Reports of the European Commission on Agriculture (known as European Committee on Agricultural Technology from 1949 to 1952 and as European Committee on Agriculture until 1956) are as follows:

2. First Session Rome, 26-30 September 1949
4. Third Session Rome, 25-28 June 1951
5. Fourth Session Rome, 3-6 June 1952
6. Fifth Session Rome, 26-29 May 1953
7. Sixth Session Rome, 14-18 June 1954
9. Eighth Session Rome, 7-11 May 1956
10. Ninth Session Rome, 17-21 June 1957
11. Tenth Session Rome, 19-23 May 1958
15. Fourteenth Session Rome, 17-21 May 1965
17. Sixteenth Session Rome, 23-26 October 1968
19. Eighteenth Session Rome, 8-12 May 1972
22. Twenty-first Session Rome, 19-23 June 1978
25. Twenty-fourth Session Innsbruck, Austria, 18-22 June 1984
26. Twenty-fifth Session Chania, Greece, 8-12 June 1987
27. Twenty-sixth Session Porto, Portugal, 23-26 May 1989
28. Twenty-seventh Session Herrsching, Germany, 1-5 July 1991
29. Twenty-eighth Session Valletta, Malta, 27 September – 1 October 1993
30. Twenty-ninth Session Bled, Slovenia, 2-6 October 1995
31. Thirtieth Session Nitra, Slovakia, 8-11 October 1997
32. Thirty-first Session Rome, 12-14 October 1999
33. Thirty-second Session Rome, 7-8 March 2002
34. Thirty-third Session Rome, 1-2 March 2004
35. Thirty-fourth Session Riga, Latvia, 7 June 2006
36. Thirty-fifth Session Innsbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirty-fifth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held in Innsbruck, Austria, on 25 June 2008 under the Chairpersonship of Mr Jean-Jacques Soula (France).

2. The List of Participants is given in Appendix I to this Report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

3. The Chairperson opened the Session and recalled that the Session was taking place within the context of a revised mandate, as adopted by the 119th Session of the FAO Council, and its new role as a technical preparatory meeting for the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC). He also recalled that the technical items of the Agenda, particularly Items 4 and 5 had been defined by the European Regional Group and that a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the Session would be submitted to the 26th FAO Regional Conference for Europe meeting the following day.

4. On behalf of FAO, Ms Maria Kadlecikova, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Austria for its hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Session. She emphasized the importance of Agenda Items 4, 5 and 6, for the European and Central Asian rural sector, stressing that knowledge exchange and relevant capacity-building were major areas where FAO was offering technical assistance in the Region. Moreover, FAO’s engagement in the Delivery as One initiative within the United Nations System reform as well as in strengthening the work of the three Rome-based agencies in the Region was considered important for enhancing FAO’s contribution to the reform process. Furthermore, the activities of the ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development would be an important contribution to rural development in the Region.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Commission adopted its Agenda, as given in Appendix II to this Report. In this connection, the Chairperson indicated that considering the fact that the duration of the Commission’s Session had been reduced to one day, time constraints might not allow for the Commission to adopt its Report. The Commission therefore endorsed the Chairperson’s proposal that, if necessary, and depending on the timing of the Commission’s debate, at the conclusion of Item 10 of its Agenda, the Commission would suspend its Session for approximately one hour in order to allow the Rapporteur to draft a summary of the conclusions of the day’s deliberations on which he/she would seek the Commission’s endorsement. In view of time limitations, this summary of conclusions would be prepared in English only. The summary would form the basis of an oral report to be made to the 26th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe by the Commission’s Rapporteur during the afternoon of the subsequent day (26 June 2008).

APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

6. Ms Agnes van der Hoeven-van Ardenne (Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations in Rome) was appointed Rapporteur of the Session.
THE ROLE OF FAO IN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION

7. This Item was introduced by Mr Anton Mangstl, Director of the Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building Division (KCE), FAO Headquarters. He underlined that development of a knowledge management strategy was under consideration in order to better coordinate and implement FAO’s knowledge-based activities. Attention was also being directed towards enhancing the flow of knowledge and information between Western European countries and the Economies in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

8. The Commission welcomed the document and recognized the important role of FAO as a knowledge organization. Emphasis was given to the view of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE), that the role of FAO in knowledge exchange and capacity-building was the strongest comparative advantage of the Organization, particularly for Europe and Central Asia countries.

9. The Commission underlined that a significant amount of knowledge input was dependent on the activities of Member Nations and involvement of the private sector. Therefore, the Commission encouraged the continuation of the progress made by FAO in the field of knowledge exchange and capacity-building in the Region, especially in collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating agriculture-related information and the gradual transformation towards a more active form of knowledge management.

10. Member Nations noted the use of best practices in knowledge exchange programmes and stressed the importance of subregional collaboration. Particularly, special attention to multilingual information tools and portals and the FAO-supported information exchange projects was welcomed.

11. The Commission stressed that an important development was the exchange of knowledge and information between developed countries of the European Union and countries in transition in the European Region including the five Central Asia countries covered by the Subregional Office in Ankara, and urged that FAO play a leading role both as a facilitator of this exchange and as a provider of knowledge.

12. It was noted that WAICENT had been successful in facilitating digital access to multilingual information on agriculture and rural issues, and that the information exchange platforms such as AgroWeb could serve as important models for successful cooperation. Emphasis was given to the importance of the availability of remote editing and updating of Web information through the management of centralized collaboration platforms and other research networks as in the case of ESCORENA. Information exchange platforms and networks could serve as a good example for the promotion of international collaboration including the strengthening of the activities of NGOs and the empowerment of civil society in potential unstable regions within Europe and Central Asia.

