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Продовольственная и
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COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

Hundred and First Session

Rome, 21 - 23 October 2015

FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This item has been placed on the Provisional Agenda of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters ("CCLM" or "the Committee") under Rule XXXIV, paragraph 7(e), of the General Rules of the Organization ("GRO"), whereby the Committee shall consider specific items referred to it which may arise out of "the establishment of commissions and committees under Article VI of the Constitution, including their membership, terms of reference, reporting procedures and rules of procedure". This is consistent with the established practice of FAO, whereby the CCLM considers proposals for the abolition of Statutory Bodies and forwards them, with its recommendations, to the Council for such action as the Council may deem appropriate.

II. RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON STATUTORY BODIES

2. Between 1996 and 1997, a Review of FAO Bodies and Panels of Experts was conducted with a view to achieving savings and efficiencies in FAO governance.¹ As a result of this review, the Conference, at its 29th Session, "conscious of the continuing need to enhance the efficiency of the Organization and its governance in a time of financial challenge", decided to eliminate Statutory Bodies that were obsolete. By its Resolution 13/97, the Conference identified a number of Statutory Bodies that could be abolished and, in the case of bodies jointly established with other organizations, "request[ed] the Director-General to consult with the organizations ... with a view to securing alternative arrangements for, or the abolition of, the joint Bodies ... as deemed appropriate".²

3. At its 39th Session, the Conference reaffirmed the validity of Resolution 13/97, as well as the procedures for the establishment and abolition of Statutory Bodies contained therein, and "request[ed]

¹ The review was carried out by an *ad hoc* Study Group, mandated by the 110th Session of the Council in November 1995 (see CL110/REP, paragraph 17). The final results of the *Review of FAO Statutory Bodies and Panel of Experts* are contained in document CL113/2-Sup.1.

² C1997/REP, Resolution 13/97.

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the Secretariat to take an active role in identifying statutory bodies that the Council or Conference may wish to abolish because they are inactive or are mandated to discharge functions that could be undertaken through more flexible task-oriented and time-bound working arrangements, as called for by Resolution 13/97".³ The Conference recalled that, in its Resolution 13/97, it had recognized "the continuing need to enhance the efficiency of the Organization and its governance in a time of financial challenge, to eliminate Statutory Bodies that are obsolete, to ensure more flexible task-oriented and time-bound working arrangements for those that remain and to limit the creation of new Bodies to those that are strictly necessary".

4. It is noted that Article VI, paragraph 1, of the FAO Constitution provides that the Conference or Council "*may establish regional commissions open to all Member Nations and Associate Members whose territories are situated wholly or in part in one or more regions*". As such commissions may be established by a resolution, they may, likewise, be abolished by a resolution adopted by the Conference or Council. It is further noted that Statutory Bodies having regional scope are normally established by the Council and, consequently, decisions concerning their abolition may also be taken by the Council.

III. BACKGROUND ON THE STUDY GROUP

A. Establishment and mandate of the Study Group

5. The FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe ("the Study Group") was established in 1959 as a "*Study Group on Problems of Methodology and Definitions in Agricultural Statistics in Eastern and Western Countries*", following the recommendations of the Committee on Agricultural Problems of the UN Economic Commission for Europe ("UNECE") at its Eleventh Session and the suggestion of the Conference of European Statisticians ("CES"), the governing body on statistics of the UNECE, at its Seventh Session. The title was changed to its current name⁴ by CES at its Twelfth Session (1964). The activities of the Group are carried out jointly by the Agricultural Division of the UNECE, the Secretariat of CES and the Statistics Division of FAO, with the latter providing the main technical Secretariat.

6. The purpose of this body is to review the state of food and agriculture statistics in Europe, to advise Member Nations on the development and standardization of agricultural statistical services, and to convene expert groups or other Subsidiary Bodies of national experts required for this purpose. Member Nations of UNECE and of the FAO European Region are eligible to participate.

