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粮食及
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des
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l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE

Thirty-fifth (Special) Session

Rome, 18 – 22 November 2008

FIRST REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

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I. Agenda for the Session

1. The General Committee examined the Provisional Conference Agenda contained in document C 2008/1 and recommends that item 8 be removed given that no applications for membership had been received by the deadline of 17 October 2008 established in Rule XIX-2 of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO). With this amendment the Committee recommends that the Provisional Agenda be adopted by the Conference.

II. Tentative Timetable of the Session

2. At its Hundred and Thirty-fifth Session the Council endorsed proposals concerning the organization of the Thirty-fifth (Special) Session of the Conference. These proposals and the Provisional Timetable were communicated to all FAO Members and observers in documents C 2008/INF/1 and C 2008/2.

3. The Committee recommends that the Conference approve the Provisional Timetable. It is understood that this Timetable may be subject to modifications according to progress made in plenary meetings.

4. The attention of the Conference is drawn to the seven-minute limit on speaking time for interventions under item 6 *Consideration of the Report of the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO – Immediate Plan of Action*, which will be imposed by the Chairperson in order to accommodate the large number of speakers wishing to address the session.

III. Right of Reply

5. At its previous sessions, the Conference had decided that, if delegates wished to reply to criticisms of their Governments, they should preferably do so on the day on which such criticisms had been voiced after all those wishing to participate in the discussion had had an opportunity to speak.

6. The Committee recommends that these same arrangements be followed at the present session.

IV. Verbatim Records

7. Rule XVIII-1 GRO lays down that verbatim records shall be kept for Conference meetings. The right of delegates to check the accuracy of the record of their interventions is recognized in Rule XVIII-2 GRO.

8. The accuracy of the records may be maintained either by correcting typing and other errors, or by amending a word or phrase actually used. In practice such corrections or amendments to statements are accepted only from the delegation which made the statement, and should be submitted within 48 hours of publication of the draft verbatim record concerned.

9. Speakers who so desire may have their statements inserted in the record without delivering them in plenary in the interests of saving time.

10. While the Committee sees no objection in principle to the insertion of statements in the records when time does not permit them to be delivered, it recognizes the difficulties which might arise if no occasion is given to delegates to exercise the “right of reply” to any criticism of their government’s policy made in the inserted statement.

11. The Committee therefore recommends that the Conference continue to permit the insertion of such statements on condition that:

- the Conference is informed by its Chairperson that a statement not actually delivered, or a substantive addition to a statement that has been delivered, is being inserted in the record;
- the text handed over to the Chairperson for insertion should preferably be in digital format;
- the provisional verbatim record containing the additional statement is circulated before the close of the Session; and
- delegations attending the Session are able to avail themselves of the right of reply by having an opportunity to make, prior to the close of the Session, a statement relating to the inserted statement.

V. Statements by Heads of Delegations

12. The Committee recommends that a list of speakers be published daily in the Journal of the Conference, in the order in which they will be called upon by the Chairperson, and further recommends that statements be limited to a maximum of seven minutes.

VI. Admission of Observers from Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations

13. The list of Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations which have been invited by the Director-General to be represented in an observer capacity at this session of the Conference is given in document C 2008/6. The invitations sent to Intergovernmental Organizations with which FAO does not have a formal agreement and to International Non-Governmental Organizations which do not have consultative status with FAO are extended on a provisional basis and are subject to approval by the Conference.

14. After having reviewed this list, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the said provisional invitations.

VII. Statements by International Non-Governmental Organizations In Consultative Status

15. The Committee was informed of requests from the following International Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with FAO to address the Conference:

- International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)
- World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

16. Having examined this request, the Committee, in accordance with Rule X-2(g) GRO recommends that the Conference grant speaking time not exceeding four minutes to the above mentioned organizations on the understanding that they will not be given priority in speaking over representatives of FAO Members.

VIII. Attendance by Liberations Movements

17. In keeping with established practice, the Palestine Liberation Organization has been invited to attend the Conference in an observer capacity. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm this invitation.

IX. Statement by a Representative of FAO Staff Bodies

18. The General Committee recommends that, following past practice, the Conference permit a representative of the FAO Staff Bodies to make a statement not exceeding five minutes under agenda item 6 *Consideration of the Report of the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO – Immediate Plan of Action* in the afternoon of Thursday, 20 November if time allows, or alternatively in the morning of Friday, 21 November 2008.

X. Conclusion

19. Lastly, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm all the detailed arrangements for the session and that the normal working hours for plenary meetings be 09.30 to 12.30 hours, and 14.30 to 17.30 hours. The Committee also invites all delegations to observe the working hours with the maximum punctuality.