13. Member Nations opted for adjusting FAO’s work to the new institutional model and for adopting a more integrated approach with special emphasis on action.

14. The Commission endorsed the following recommendations:
   a) FAO should strengthen capacity-building and development skills on the basis of the assessed needs of individual countries;
   b) Capacity-building programmes should be prepared on the basis of documented good practices and private sector experience;

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1 ECA/35/08/2
c) The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia should take a leading role by enhancing the cooperation of regional universities and research institutions as well as in facilitating and improving the work of extension service staff in member countries;

d) FAO should also consider twinning arrangements in the distribution of information and in knowledge exchange;

e) The local knowledge exchange system in the Region should therefore focus on local focal points, and local scientists and information experts in order to incorporate good practices from the past in the Region and to identify local/regional centres of expertise.

FAO’s ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REFORMS:

15. The Item was introduced by Mr Raimund Jehle, ECA Secretary, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. He outlined that following the launch of the report of the High-Level Panel (HLP) on UN System-wide Coherence in November 2006, and particularly the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE), the collaboration of FAO within the “Delivering as One” initiative was considered important. This was particularly related to the strengthening of collaboration among the three Rome-based agencies: (FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) as a major contribution to enhancing FAO’s input in the United Nations System reform process.

16. The Commission highlighted that the United Nations System of operational activities was perceived as unique in its mandate that included poverty and hunger eradication, sustainable development, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation and peace building. The active role of FAO in the United Nations reform process together with the ongoing reform process based on the findings of the IEE was welcomed and considered essential in order to reinforce the role of food security and agriculture in the multilateral system.

17. Member Nations stressed that FAO has a strong comparative advantage in key areas of its activities, particularly in the provision of basic global data, and statistics; support in defining policies, adapted to the situation of each country; work in emergencies and rehabilitation and in determining standards; and support for global conventions on agricultural issues and food safety.

18. The Commission highlighted that FAO was envisaged as a key partner and the reference point in the United Nations System in the field of sustainable agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. The United Nations reform process was considered as an opportunity to further increase cooperation among the three Rome-based United Nations agencies including Bioversity International, and to combine their respective comparative advantages and complementarities, wherever possible.

19. Member Nations recognized the progress made in identifying areas of collaboration among the three agencies although further efforts should be made in the light of new emerging needs, for instance with increasing food prices in rural areas.

20. The Commission endorsed the list of recommendations as outlined in paragraphs 41 and 42 of the document ECA 35/08/3 which were then to be forwarded to the Regional Conference for Europe.

2 ECA/35/08/3
STATUS OF THE ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

21. The Item was introduced by Mr Tomasz Lonc, Secretary of the Regional Conference for Europe, Subregional Office for Europe and Central Asia. He drew attention to the unique platform that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) offered in the Europe and Central Asia Region since it was the only FAO statutory body in the European Region which specifically addressed gender issues. He also outlined actions to improve the themes and organization of the expert meetings (EMs).

22. The Commission unanimously recognized that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development was an important forum due to it being the only statutory body addressing gender issues in the Region. It emphasized the important commitments undertaken by FAO as part of the United Nations System to mainstream gender into projects and policies.

23. The Commission supported the continuation of the WPW activities. However there was disagreement regarding the funding resources to be used for the continuation of the activities. It was noted that the availability of non-staff resources from the Regular Programme, the multi-donor trust fund and the provision of a Junior Technical Officer financed by Hungary would contribute to the revival and expansion of the WPW activities.

24. Some Member Nations supported the proposal to focus the WPW Sessions and Expert Meetings on selected priority areas and, specifically, to shorten their duration.

25. The Commission welcomed the possibility of enhancing communication by approaching institutions and ministries beyond the Ministry of Agriculture.

26. Member Nations underlined the importance of FAO’s involvement in gender focused rural development projects and activities in the Central and Eastern European subregion and requested the expansion towards Central Asian countries.

27. The Commission requested the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development to take advantage of the introduction of the Russian language as one of the official languages of FAO since this would open up further opportunities for many people.

28. The Commission endorsed the conclusion and recommendation of the Chairperson that a special ECA WPW meeting should be convened by the end of 2008 in Rome to review and make recommendations on WPW matters recognizing the importance of gender issues in agricultural and rural areas in the European Region. This meeting should be organized by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in order to review the form and organization of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, and propose measures for improvements, including better communication between the WPW, the ECA and the WPW Secretariat in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

ADOPTION OF REVISED RULES OF PROCEDURE

29. The Chairperson recalled that at its 34th Session in 2006, the Commission requested the Executive Committee to review the Rules of Procedure of the ECA adopted at its 29th Session in 1995, in order to reflect the increase of Member Nations and to increase the composition of the Executive Committee. In addition, the Chairperson recalled that an amendment to Rule VIII was requested to reflect the actual reporting practice that the summary of conclusions were orally presented by the Rapporteur and the report prepared by the Secretariat.

30. The Commission endorsed the revision of the Rules of Procedure regarding Rule III and Rule VIII as presented in the document ECA 35/08/5, increasing the members of the Executive
Committee to six and allowing the preparation of summary conclusions instead of a draft report where necessary.