B. Rationale for Abolition of the Study Group

7. The Study Group was identified in Resolution 13/97 as a Statutory Body that could be abolished "*after discussion with the other sponsoring organizations by the Director-General*".⁵ At its 116th Session convened in 1999, the Council endorsed the Final Report on the Implementation of Conference Resolution 13/97 which, inter alia, concluded at that time, following consultations with UNECE and CES, that "*it would be advisable to maintain this mechanism with further economies sought in connection with FAO participation in its meetings*".⁶

³ C2015/REP, Resolution 11/2015.

⁴ Alternative names for this body can be found. The UN Terminology Database (<http://unterm.un.org>) uses both "FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics" and "FAO/ECE Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe" as variants of each other, which are then cross-referenced, and the last Report of the CES refers to it as the "FAO-CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics". Nevertheless, the title "FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe" encompasses all of the variations that appear to be used for this body. Unfortunately, documentation of the instrument adopted by FAO establishing the original body, as well as the decision to change its name, no longer appear to be available.

⁵ See JM97/3-Rev.2, Appendix C, as contained in document CL 113/2-Sup.1.

⁶ CL 116/REP, paragraph 103, and CL 116/INF/16.

8. Between 1960 and 2005, the Study Group was active and met regularly every two years. However, it has not met once since 2005.

9. As reflected in the Report of the 2014 October meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, the Bureau of CES “*decided to discontinue the FAO-CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics*”, bearing in mind that “*the last meeting of the Study Group was held in 2005 and the Group has not been active since then*”.⁷ The sixty-third plenary session of the CES Conference, convened in June 2015, took note of the Bureau's report.⁸

10. The original goals of the Study Group remain relevant. However, the Study Group, having not met since 2005, is not working to meet those goals. The Statistics Division confirms that the Study Group is inactive and, within FAO, alternative mechanisms by which those goals could be addressed are being considered.⁹ It has been proposed, therefore, that a process for abolition of the Study Group could be initiated.

IV. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

11. In light of the views of the Statistics Division of FAO, the decision of the CES, and based on Conference Resolutions 13/97 and 11/2015, the CCLM is invited to endorse the process presented in this document. The CCLM may wish to submit the draft Council resolution entitled “*Abolition of the FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe*”, set forth in the **Annex** to this document, to the Council for consideration and adoption.

⁷ ECE/CES/2015/14/Add.8, paragraphs 69-70.

⁸ ECE/CES/89, Report of the sixty-third plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, paragraph 73.

⁹ At the time of preparation of this paper, no corporate decision has been taken regarding a possible future global Commission on Statistics.

ANNEX**Draft Resolution****Abolition of the FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe****THE COUNCIL**

Recalling that the FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe was established under Article VI, paragraph 1, of the FAO Constitution following the recommendations of the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems at its Eleventh Session (1959) and the suggestion of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) at its Seventh Session, to review the state of food and agriculture statistics in Europe, to advise Member Nations on the development and standardization of agricultural statistical services, and to convene expert groups or other Subsidiary Bodies of national experts required for this purpose;

Further recalling Resolution 13/97 in which the Conference, *inter alia*, proposed abolition of the Study Group subject to consultations with the relevant sponsoring organizations, and the subsequent decision of the Council at its 116th Session in 1997 to maintain the Study Group following such consultations with the Conference of European Statisticians of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, due to its role in the development of food and agricultural statistics in Europe;

Bearing in mind Resolution 11/2015 adopted by the FAO Conference at its 39th Session reaffirming the validity of Resolution 13/97 and requesting “*the Secretariat to take an active role in identifying statutory bodies that the Council or Conference may wish to abolish because they are inactive or are mandated to discharge functions that could be undertaken through more flexible task-oriented and time-bound working arrangements*”;

Observing that the Study Group held its last meeting in 2005, and that the Conference of European Statisticians and the Organization concur that the Study Group is inactive and that, while the original goals of the Study Group remain relevant, the gap created by abolishing the body can be addressed through alternative mechanisms;

Hereby abolishes the FAO/ECE/CES Study Group on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe.