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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Organisation des Nations
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
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CONFERENCE

Forty-first Session

Rome, 22-29 June 2019

Arrangements for the 41st Session of the Conference

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of arrangements for the 41st Session of the FAO Conference (22-29 June 2019). It contains proposals regarding the Provisional Agenda and Timetable for the Session, the topic for the General Debate, the Biennial Theme for 2020-21, elections, resolutions and invitations. The Provisional Agenda for the Session is given in document C 2019/1 and the Timetable in C 2019/INF/1. The procedure to be followed for the address to the Conference by candidates for the office of Director-General is also set out.

The Conference is requested to decide on:

- a) The establishment of two commissions:
 - on Substantive and Policy Matters (Commission I)
 - on Programme and Budgetary Matters (Commission II)
- b) Candidates proposed by Council for the following officers of the Conference:
 - Chairperson of the Conference;
 - Chairperson of Commission I;
 - Chairperson of Commission II;
 - Three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference;
 - Seven elected Members of the General Committee; and
 - Nine Members of the Credentials Committee
- c) The main topic for the General Debate on the State of Food and Agriculture, and a five minute time limit for statements made by Heads of Delegation under this item
- d) Invitations to observers to attend the Session in an observer capacity
- e) The Biennial Theme for Governing Body sessions to be held in the 2020-21 biennium

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Introduction

1. As decided by the 40th Session of the Conference (3-8 July 2017), the 41st Session of the Conference will be held in Rome from 22 to 29 June 2019¹.
2. The Conference is the ultimate decision-making body of the Organization, determining its overall policy and strategy and taking the final decisions on objectives, strategy and budget². The Conference focuses on ensuring coherence in global policy issues and regulatory frameworks, acting on the recommendations of the FAO Technical Committees and Regional Conferences and, where appropriate, the FAO Council. More specifically, the Conference approves the Organization's priorities, strategy and budget, having considered the recommendations of the Council.

Agenda, Topic for the General Debate, Biennial Theme and Voting

3. A provisional agenda for the Conference is found in document C 2019/1.
4. Two Commissions will be established:
 - Commission I on Substantive and Policy Matters; and
 - Commission II on Programme and Budgetary Matters.
5. Each session of the Conference has one major topic for general debate. In this regard, the Council at its 160th Session (December 2018) proposed that the **topic for the General Debate of the Conference** under Item 10: *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*, be "Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development"³.
6. Since only five days are available for substantial work in plenary meetings, and as the Heads of Delegations present at the Conference will make statements under Item 10, the Council recommended that statements be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes each.
7. The Council at its 161st Session endorsed the following **Biennial Theme for Governing Body sessions to be held in the 2020-21 biennium**: "Promoting healthy diets and preventing all forms of malnutrition"⁴.
8. The election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and of Members of the Council, and the vote on the budget level (by electronic roll call vote) are scheduled to take place on Friday 28 June 2019.
9. In order to streamline procedures and to focus debate, documents for the Session include an executive summary and highlight matters requiring decision by the Conference. Where feasible, this will be done primarily by presenting draft decisions to be taken by the Conference in a form ready for approval and inclusion in the final report of the Session.

Composition of Delegations

10. Delegations are normally headed by Ministers. In accordance with Article III of the Constitution (*Appendix A*), each Member of the Organization may be represented by one delegate who may be accompanied by alternates, associates and advisers. Online registration is accessible through the password-protected FAO Members Gateway at <http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>. Instructions for online registration can be found on the same site. It should be noted that online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Constitutional Duties of the Conference

11. In addition to adopting amendments to the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Organization, and approving conventions and agreements, the Conference has the following specific constitutional duties:

¹ C 2017/REP para. 93.

² Conference Resolution 7/2009.

³ CL 160/REP, para. 24.

⁴ CL 161/REP, para. 28.

Admission of New Members

12. The Conference, as the supreme authority of the Organization, admits new Members and deals with all matters relating to membership. At the date of preparing this document, no application for membership had been received. Under Rule XIX.2 of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO), applications are receivable up to 30 days before the opening of the Conference session, i.e. Thursday 23 May 2019. The admission of new Members is decided by secret ballot and requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that the total number of affirmative and negative votes cast shall be more than one half of the Member Nations of the Organization. Membership becomes effective on the date on which the Conference approves the application.