31. In accordance with Rule III of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission unanimously elected Mr Zohrab V. Malek, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to FAO, as Chairperson of the ECA for a term of four years. Ms Daniela Rotondaro, Permanent Representative of the Republic of San Marino to FAO was elected unanimously as Vice-Chairperson for a term of four years.

32. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for another term of two years, not eligible for re-election:

- Ms Daniela Moyzesová (Czech Republic)
- Mr Soren Skafte (Denmark)
- Ms Rita Mannella (Italy)

33. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for up to one additional two-year term:

- Russian Federation (the name of the person replacing Mr Vershinin would be provided to the Chairperson in due course)

34. The Commission unanimously elected the following new members to the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for two additional two-year terms:

- Mr Emmanuel Manoussakis (Greece)
- Mr Fazil Düsünceli (Turkey)

DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

35. The Chairperson informed the Commission that the proposal made by the Republic of Armenia during the Thirty-fourth Session to host the Thirty-sixth Session of the ECA together with the 27th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan, Armenia, had been endorsed by the Director-General of FAO. The Session would continue to meet back-to-back with the Regional Conference for Europe.


ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OR SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS PRESENTED BY THE RAPPORTEUR

37. The presentation of the summary of conclusions by the Rapporteur on the deliberations of the debate regarding Items 4, 5 and 6 was unanimously endorsed by the Commission.

CLOSING OF THE SESSION

38. In closing the Session, the Chairperson warmly thanked the Austrian authorities (Ministries and services, the Tyrol Region and the City of Innsbruck). He also thanked all the participants for their contribution. In particular, he expressed appreciation to those
Member Nations that had sent delegations from their capitals. Furthermore, he thanked on his own behalf and that of the Commission, the outgoing members of the Executive Committee. He also warmly welcomed the newly-elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission and the new members of the Executive Committee and wished them every success in guiding the Commission’s future activities. In addition, he expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat for the support provided during his four-year term as Chairperson. The Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia thanked the participants for their contribution, and welcomed the lively debate, fruitful discussions and excellent recommendations for endorsement by the Regional Conference for Europe.
### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>Jean-Jacques Soula</td>
<td>(France)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Président</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidente</td>
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<td>(France)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapporteur</td>
<td>Agnes van der Hoeven-van Ardenne</td>
<td>(Netherlands)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relator</td>
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</tbody>
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MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION
ÉTATS MEMBRES DE LA REGION
ESTADOS MIEMBROS DE LA REGIÓN

ALBANIA – ALBANIE

Delegate
Jemin GJANA
Minister for Agriculture, Food and
Consumers Protection
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and
Consumers Protection
Skanderbeg Square No 2
Tirana
Tel: +355 4232796
Fax: +355 42227424
E-mail: personel@icc.al.eu.org

Alternates
Grigor GIECI
Director of Rural Development Division
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and
Consumers Protection
Skanderbeg Square No 2
Tirana

Llesh KOLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Albania to FAO
Via Asmara 5
00199 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 068622411
Fax: +39 0686224120
E-mail: veracara@mfa.gov.al
ANDORRA - ANDORRE

Délégué
Edgar BARÓ RIBA
Directeur du Département de l’agriculture
Ministère de l’économie et de l’agriculture
Edifici Prat del Rull
Camí de la Grau s/n.
AD500 – Andorre la Vieille
Fax: +376 875666
E-mail: edgar_baro@govern.ad
montserrat_gesse@govern.ad

ARMENIA – ARMÉNIE

Delegate
Zohrab V. MALEK
Ambassador to FAO
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to FAO
Via Camillo Sabatini 102
Mailing address: C.P. 64194
00100 Rome, Italy
Tel.: +39 065201924
Fax: +39 065201924
E-mail: armambfao@virgilio.it

Alternate
Andranik PETROSYAN
Head of Foreign Relations and Marketing Department
Ministry of Agriculture
III Government Building
Republic Square
375010 Yerevan

AZERBAIJAN - AZERBAÍDJAN
AZERBAIYÁN

Delegate
Ismat Dursun ogly ABASOV
Minister for Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture
Uz. Hajibeyov 40
370016 Baku
Tel: +994 12 4930884
Fax: +994 12 4930884
E-mail: mfa_mz@yahoo.com

Alternate
Vugar MEHDIYEV
Programme Director
State Agency for Agricultural Credits
Government House
Uz. Hajibeyov 40
AZ 1000 Baku

BELARUS – BÉLARUS - BELARÚS

Delegate
Andrei LOZOVIK
Alternate Permanent Representative of Belarus to FAO
Embassy of the Republic of Belarus
Via delle Alpi Apuane 16
00141 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 0682081430
Fax: +39 0682002309
E-mail: italy@belembassy.org
BELGIUM - BELGIQUE - BÉLGICA

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE - BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA

BULGARIA – BULGARIA
Delegate
Nikolay MARIN
Ambassador
Head of Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2 Alexander Zhendov street
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria
Fax: +359 2 9482421
E-mail: nmarin@mfa.government.bg

CROATIA - CROATIE – CROACIA
Delegate
Ms Lidija MRKOCI
Head
International Relationship Unit
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
Ulica grada Vukovara 78
P.O. Box 1034
HR10000 Zagreb
Tel: +385 1 6106677
Fax: +385 1 6109206
E-mail: lidija.mrkoci@mps.hr

Alternate
Irena GEORGIEVSKI
Expert Adviser
International Relationship Unit
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
Ulica grada Vukovara 78
P.O. Box 1034
HR10000 Zagreb
Tel: +385 1 6106677
Fax: +385 1 6109206

