRO XXVII.6; RC I.2
• Nomination	GRO XXIII.1 (b); GRO XLIV
• Term of Office	GRO XXIII.1 (a)
• Voting Rights	GRO XXIII.2; RC IV.2
COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS	
• Sessional	GRO XXV.10 ; RC V
• Standing	Const. V.6; GRO XXVI; GRO XXVII; GRO XXVIII.3; GRO XXIX; GRO XXX; GRO XXXI; GRO XXXII; GRO XXXIII; GRO XXXIV
• Other	Const. VI(9); Const. XIV.2, 3(a)
COMPETENCE OF	see FUNCTIONS
COMPOSITION	see ELECTION OF
CONVENING OF	GRO XXXVIII.2 (b); see also SESSIONS
CONVENTIONS	see AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS
DECISIONS OF	Const. V.5; see also ELECTION OF, PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS, VOTING

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<sup>4</sup> "Const." stands for Constitution; "GRO" for General Rules of the Organization; "RC" for Rules of Procedure of the Council; "Vol. II" for Volume II of the FAO Basic Texts.

DELEGATES	see REPRESENTATIVES
DOCUMENTATION	GRO XXV.7 (a); RC VI
ELECTION OF	GRO XXII; see also PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS, QUORUM, VOTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference</li> </ul>	Const. V.1; GRO II.2(c)(vii); GRO II.4(d)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election Procedure</li> </ul>	GRO XII.9,10; GRO XXII.10(g)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Committee Recommendations</li> </ul>	GRO X.2 (i)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership and Eligibility</li> </ul>	Const. II.9; Const. V.1; GRO XXII.4, 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations</li> </ul>	GRO XXII.10 (a-e)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term of Office</li> </ul>	GRO XXII.1, 9
EXPENSES OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR TRAVELLING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reimbursement of</li> </ul>	GRO XXV.6; RC VII
FUNCTIONS	Const. V.3; GRO XXIV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities of the Organization, Current and Prospective</li> </ul>	GRO XXIV.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative and Financial Matters</li> </ul>	GRO XXIV.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional Matters</li> </ul>	GRO XXIV.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Agriculture Situation</li> </ul>	GRO XXIV.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General</li> </ul>	GRO XXIV, Preamble; GRO XXIV.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of Conference Sessions</li> </ul>	GRO VII.1; GRO XXIV.5(c)
MEMBERSHIP	see ELECTION OF
NOMINATIONS	see ELECTION OF
PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS BY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Members</li> </ul>	GRO XXV.9(c); Vol. II, Part L
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director-General</li> </ul>	Const. VII.5; GRO XXV.13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Organizations including United Nations and Specialized Agencies</li> </ul>	GRO XXV.8; RC III.2; RC VI.2; Vol. II, Part Q
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Nations not Members of the Council</li> </ul>	GRO XXV.9; Vol. II, Part L
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assimilation Clause</li> <li>– Competence</li> <li>– Holding of Office</li> <li>– Membership Rights</li> <li>– Quorum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Const. II.3; GRO XL Const. II.4-7; GRO XLII Const. II.9; GRO XLIV Const. II.8-10; GRO XLIV; GRO XLV.2 see this heading

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– Voting	Const. II.10; GRO XLV
• Non-Member Nations	GRO XXV.11; Vol. II
POWERS	see FUNCTIONS
PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS	GRO XII.1-29
QUORUM	GRO XII.2, 13(a); GRO LIV.1; RC II.2
RAPPORTEURS	GRO XVI.2
RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS	RC VI
REPORT OF COUNCIL SESSION	GRO II.2(c)(v); GRO XXIV.5(f); GRO XXV.12; RC VI.2
REPRESENTATIVES	Const. V.1
RESIGNATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS	see WITHDRAWAL
RULES OF PROCEDURE	
• Adoption	Const. V.4
• Amendments	RC VIII.1
• Suspension	RC VIII.2
SESSIONS	GRO XXV; RC II
TERM OF OFFICE	see ELECTION OF
URGENT MATTERS	GRO XXV.14
VICE-CHAIRPERSON	RC I
VOTING	Const. V.5; GRO XII; RC IV see also PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS BY MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS
WITHDRAWAL AND RESIGNATION	GRO XXII.7, 8, 9,