Appointment of the Director-General

13. The procedures regarding nominations and appointment of the Director-General are set out in Rule XXXVII of the GRO. The term of office of the present Director-General will expire on 31 July 2019. Pursuant to the provisions quoted in the preceding paragraph, the 159th Session of the Council set 1 December 2018 to 28 February 2019 as the period in which nominations for the post of Director-General for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2023 were receivable⁵. Nominations received by the established deadline were circulated immediately thereafter by circular letter and through the FAO Members Gateway⁶.

14. On 4 March 2019, the Independent Chairperson of Council convened a meeting with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the seven Regional Groups in order to finalise arrangements for the *Address by Candidates for the Post of Director-General* at the 161st Session of the Council and the 41st Session of the Conference⁷.

15. The procedure concerning the address to the Conference by candidates for the office of Director-General, along with arrangements for voting at the election of the Director-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Rules XII and XXXVII of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO), are set out in *Appendix B*.

Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council

16. In accordance with Article V.2 of the Constitution and Rule XXIII.1 of the GRO, the Conference appoints the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

17. Rule XXIII.1(b) of the GRO provides that the Council determine the closing date of submission of nominations for the office of Independent Chairperson of the Council by Member Nations to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Council. Likewise, the Council also sets the date by which the Secretary-General circulates these nominations to all Members of the Organization. In this regard, the Council at its 160th Session established 12.00 hours on Friday 5 April 2019 as the closing date for submission of nominations for this appointment⁸, and Friday 12 April 2019 as the date by which such nominations were to be circulated by letter and through the FAO Members Gateway by the Secretary-General (see document C 2019/9).

Election of Council Members

18. In line with Article V.1 of the Constitution, the Conference elects the Members of the Council. In accordance with Rule XXII.10(a) of the GRO, the Conference decides the date of the election and the date by which nominations for election to the Council must be submitted. It is proposed that the election be held on Friday 28 June 2019.

19. As laid down in Rule XXII.10(c) of the GRO, nominations must be supported in writing by the delegates of two Member Nations to the Conference, other than the delegate of the Member Nation nominated, and must be accompanied by a formal written acceptance of the nomination by the delegate of the Member Nation nominated. Conference document C 2019/11 contains information regarding the election of Council Members, including a Nomination Form which reflects the above

⁵ CL 159/REP, para 18.

⁶ C 2019/7; C 2019/7 Add.1.

⁷ CL 161/7 Rev.1, para 2.

⁸ CL 160/REP, para. 25.

requirements. Rule XXII.10(d) further specifies that the General Committee shall communicate the valid nominations received to the Conference at least three working days before the date selected for the election. The Council at its 160th Session recommended that the deadline for the receipt of nominations be set at 12.00 hours on Monday 24 June 2019⁹.

Officers of the Conference

20. In accordance with Rule XXIV.5(b) of the GRO, the Council nominates candidates for the offices of: (i) Chairperson of the Conference; (ii) Chairpersons of the commissions of the Conference; (iii) three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference; (iv) seven elected Members of the General Committee to the Conference; and (v) nine Members of the Credentials Committee¹⁰.

21. At its 161st Session, the Council nominated Mr Enzo Benech, Minister for Livestock, Agriculture and Fishery of Uruguay, as Chairperson of the Conference¹¹. This nomination will be submitted for endorsement by the Conference at its opening, along with nominations for the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference. Nominations for the two Vice-Chairpersons of both Commission I and Commission II will be approved by the Conference through the General Committee.

22. Following past practice the members of the Credentials Committee will commence their work in the 15 days leading up to the Conference.

Conference Resolutions

23. The existing criteria for Conference Resolutions, which are confined to formal matters, are set out in *Appendix C*.

Invitations¹²

24. The United Nations, its Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency may be represented at sessions of the Conference, without the right to vote. Other intergovernmental organizations having concluded an agreement with FAO which contains specific provisions to this effect have a right to attend as observers. Non-governmental organizations which have consultative status are also entitled to send observers to Conference sessions. Other intergovernmental organizations, including non-governmental organizations having specialized consultative status or liaison status, may be invited on a provisional basis by the Director-General.