CYPRUS - CHYPRE – CHIPRE

CZECH REPUBLIC - RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE - REPÚBLICA CHECA
Delegate
Ms Marta TEPLÁ
Director of Trade and International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Těšnov 17
117 05 Prague 1
Fax: +420224 810652
E-mail: marta.tepla@mze.cz

Alternates
Ms Jaroslava Beneš ŠPALKOVÁ
Director General of the External Relations Division
Ministry of Agriculture
Těšnov 17
117 05 Prague 1
Fax: +420221 812941
E-mail: jaroslava.spalkova@mze.cz

Ms Daniela MOYZESOVÁ
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to FAO
Embassy of the Czech Republic
Via dei Gracchi 322
00192 Rome
Italy
Tel: +3906360957
Fax: +39063244466
E-mail: rome@embassy.mzv.cz

Ms Kateřina TOMÁŠOVÁ
Officer Responsible for Relations with FAO
Trade and International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Těšnov 17
117 05 Prague 1
Fax: +420224 810652
E-mail: katerina.tomasova@mze.cz
DENMARK - DANEMARK - DINAMARCA

Delegate
Soren SKAFTE
Minister
Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to FAO
Via dei Monti Parioli
00197 Rome
Italy
Tel.: +39 06 9774831
Fax: +39 06 97748399
E-mail: sorska@um.dk

ESTONIA – ESTONIE

Delegate
Ruve ŠANK
Minister Counsellor
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to FAO
Embassy of the Republic of Estonia
Viale Liegi 28
00198 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 0684407510
Fax: +39 0684407519
E-mail: ruve.schank@mfa.ee

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (MEMBER ORGANIZATION) - COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE (ORGANISATION MEMBRE) - COMUNIDAD EUROPEA (ORGANIZACIÓN MIEMBRO)

Délégué
Javier ALCAZAR SIRVENT
Administrateur Principal à la Direction Générale ‘Agriculture’
Commission européenne
Rue de la Loi 130, bureau 06/056
1040 Bruxelles
Belgium
E-mail: javier.alcazar@ec.europa.eu

FINLAND - FINLANDE – FINLANDIA

Delegate
Veli-Pekka TALVELA
Director-General
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Hallituskatu 3A
P.O. Box 30
FI-00023 Helsinki
Fax: +358 9 16052201
E-mail: veli-peka.talvela@mmpm.fi

Alternate
Ms Anna SANTALA
Senior Officer
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Hallituskatu 3A
P.O. Box 30
FI-00023 Helsinki
Fax: +358 9 16052201
E-mail: anna.santala@mmpm.fi

FRANCE - FRANCIA

Délégué
Jean-Jacques SOULA
Conseiller scientifique
Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l’OAA
Corso del Rinascimento 52
00186 Rome
Italy
Tel: +3906 68405240
Fax: +39066892692
E-mail:
jean-jacques.soula@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Suppléant
Mme Catherine GERARD
Attaché pour l’Agriculture
Ambassade de France
Reisnerstraße 50/10
1030 Vienna
Austria
Fax: +43 17126299
E-mail: catherine.gerard@missioneco.org
GEORGIA – GÉORGIE
Delegate
Tornike MGALOBLISHVILI
Head of the Department of Cooperation with International Organizations and Projects Management (DRIOPM)
Ministry of Agriculture
6, Marshall Gelovani Avenue
0159 Tbilisi
Tel: +995 32 378005
Fax: +995 32 378005
Email: tornikemg@yahoo.com
Alternate
Ms Tamara BUKHRASHVILI
Deputy Head
Division for Euro-integration Affairs and Relations with International Organizations
Ministry of Agriculture
6 Marshall Gelovani Avenue
Tbilisi
Tel: +995 32 378006
Fax: +995 32 378006
E-Mail: tamara.bukhrashvili@gmail.com

HUNGARY - HONGRIE – HUNGRÍA
Delegate
Zoltán KÁLMÁN
Permanent Representative of Hungary to FAO
Embassy of the Republic of Hungary
Via Luigi Lilio 59
00142 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 06 5190116
Fax: +39 06 97256859
E-mail: hufaorep@fastwebnet.it

ICELAND - ISLANDE – ISLANDIA
Delegate
Gudni BRAGASON
Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Iceland to the UN Agencies in Rome
Permanent Mission of Iceland
Via San Saba 12
00153 Rome
Italy
Fax: +39 06 5758012
E-mail: gudni@mfa.is

GERMANY - ALLEMAGNE - ALEMANIA
Delegate
Ms Kerstin BARTH
Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection
Wilhelmsstrasse 54
D-10117 Berlin

GREECE - GRÈCE – GRECIA
Delegate
Emmanuel MANOUSSAKIS
Minister Plenipotentiary for Agricultural Affairs
Alternate Permanent Representative of the Hellenic Republic to FAO
Viale G. Rossini 4
00198 Rome
Tel: +39 06 85375525
Fax: +39 06 85375503
E-mail: e.manousakis@mfa.gr
IRELAND – IRLANDE – IRLANDA
Delegate
Trevor SARGENT
Minister for Food and Horticulture
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Fax: +353 1 676 3947
E-mail: Trevor.Sargent@agriculture.gov.ie

Alternates
Aidan DUANE
Private Secretary to the Minister for Food and Horticulture
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Fax: +353 1 676 3947
E-mail: Aidan.Duane@agriculture.gov.ie

