

Co-Chairs Aide Mémoire of the Ninth Meeting of Working Group II
Wednesday 7 May 2008
Natalie Feistritzer and Lamy Al-Saqqaf Co-Chairs

1) **Functions and Membership of the Programme and Finance Committees:** Members agreed that:

- a) the Programme and Finance Committees should have their functions clarified in the Basic Texts and that for the Programme Committee this included consideration of field and decentralized work, global governance priorities and partnership and coordination with other organizations for technical work. The Finance Committee should cover all aspects of administration, services and human resources as well as finance;
- b) the two committees should be required in the Basic Texts to produce recommendations to the Council on the matters before them;
- c) the two committees should not vote but should continue to search for consensus;
- d) the two committees should not be merged;
- e) the two committees should be open to non speaking observers;
- f) the two Committees should hold more joint meetings and joint meetings should normally be chaired by the Independent Chairperson of the Council, who should also normally attend meetings of the Committees;
- g) Chairs should be independently elected in a personal capacity and not represent a region or country in the two Committees; and
- h) the membership of the Committees should each be increased, in addition to the Chair, to eight representatives of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East and four representatives of Europe, North America and the South West Pacific (1+8+4).

2) **Functions and Membership of the Council:**

- a) Members agreed that the Council should concentrate more on making decisions and recommendations. Many Members supported the proposal to eliminate drafting of the full report of the Council, concentrating drafting on decisions which would thus become clearer. In their view, a document such as an aide mémoire of the chair or the verbatim could serve as a record of discussion, without requiring a drafting group for this but a drafting group would probably be required for decisions;
- b) Following presentation of an illustrative Basic Text by the EU (see Annex 1), most Members considered that the Council should make a clear set of recommendations to the Conference on the proposed Programme of Work and Budget, including the budget level and that it should be the Council that transmitted the proposal to the Conference. This procedure should be reflected in the Basic Texts. This would, in their view, encourage the Council to undertake serious preparatory negotiations prior to the Conference and could reduce the extent of time that the Conference expended on the budget decision at the expense of dealing with global agricultural issues. At the same time it would not in any way impinge on the Conference's mandate in making final decisions. One Member reserved its position on this proposal; and
- c) It was agreed that the Council and Conference should continue to search for consensus in making decisions and voting should only be a last resort. In the case of the Council, if no consensus could be reached on decisions within the prerogative of the Conference, and there were substantial minority views, these would normally be transmitted to the Conference along with the views of the majority.