25. *Appendix D* contains the above-mentioned provisions as set out in Rule XVII of the GRO and the FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations (FAO Basic Texts, Volume II, Section M).

26. The 160th Session of the Council recommended that, following previous practice, Palestine be invited to attend the 41st Session of the Conference in an observer capacity¹³.

⁹ CL 160/REP, para. 23(b).

¹⁰ CL 161/REP, paras. 23-27.

¹¹ CL 161/REP, para. 23.

¹² C 2019/13.

¹³ CL 160/REP, para. 26.

Appendix A**Extract from Article III of the Constitution of FAO****The Conference****[Provisions regulating composition of delegations]**

1. There shall be a Conference of the Organization in which each Member Nation and Associate Member shall be represented by one delegate. Associate Members shall have the right to participate in the deliberations of the Conference but shall not hold office nor have the right to vote.
2. Each Member Nation and Associate Member may appoint alternates, associates and advisers to its delegate. The Conference may determine the conditions for the participation of alternates, associates and advisers in its proceedings, but any such participation shall be without the right to vote, except in the case of an alternate, associate, or adviser participating in the place of a delegate.
3. No delegate may represent more than one Member Nation or Associate Member.
4. Each Member Nation shall have one vote. A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a Member Nation to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member Nation.

Appendix B**Procedures Concerning the *Address by Candidates*
for the *Office of Director-General* at the 41st Session of the Conference*****Time allocation for each candidate***

Each candidate, validly nominated in accordance with Rule XII, paragraph 5 of the GRO, will make a statement to a plenary meeting of the Conference of up to 15 minutes and no question and answer session will take place thereafter.

The *Address by Candidates for the Post of Director-General* to the Conference will be scheduled on the afternoon of Saturday 22 June 2019.

Order of speakers

The order in which speakers will address the Conference was determined by drawing of lots by the Independent Chairperson of the Council. The order of speakers will be as follows: (1) Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle (France); (2) Davit Kirvalidze (Georgia); (3) Qu Dongyu (China).

**Arrangements for Voting
(Extract from document CL 161/7 Rev.1)**

Pursuant to Article VII of the FAO Constitutions with regard to *The Director-General* of FAO and in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXXVII of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) regarding the *Appointment of the Director-General*, as well as the relevant provisions set out in Rule XII of the GRO regarding *Quorum and Voting Arrangements at Meetings of Conference and Council*, the following arrangements for voting will be applied for the election of the Director-General of FAO for the term of office from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2023 scheduled to take place during the 41st Session of the FAO Conference on Sunday 23 June 2019:

- The appointment of the Director-General shall be decided by secret ballot [Rule XII.10(a)].
- The appointment of the Director-General at a regular session of the Conference shall be effected within three working days following the opening date of the session [Rule XXXVII.1(d)].

Quorum

A majority of the Member Nations shall constitute a quorum [Rule XII.2(a)].

Majority

The Director-General shall be elected by a majority of votes cast; votes cast means affirmative and negative votes and does not include abstentions or defective ballots [Rule XII.4(a)].

Until a candidate obtains the required majority, the following procedure shall apply [Rule XXXVII.2(a-h)]:

- Two ballots shall be held among all candidates
- The candidate having received the smallest number of votes in the second ballot shall be eliminated;
- Thereafter, successive ballots shall be held and the candidate having received the smallest number of votes in any one of these ballots shall be eliminated until only three candidates remain;
- Two ballots shall be held among the three remaining candidates and the candidate having received the smallest number of votes during this second ballot shall be eliminated;
- A subsequent ballot or successive ballots shall be held among the two remaining candidates until one candidate obtains the required majority.

Tellers

The Chairperson of the Conference shall appoint two tellers from among the delegates, who are not parties directly involved in the election, to supervise the balloting procedure, count the ballot papers, decide on the validity of the ballot paper and certify the result of each ballot. The same tellers may be appointed for successive ballots. [Rule XII.10(c)(i-iii)].