Kevin SMYTH
Chief Economist
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Fax: +353 1 6072235
E-mail: Kevin.Smyth@agriculture.gov.ie

Padraic DEMPSEY
Agriculture Attaché (Agriculture)
Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO
Embassy of Ireland
Piazza di Campitelli 3
00186 Rome
Tel: +39 06 6979121
Fax: +39 06 6792354
E-mail: padraic.dempsey@dfa.ie

ITALY - ITALIE - ITALIA
Délégué
Vincenzo CARROZZINO
Coordinateur technique
Ministère pour les politiques agricoles, alimentaires et forestières
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Rome
Fax: +39 06 46655306
E-mail: v.carrozzino@politicheagricole.gov.it

Suppléante
Mme Raffaella ZUCARO
Expert
Ministère pour les politiques agricoles, alimentaires et forestières
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Rome
Fax: +39 06 46655306
E-mail: zucaro@inea.it

KAZAKHSTAN - KAZAJSTÁN

KYRGYZSTAN – KIRGHIZISTAN – KIRGUISTÁN
Delegate
Dyikanbay KENJEBAEV
Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Water and Processing Industry
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Processing Industry
96/A Kievskaya Street
Bishkek 720040

Alternate
Rysbek APASOV
National Coordinator
FAO NC Office
6° Samanchin Str., Room 328
Bishkek
Tel./Fax: +996 312 543036

ISRAEL - ISRAËL
LATVIA - LETTONIE - LETONIA

Delegate
Ms Rigonda LERHE
Deputy State Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture
Republiklas laukums 2
LV-1981 Riga
Fax: +371 67830272
E-mail: rigonda.lerhe@zm.gov.lv

Alternates
Janis BRIEDIS
Director
International Relations Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Republiklas laukums 2
LV-1981 Riga

Ainars NABLES-SNEIDERS
Director
Head of the Foreign Relations Division
Ministry of Agriculture
Republiklas laukums 2
LV-1981 Riga
Tel: +371 29424753
Fax: +371 67027296
E-mail: ainars.nabels@zm.gov.lv

Ms Ilze RUSE
First Secretary
Embassy of Latvia to Austria
Stefan Esders Platz 4
A-1190 Vienna
Austria
Fax: +43 1403 311227
E-mail: ilze.ruse@mfa.gov.lv

LITHUANIA - LITUANIE - LITUANIA

Delegate
Ms Virginija ZOSTAUTIENE
Vice-Minister for Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture
Gedimino pr.19
LT-01103 Vilnius
Fax: +370 52391212
E-mail: agromokslas@zum.lt

Alternates
Ms Genute STALIUNIENE
Chairperson
Lithuanian Farmers’ Union
K. Donelaicio 2
LT-44213 Kaunas
Fax.: +370 37 225301
E-mail: lus@lus.lt

Rimantas KRASUCKIS
Director
Common Market Organization Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Gedimino pr.19
LT-01103 Vilnius
Fax. +370 52391212
E-mail: rimantask@zum.lt

Saulius GELAZAUSKAS
Adviser to the Minister
Ministry of Agriculture
Gedimino pr.19
LT-01103 Vilnius
Fax: +370 52391212

Ms Regina GIRDVAINYTE
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to FAO
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Italy
Viale di Villa Grazioli
00198 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 8559052
Fax. +39 06 8559053
E-mail: reginag@zum.lt

Ms Brute GUDAITIENE
Chief Specialist of Protocol Division
Ministry of Agriculture
Gedimino pr.19
LT-01103 Vilnius
Fax: +370 52391212
E-mail: bruteg@zum.lt

Ms Dangira VEST
Counselloor
Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
J. Tumo-Vaizganto, 2,
Vilnius

LUXEMBOURG - LUXEMBURGO
MALTA - MALTE

Delegate
Ms Ritienne BONAVIA
Alternate Permanent Representative of Malta to FAO and UN
Specialized Agencies in Rome
Embassy of Malta
Lungotevere Marzio 12
Rome
Italy
Tel.: +39 06 687990
Fax: +39 06 6892687
E-mail: ritienne.bonavia@gov.mt

MOLDOVA, REPUBLIC OF - MOLDOVA, RÉPUBLIQUE DE - MOLDOVA, REPÚBLICA DE

MONACO

MONTENEGRO – MONTÉNÉGRO

Delegate
Branko BULATOVIC
Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
Rimski trg 46, PC “Vektra”
81000 Podgorica
Tel: +382 81 234106, 482263
Fax: +382 81 234306
E-mail: branko.b@mn.yu

NETHERLANDS - PAYS-BAS – PAÍSES BAJOS

Delegate
Ms Agnes VAN DER HOEVEN-VAN ARDENNE
Ambassador to FAO
Permanent Representative to the UN Organizations in Rome
Via delle Terme Deciane 6
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +0039 06 5740306
Fax: +0039 06 5744927
E-mail: rof@minbuza.nl

NORWAY - NORVÈGE – NORUEGA

POLAND - POLOGNE - POLOÑA

Delegate
Ryszard WOJTAL
Permanent Representative to FAO
Via P.P. Rubens 20
00197 Rome
Tel: +39 06 36204200
Fax: +39 06 3217895
E-mail: faopoland@alice.it

Alternate
Wojciech OSTROWSKI
Minister-Counsellor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Al. Szucha 23
00-580 Warsaw
Tel.: +48 22 5239407
Fax: +48 22 6290500

