

Chairs' Aide Mémoire Second Meetings of CoC-IEE WG II
Monday 28 January 2008

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The Roles and Functions of the Conference and Council

Discussion focused on IEE recommendations 4.7 and 4.8 concerning, respectively, the roles and functions of the Conference and Council. Following a wide ranging debate it was agreed that it was now important to extend the discussion to the full governance architecture and the CoC-IEE secretariat was asked to facilitate this by developing a flow chart of the present situation and the IEE proposals. It was emphasised that final conclusions would need to be reached once there was a more holistic and shared understanding of the issues, and that there was not necessarily full agreement between all Members. There was however some emerging coincidence of views on broad agreement with IEE recommendations 4.7 and 4.8 with attention to the considerations and reservations discussed below:

- 1) FAO's role in Global Governance was important, although it should not be allowed to develop at the expense of other functions including technical cooperation. The Conference could usefully play an expanded role in Global Governance for areas of FAO's mandate and Working Group I would be developing priorities for this. The Council already concentrated on executive oversight of the FAO secretariat, its budget and programmes, and this distinction of roles could be further reinforced.
- 2) The Conference should become of more interest for participation by Ministers and senior officials but speeches by Ministers in plenary session were important for both issues of Global Governance and FAO's orientation. They should thus continue to form part of the format of the Conference but the Conference itself could also have more focus and there needed to be care to not overburden the Conference agenda.
- 3) Duplication of discussion between the Council and Conference should be reduced. The Council still needed to prepare the work of the Conference, but this did not mean it needed to meet immediately before it.
- 4) The Council should continue to have before it major documents, such as the Programme of Work and Budget documents, previously discussed in the Programme and Finance Committees and should discuss them with the recommendations of those Committees rather than solely on the basis of the Committee's recommendations, as suggested by the IEE (Recommendation 4.8 c).
- 5) Observers should continue to be permitted to speak in the Council after the Members, as is the current practice (last part of IEE Recommendation 4.8 g).
- 6) There was a need to make the Programme of Work and Budget decision making process more efficient, enhancing effective oversight by the Governing Bodies. The IEE proposals of advancing the date of the Conference so that the Budget level would be set well before the start of each biennium thus had some merit and the views of the other Working Groups would also be important in deciding on this. It was noted that if a change were to be made in the Conference date, this was probably not realistic for 2009 and would be for 2011.

- 7) The issue of Member Country Representation in the Council and in the Programme and Finance Committees deserved much greater in-depth discussion and for some members represented an issue for the governance architecture.