The nominated tellers will be invited by the Secretariat at the start of the Conference to a briefing on duties to be carried out.

Scrutineers

Either the candidate or a scrutineer appointed by the candidate may attend the count of the votes, without taking part therein [Rule XII.10(g)]. The Secretariat will request candidates to provide the names of scrutineers in advance.

Count of votes

The Secretariat is mandated to take such steps as may be required to ensure that the results of secret ballots remain undisclosed until the formal announcement of the outcome of the ballot [Rule XII.10(h)]. Following the recommendation by the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (October 2017), approved by the 158th Session of the Council (December 2017), the Secretariat is invited to enforce Rule XII.10(h), if necessary, by requesting all delegates and Secretariat members attending the count of votes to hand over any electronic appliances, such as mobile phones and tablets while in the room.

Elections Officer

An Elections Officer is appointed by the Director-General for each session of the Conference or Council who is responsible for ensuring adherence to the provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization during the voting and electoral procedure [Rule XII.16(a-g)].

Criteria for Conference Resolutions

Criteria for the Formulation of Resolutions:

Resolutions should be confined essentially to the following formal matters:

- i) Amendments to the Constitution, the GRO, and the Financial Regulations.
- ii) Approval or confirmation of conventions or agreements and of amendments thereto.
- iii) Establishment of bodies under Article VI of the Constitution and adoption or amendment of the Statutes of such Bodies.
- iv) Adoption of the Programme of Work and Budget for the ensuing biennium.
- v) Decisions regarding financial matters such as the Working Capital Fund, the scale of contributions, and adoption of audited accounts.
- vi) Major programme and policy matters.
- vii) Recommendations to Member Nations or to international organizations.
- viii) Matters relating to the appointment of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Council.
- ix) Tributes and commemorations of special importance to FAO.

Appendix D**FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations
Rule XVII of the General Rules of the Organization
Participating International Organizations**

1. A representative of the United Nations and a representative of any specialized agency of the United Nations, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any commission, of any committee of a commission, and of any committee established under Rule XV. Such representatives may, without vote, speak and participate in the discussions and may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
2. An observer of any other intergovernmental organization with which an agreement has been concluded providing for representation, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference, and the meetings of any commission, of any technical committee of a commission and of any technical committee established under Rule XV. Such observer may, without vote, speak and, upon the request of the Chairperson, participate in the discussions. They may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
3. An observer of any international non-governmental organization having consultative status, accompanied by advisers and assistants, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any commission, of any technical committee of a commission and of any technical committee established under Rule XV. Such observers may, without vote, speak before such commissions and committees, participate in the discussions therein upon the request of the Chairperson and, with the consent of the General Committee, speak before plenary meetings of the Conference. They may circulate to the Conference, without abridgement, the views of the organizations which they represent.
4. The Director-General shall determine provisionally what other international organizations shall be invited to any session of the Conference and shall submit the list of such organizations to the Conference for approval.

**Extract from the FAO Basic Texts, Volume II, Section M
FAO Policy Concerning Relations with International Non-Governmental Organizations****General Arrangements**

5. The Organization established relationships with certain international non-governmental organizations in order to secure their advice and to associate them effectively with the work of the Organization.

Organizations eligible for consultative status

6. In order to be eligible for consultative status, an international non-governmental organization shall:
 - a) be international in its structure and scope of activity, be sufficiently representative of the field of interest in which it operates, and be of a recognized standing that renders its views on policy a matter of great interest to governments and to FAO;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a substantial portion of FAO's field of activity;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.

Organizations eligible for specialized consultative status

7. In order to be eligible for specialized consultative status, an international non-governmental organization shall:
- a) be international in its structure and scope of activity, and representative of the specialized field of interest in which it operates;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a particular portion of FAO's field of activity;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.

Organizations eligible for liaison status

8. In order to be eligible for liaison status an international non- governmental organization shall:
- a) be international in its structure and scope of activity and be sufficiently representative of the field of interest in which it operates;
 - b) be concerned with matters covering a portion of FAO's field of activity and be in a position to give practical assistance in that field;
 - c) have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO;
 - d) have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.