Ms Malgorzate PIOTROWSKA
Secretary of the Polish FAO
National Committee
Wspolna Street 30
00-970 Warsaw
Fax: +48 22 6232372
E-mail: m.piotrowska@minrol.gov.pl

Ms Anna LESNODORSKA
Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Poland to the UN Office
Hietzinger Hauptstraße 42/c
1130 Vienna

Andrzej HALASIEWICZ
Deputy Director
Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture
Wspolna Street 30
00-970 Warsaw
E-mail: a.halasiewicz@fapa.org.pl
PORTUGAL

ROMANIA - ROUMANIE - RUMANIA

Délégué
Bogdan BAZGĂ
Conseiller Affaires Européens
Ministère de l'agriculture
et du développement rural
24, Bvd. Carol I, Sector 3
7000 Bucarest
Tel.: +40 21 3078642
Fax: +40 21 3078627
E-mail: bogdan.bazga@madr.ro

Suppléante
Mme Roxana GRĂDINARU
Conseiller Affaires Européens
Ministère de l'agriculture
et du développement rural
24, Bvd. Carol I, Sector 3
7000 Bucarest
Tel.: +40 21 3072483
Fax: +40 21 3078627
E-mail: roxana.gradinariu@madr.ro

RUSSIAN FEDERATION –
FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE –
FEDERACIÓN DE RUSIA

Delegate
Ms Irina MEDVEDEVA
Deputy Head of Division
Ministry of Economic Development
1,3 1-St Tverskaya-Yamskaya Str.,
125993, GSP-3
Moscow A-47
Fax: +7 495 694 5280
E-mail: medvedeva@economy.gov.ru

Alternate
Ms Yulia FETISOVA
Consultant
Ministry of Economic Development
1,3 1-St Tverskaya-Yamskaya Str.,
125993, GSP-3
Moscow A-47
Fax: +7 495 694 5280
E-mail: fetisova@economy.gov.ru

SAN MARINO - SAINT-MARIN

Delegate
Ms Daniela ROTONDARO
Counsellor
Permanent Representative of the Republic of
San Marino to FAO
Via Eleonora Duse, 35
00197 Rome
Italy
Tel.: +39 06 8072511/5131
Fax: +39 6 8070072
E-mail: ambamarinofao@ambrsm.it

SERBIA – SERBIE

Delegate
Ms Suzana DJORDJEVIC-MILOSEVIC
Assistant Minister
Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management
and Forestry
Nemanjina 22-26
11000 Belgrade
Tel.: +381 11 2634941
Fax: +381 11 2634941
E-mail: suzana.djordjevic@minpolj.sr.gov.yu

SLOVAKIA – SLOVAQUIE

Delegate
Ms Eva KOLESÁROVÁ
Director
Foreign Relations Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Dobrovičova 12
81266 Bratislava
Fax: +421 2 59266 294
E-mail: eva.kolesarova@land.gov.sk

Alternates
Ms Barbara HELLEBRANDTOVÁ
National Secretary for Cooperation of the
Slovak Republic with FAO
Ministry of Agriculture
Dobrovičova 12
81266 Bratislava
Fax: +421 2 59266 294
E-mail: b.hellebrandtova@land.gov.sk
Milan KOVAC  
Permanent Representative of the  
Slovak Republic to FAO  
Embassy of the Slovak Republic  
Via Colli della Farnesina 144/6  
00194 Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +390636715206  
Fax: +390636715266  
E-mail: milan_kovac@rim.mfa.sk

Fedor ROSOCHA  
Senior Officer  
Department for UN and UN Organizations  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Hlboká cesta 2  
Bratislava

Ms Daniela DOBROVC  
Advisor  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana  
Fax: +386 1 4789155  
E-mail: danica.dobrovoc@gov.si

Jean-Pierre SABSOUB  
Administrator  
Council of the European Union  
Rue de la Loi 175  
1048 Brussels  
Belgium  
Fax: +32 2 2817227  
Email: jean-pierre.sabsoub@consilium.europa.eu

Iztok JARC  
Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana  
Fax: +386 1 4789021  
Email: fao.mkgp@gov.si

Ms Simona ROGL  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana

SLOVENIA - SLOVÉNIE - ESLOVENIA

Alternates  
Ms Bojana HOČEVAR  
Advisor  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana  
Fax: +386 1 4789155  
E-mail: bojana.hocevar@fastwebnet.it

Marko VERBIČ  
Secretary  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana  
Fax: +386 1 4780155  
E-mail: marko.verbic@gov.si

Leon MEGUŠAR  
Advisor  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana  
Fax: +386 1 4789155  
Email: leon.megusar@gov.si

SPAIN - ESPAGNE - ESPAÑA

Delegado  
Sra Pilar VILLALBA CORTIJO  
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Ambiente  
Pº Infanta Isabel No. 1  
28071 Madrid  
Fax: +3491 468 5179  
E-mail: pvillalb@mapa.es

Jernej KOVAC  
Public Relations  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food  
Dunajska 58  
1000 Ljubljana

SWEDEN - SUÈDE - SUECIA

Delegat  
Andreas DAVELID  
Trade Policy Analyst  
Swedish Board of Agriculture  
551 82 Jönköping  
Sweden  
Fax: +46 36 308577  
E-mail: andreas.davelid@sjv.se
Alternate:
Anders KLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to FAO
Embassy of Sweden
Piazza Rio de Janeiro 3
00161 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 06 441941
Fax: +39 06 44194762
E-mail: anders.klum@foreign.ministry.se

