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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF AFRICA

Fifteenth Session

Lusaka, Zambia 09 – 11 December 2008

AMENDMENT OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

SUMMARY

The Chairperson of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa has an important role and responsibilities in overseeing the operations of the Committee. As the Committee expands its scope and functions, activities undertaken during the intercessional period under the stewardship of the Chair are also becoming increasingly important. It has been suggested that a change in the Rules of Procedure in regard to how the Chairmanship is allocated with regard to the session and the intercessional period would provide more direct interaction by the Chair and promote a higher level of intercessional action. The Committee is asked to review the situation and make decisions as to whether or not the procedures with regard to the Chair should be changed.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourteenth Session of the Committee unanimously recognised the need for CIFAA to “evolve into a nexus for addressing inland fisheries and aquaculture issues in Africa, effectively linking the public sector with the private sector, its development partners (including WFC) and improving political links with relevant regional economic organizations and NEPAD” (paragraph 36, Report of the Fourteenth Session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa). For this evolution to take place, CIFAA must adopt operating mechanisms and procedures that facilitate a more proactive functioning of the Committee.
2. The functions of the Chair influence to a large degree the ability of the Committee be more or less proactive, particularly during the intercessional periods.

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3. Current procedures call for electing a Chair at the beginning of the Session, with the Chair assuming the leadership of the Committee for the given session and the subsequent intercessional period; passing the baton to the new Chair at the following session. In this process, there is a disconnection between the important work of the Committee during the intercessional period, as guided by the Chair, and the work of the subsequent session; the two activities being overseen by different individuals.

4. There is a school of thought that the Chair should in fact oversee the intersessional period as well as the subsequent session so that he/she can report back to the Committee on work done and accomplishments made during this important intercessional period; a period often of limited activity but a time when increasing responsibilities of CIFAA will require increasing levels of activity between sessions.

BACKGROUND

5. When the Committee was established in 1971, the Rules of Procedure made provision for the election of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons at the end of the sessions. Rule II, paragraph 1 read as follows: "The Committee shall elect, at the end of every session, a Chairman and a maximum of three Vice-Chairmen who shall remain in office until the election of the new Chairman and new Vice-Chairmen". At its session of 1983 the Committee approved a revised Rule whereby the Committee elects the Chairman and a maximum of three Vice-Chairmen at the beginning of its sessions.

6. If the Committee wishes to go back to the original rule, it has to adopt a revised Rule II, paragraph 1, reinstating the original wording of this provision. (i.e. "The Committee shall elect, at the end of every session, a Chairman and a maximum of three Vice-Chairmen who shall remain in office until the election of the new Chairman and new Vice-Chairmen").

7. If the original procedure is again adopted, there is the issue of how the transition from the current system to the new one is organised. One option is that all members of the Committee could agree that the Committee would not elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons at the beginning of the session and that these would be appointed at the end of the session only and that the current incumbents should remain in office until then.

8. If there are objections to this option, the alternative would consist in electing a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons at the beginning of the session on the understanding that they would remain in office until the end of the forthcoming session.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

9. The Committee is requested to make a decision on reinstating the original procedure whereby the Chair is elected at the end of every session.

10. In the event that the original procedure is reinstated, the Committee is invited to decide how to structure the Chairmanship of the presnet sessioni in view of the options provided.