

The Council Membership, Independent Chair and Possibilities of a Bureau WG II Co-Chairs' Options Paper

Contents

The Council Membership.....	1
Possible Bureau of the Council.....	2
Independent Chair of the Council or Chair of the Bureau	2

.....

1) At the meeting on 2-3 July 2008 of Working Group II, the Chairs and secretariat were asked to discuss with Members and provide preferred options for further discussion at the meeting of the WG on Friday 18 July on:

- a) Membership of the Council;
- b) A Bureau of the Council; and
- c) The Independent Chair of the Council

The Council Membership

2) At the meeting on 2-3 July most members were of the view that a relatively small increase in the size of the Council was justified to bring about a more balanced representation of the regions. In the discussion many members emphasised that a significant increase in the size of the Council would inevitably have implications for numbers of speakers on any one issue and thus efficiency. Many other Members emphasised that the main consideration was effectiveness not efficiency and this required adequate democratic representation of all regions. Two viable options appeared from discussion which met the main criteria of members:

- a) **A. Increasing the membership of Europe and of the Southwest Pacific by one seat each:** The representation would move as shown in Table 1 below. Europe's position would improve slightly and the South West Pacific would become better represented in terms of number of countries. There would be little substantive change in the position of other regions;
- b) **B. Increasing the membership of all Regions by one seat and Europe by two seats:** The Council would increase in size by 7 members to 56 and representation would move as shown in Table 1 below. All regions would be more fully represented (except North America). Europe's position in terms of the proportion of seats would improve slightly and the South West Pacific would become better represented in terms of number of countries. There would be little substantive change in the position of other regions.

3) The consultations indicated the greatest level of support for the second of the two options. There is not a major increase in the size of the Council which, although at the high end of the range, remains of comparable size with several other Organizations (56 members). With the exception of

the North America region (which has two members) all regions would be more fully represented and Europe and the South West Pacific have more equitable coverage. Any other formula allocating more seats per region would have a more substantial impact on the size of the Council and would not impact on the more equitable representation of regions.

Regions for the Council	2008 – Current Situation				Option A		Option B	
	Number		Percentage		Number	%		
	Members	Seats	Members	Seats	Seats	seats		
Africa	48	12	25%	24%	12	24%	13	23%
Asia	23	9	12%	18%	9	18%	10	18%
Europe	48	10	25%	20%	11	22%	12	21%
Latin Am Car	33	9	17%	18%	9	18%	10	18%
Near East	21	6	11%	12%	6	12%	7	13%
North America	2	2	1%	2%	2	4%	2	4%
S.W. Pacific	16	1	8%	4%	2	4%	2	4%
	191	49	100%	100%	51	100%	56	100%

Possible Bureau of the Council

4) At the meeting on 2-3 July many Members considered that it would be desirable to have a Bureau of one Member per region, elected by the Council from among the Permanent Representatives to FAO to assist the Chair in a facilitation role, ensuring that the Council becomes more effective and responsive to Members concerns. Members to such a Bureau could be elected for one or two years. Functions would include:

- a) preparing the work of the Council, including consulting members on agendas, finalisation of dates for sessions, etc.;
- b) liaising with regional groups to ensure adequate briefing on the work of the Council;
- c) assisting the Chair in the management of sessions during the Council.

Independent Chair of the Council or Chair of the Bureau

5) Members varied in their views as to whether the Bureau could best be chaired by the Independent Chair or a rotating chair from among the Permanent Representatives. In consultations the majority support was found for continuation of an Independent Chair. They considered that this task was facilitated by the status of an Independent Chair; required more time and attention than could be given by many Permanent Representatives; and that an Independent Chair provided a better guarantee of neutrality. Assurance of presence in Rome for a minimum of some eight months of the year was however, an important consideration but expenses only should be paid by FAO not an honorarium, in order to contain costs, it being noted that there was also room for economies as the Independent Chair already received an expense allowance¹. It was also noted that Permanent Representatives could be elected as Independent Chair.

6) Those favouring a rotating Chair from among the representatives considered that this would be a less costly solution than an Independent Chair and gave a greater number of countries the opportunity to occupy the position.

¹ The Independent Chair receives an allowance of US\$ 44,000 per biennium and when average travel and expenses are calculated net, the total increase in costs of the Independent Chair spending 8 months per year in Rome would be in the order of US\$ 10-20,000 per biennium with: a shift to payment of the additional living expenses when in Rome; and assuming entitlement to first class travel and per diem at DDG rates were dropped and Director or ADG level conditions applied.