SWITZERLAND - SUISSE - SUIZA

Délégué
Hubert POFFET
Section Agriculture durable international
Office fédéral de l’agriculture OFAG
Mattenhofstrasse 5
CH-3003 Berne
Tél.: +41 31 3251700
Fax: +41 31 322 2634
E-mail: hubert.poffet@blw.admin.ch

Suppléants
Hans-Jörg LEHMANN
Ministre
Représentant permanent de la Suisse
auprès de la FAO
Viale Aventino 89
00153 Rome
Italie
Téléphone: +39 06 5756293
Fax: +39 06 5756321
E-mail: hans-joerg.lehmann@eda.admin.ch

Mme Wendy PETER
Président
FAO/ECA Groupe de travail sur la femme et
la famille dans le développement rural
(WPW)
Bioforum Schweiz
CH-6130 Wellberg
Téléphone:
Fax: +41 9703505
E-mail: bio-forum@bluewin.ch

TAJIKISTAN – TADJIKISTAN - TAYIKISTÁN

Delegate
Isroilov SIJOUDIN
Deputy Minister for Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture
Rudaki Avenue 44
734025 Dushanbe
Fax: +99 237 2218003/2217305
E-mail: tr_mrd@inbox.ru

Alternate
Gulonov HIKMATULLO
Head of Department of
International Relations
Ministry of Agriculture
Rudaki Avenue 44
734025 Dushanbe
Fax: +99 237 2218003/2217305
E-mail: tr_mrd@inbox.ru

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA - L’EX
RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE
MACÉDOINE - LA EX REPÚBLICA
YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA

Delegate
Masum BURAK
Director General
General Directorate of Agricultural Research

Alternate
Mustafa IMIR
Head of Department of Foreign Relations
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

TURKMENISTAN – TURKMÉNISTAN - TURKMENISTÁN

Delegate
Ms Valentyna ZAVALEVSKA
Deputy Minister for
Agricultural Policy
Ministry of Agricultural Policy

UKRAINE – UCRAVIA

Delegate
Ms Valentyna ZAVALEVSKA
Deputy Minister for
Agricultural Policy
Ministry of Agricultural Policy
Alternate
Mykhailo RUDENKO
Director
Department of Foreign Economic Relations
Ministry of Agricultural Policy

UNITED KINGDOM -
ROYAUME UNI - REINO UNIDO
Delegate
Victor HEARD
Deputy Permanent Representative of the
United Kingdom to FAO
Permanent Representation of the
United Kingdom to FAO
Via Monserrato 48/1
00186 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 06 68400901/2/3/4
Fax: +39 06 68400920
Email: v-heard@dfid.gov.uk

UZBEKISTAN – OUZBÉKISTAN –
UZBEKISTÁN

ASSOCIATE MEMBER
MEMBRE ASSOCIÉ
MEMBRO ASOCIADO

FAROE ISLANDS – ÎLES FÉROÉ (LES) – ISLAS FEROES

OBSERVERS FROM MEMBER NATIONS NOT IN THE REGION
OBSERVATEURS D’ÉTATS MEMBRES N’APPARTENANT PAS À LA REGION
OBSERVADORES DE LOS ESTADOS MIEMBROS QUE NO PERTENECEN A LA REGION

CANADA – CANADÁ

Kent VACHON
Alternate Permanent Representative of Canada
to the Food and Agriculture Agencies to the UN
Permanent Representation of Canada to the
Food and Agriculture Agencies to the UN
Canadian Embassy
Via Zara 30
00198 Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 06854442551
Fax: +39 06854442930
E-mail: kent.vachon@international.gc.ca
OBSERVERS FROM UNITED NATIONS MEMBER STATES
OBSERVATEURS D’ÉTATS MEMBRES DES NATIONS UNIES
OBSERVADORES DE LOS ESTADOS MIEMBROS
DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

HOLY SEE - SAINT-SIÈGE - SANTE SEDE

Monseigneur Renato VOLANTE
Conseiller de Nonciature
Observateur permanent du Saint-Siège auprès de la FAO
Bureau de l’Observateur permanent du Saint-Siège auprès de la FAO
Palazzo San Calisto
Piazza San Calisto 16
00120 Cité du Vatican
Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 0669887234
Fax: +39 0669887195
E-mail: osserfao@mhsfao.va

SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA - ORDRE SOUVERAIN DE MALTE -
ORDEN SOBERANA DE MALTA

REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES
REPRÉSENTANTS DES NATIONS UNIES ET INSTITUTIONS SPÉCIALISÉES
REPRESENTANTES DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS
Y ORGANISMOS ESPECIALIZADOS

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)
PROGRAMME ALIMENTAIRE MONDIAL (PAM)
PROGRAMA MUNDIAL DE ALIMENTOS (PMA)

Lubna ALAMAN
Chief
Inter-agency Affairs
Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68-70
Parco de Medici
Rome
Italy
Fax: +39 06 65132795
E-mail: lubna.alaman@wfp.org
OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (IGOs)
OBSERVATEURS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES (OIGs)
OBSERVADORES DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES INTERGUBERNAMENTALES (OIGs)

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
CONSEIL DE L’UNION EUROPEENNE
CONSEJO DE LA UNION EUROPEA

Jean-Pierre SABSOUB
Administrator
Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175
1048 Brussels
Belgium
Fax: +32 2 2817227
E-mail: jean-pierre.sabsoub@consilium.europa.eu

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE HAUTES ETUDES AGRONOMIQUES MEDITERRANEENES (CIHEAM)

Ms Elena KAGKOU
Administrator
11 Rue Newton
Paris 75116
France
Tel: +33 1539105
Fax: +33 153239102
E-mail: kagkou@ciheam.org

OBSERVERS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
OBSERVATEURS DES ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES
OBSERVADORES DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES NO GUBERNAMENTALES

ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD (ACWW)

Ms Joanna KOCH
UN Representative
A. Landstr. 89
8802 Kilchberg
Switzerland
Tel: +41 044 7151946
Fax: +41 044 7154137
E-mail: joannakoch@bluewin.ch
BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL

Emile FRISON
Director-General
Bioversity International
Via dei Tre Denari 472/a
00057 Maccarese (Fiumicino)
Rome
Italy
Fax: +39 06 6118405
E-mail: e.frison@cgiar.org

Jozef TUROK
Regional Director, Europe
Bioversity International
Via dei Tre Denari 472/a
00057 Maccarese (Fiumicino)
Rome
Italy
Tel: +39 066118250
Fax: +39 06 61979661
E-mail: j.turok@cgiar.org

CAP 2013

Samuel FERET
Coordinator
La Gree du Val
56190 Arzal
France
Tel.: +33 6 08831235
Fax: +33 977965172
E-mail: samuel.feret@gmail.com

CSA
(COLLECTIF STRATÉGIES ALIMENTAIRES)

Daniel VAN DER STEEN
Coordinateur
184d Boulevard Léopold II
1080 Bruxelles
Belgium
Tel: +32 24120663
Fax: +32 24120666
Email: daniel.vandersteen@csa-be.org
DIÖZESE INNSBRUCK

Thomas GARBER
Fachreferat für Schöpfungsverantwortung
Haus der Begegnung
Rennweg 12
6020 Innsbruck
Tel.: +43-512-587869-14 (Mo, Mi, Do vm)
Fax: +43-512-587869-11
E-mail: thomas.garber@diozese-innsbruck.at

Gudrun ERNSTBRUNNER
Project Officer
Heiliggeist str. 16
6020 Innsbruck

ELKANA

Ms Mariam JORJADZE
Director
16th Natveti, 3rd Delisi Street
0177 Tbilisi
Georgia
Tel: +995 32 53 64 85 (office)
Fax:+995 32 53 64 87;
E-mail: director@elkana.org.ge

FIAN

Ms Gertrude KLaffenböck
Section Coordinator
Johann Strauss Gasse 33/2-3
1040 Vienna
Austria
Tel.: +43 1 2350239
E-mail: fian-oe@oneworld.at

Dietlind Höfle
Volunteer
Johann Strauss Gasse 33/2-3
1040 Vienna
Austria
Tel.: +43 1 2350239
E-mail: dhoefle@gmx.a

Bastiaan COLOMBAROLI
Assistant Campaign Coordinator
Willy-Brandt Platz 5
69115 Heidelberg
Germany
Tel.: +49 6221 6530052
Fax: +49 6221 830545
E-mail: colombaroli@fian.org
Martin WOLPOLD-BOSIEN  
Campaign Coordinator  
Willy-Brandt Platz 5  
69115 Heidelberg  
Germany  
Tel.: +49 6221 6530041  
Fax: +49 6221 830545  
E-mail: wolpold@fian.org

PRACTICAL ACTION

Patrick MULVANY  
ITDG Intermediate Technology Development Group  
The Schumacher Centre for Technology & Development  
Bourton Hall  
Bourton-on-Dunsmore RUGBY  
CV23 9QZ  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 1926 63 44 69 office  
Fax: +44 1788 57 89 58 private  
Email: patrickmulvany@clara.co.uk

PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS’ RIGHTS

Abgar YEGHOYAN  
Hanrapetutyan 76/1, Apr. 28  
0001 Yerevan  
Armenia  
Tel.: +374 10 543818  
Fax: +374 10 543843  
E-mail: upcr@web.am

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Antonio LICO  
Rotary International Representative to FAO  
Via Luigi Amadeo 4  
00152 Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 0658320689  
Fax: +  
E-mail: ilico@fastwebnet.it
VIA CAMPESINA AUSTRIA

Irmi SALZER
Mariahilferstrasse 89/22
1060 Vienna
Austria
Tel: +43 699 11827634
Fax: +43 1 8929400
Irmi.salzer@viacampesina.at

VREDeseilandEN

Gert ENGELEN
Policy Officer
Blijde Inkomststraat 50
3000 Leuven
Belgium
Tel: +32 16 316594
Fax: +32 16 316581
Email: gert.engelen@vredeseilandEn.be
Ms Maria Kadlecikova
Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia

Mr Anton Mangstl
Director of the Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building Division
FAO Headquarters

Mr Tomasz Lonc,
ERC Secretary – Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe

Mr Raimund Jehle
ECA Secretary – Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Appointment of Rapporteur
4. The role of FAO in knowledge exchange and capacity building in the Europe and Central Asia Region
5. FAO’s Engagement in the United Nations System Reforms
7. Adoption of revised Rules of Procedure
8. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for a term of office of four years (2008-2011) and election of members of the Executive Committee
9. Other Business
10. Date and Place of the Thirty-sixth Session
11. Adoption of the Report or summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur
12. Closing of the Session