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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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CONFERENCE

Forty First Session

Rome, 22-29 June 2019

Report of the First Meeting of the General Committee

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A. Agenda for the Session¹

1. The General Committee examined the Provisional Conference Agenda contained in document C 2019/1.
2. The Committee recommends that the Provisional Agenda be adopted by the Conference.

B. Establishment of Commissions and Provisional Timetable of the Session²

3. At its 160th Session (3-7 December 2018) and 161st Session (8-12 April 2019) the Council formulated proposals concerning the organization and timetable for the 41st Session of the Conference. These proposals are contained in documents C 2019/12/Rev.1 and C 2019/INF/1/Rev.1.
4. The Committee recommends that the Conference establish two Commissions to consider and report on the "Substantive and Policy Matters" and "Programme and Budgetary Matters" sections of the Agenda respectively.
5. The Committee recommends that the Conference approve the Provisional Timetable proposed by the Council.

C. Appointment of the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Two Commissions³

6. In accordance with Rules VII and XXIV.5(b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) and as indicated in document C 2019/LIM/5, the Council at its 161st Session proposed the following candidates as Chairpersons of the Commissions:

Commission I: Ms Marie-Therese Sarch (United Kingdom)
Commission II: Mr Bommakanti Rajender (India)

The Committee recommends that the Conference endorse the nomination of:

Ms Marie-Therese Sarch (United Kingdom) as Chairperson of Commission I; and
Mr Bommakanti Rajender (India) as Chairperson of Commission II.

7. In accordance with Rule X.2(c) of the GRO the Committee recommends that the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commissions be as follows:

Commission I: Ms Zora Weberová (Slovakia)
Mr Haitham Abdelhady Elsayed Elshahat (Egypt)

Commission II: Mr Inge Nordang (Norway)
Ms Jeanne Dambendzet (Congo)

D. Resolutions

8. The existing criteria for draft Conference Resolutions are described in document C 2019/12/Rev.1, *Appendix C*. Accordingly, the General Committee recommends that these criteria apply for the 41st Session of the Conference.

¹ C 2019/1; C 2019/INF/1/Rev.1; C 2019/12;

² C 2019/12/Rev.1; C 2019/INF/1/Rev.1

³ C 2019/LIM/5

E. Appointment of the Director-General

9. By the date established by the Council, that is 28 February 2019, the following five nominations had been received for the post of the Director-General:

Cameroon:	Mr Médi MOUNGUI
China:	Mr Qu Dongyu
France:	Ms Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
Georgia:	Mr Davit Kirvalidze
India:	Mr Ramesh Chand

These nominations were notified to all Members by Circular Letter C/CF-4/2 on 4 March 2019.

10. Subsequently, on 21 March 2019, the Government of Cameroon informed of the withdrawal of the nomination of Mr Médi MOUNGUI.⁴

11. On 13 June 2019, the Government of India informed of the withdrawal of the nomination of Mr Ramesh Chand⁵, resulting in three remaining candidates.

12. Under the terms of Rule XXXVII.1(d) of the GRO, the General Committee determines and announces the date of the election, it being understood that the appointment of the Director-General at a regular Session shall begin and be effected within three working days following the opening date of the Session. The election is by secret ballot. The candidate who obtains the required majority of votes cast, that is, more than one half of the votes cast (abstentions and defective ballots not being counted), is elected, provided that a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization is present.

13. Rule XXXVII.1(d) also stipulates that candidates shall address the Conference and respond to questions that Members may put to them, subject to such arrangements as the Conference may make consistent with the General Rules of the Organization aimed at ensuring equality among candidates. In this regard, the Committee notes the broad consensus for a suggestion made by the Chairpersons of the FAO Regional Groups that the addresses by candidates be streamlined in the interest of good time management. The Committee therefore recommends that candidates address the Conference for no more than 15 minutes rather than replicate the 45 minute address, questions and answers sequence followed by the Council in April 2019.

14. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the addresses by candidates be made on the afternoon of Saturday 22 June. The Committee understands that lots were drawn by the Independent Chairperson of the Council at a meeting in his office with representatives of the candidates on 1 April 2019 to determine the speaking order of the candidates. The candidates will address the Conference as follows:

France:	Ms Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
Georgia:	Mr Davit Kirvalidze
China:	Mr Qu Dongyu

15. The Committee recommends that secret balloting for the appointment begin on the morning of Sunday 23 June 2019 and continue until a candidate reaches the majority, as is envisaged in document C 2019/INF/1/Rev.1 "Provisional Timetable".

16. The Committee noted that, further to consultation with the Independent Chairperson of the Council, the Director-General had decided that electronic recording devices, defined as any device which could be used to record images, including but not limited to cameras, mobile phones or smartwatches, shall not be allowed within the polling area. Electors shall leave any such devices in a basket at the entrance to the polling area before entering. Electors should show the tellers that they do

⁴ C 2019/7 Add. 1

⁵ C 2019/7 Add. 2

not have electronic devices. The Director-General would also request the Secretary-General of the Conference to remind all delegates of the importance of complete secrecy of the ballot and of the requirement that all those responsible for the supervision of any vote by secret ballot shall not disclose to any unauthorized person any information which might tend, or be presumed to tend, towards destroying the secrecy of the ballot, in accordance with the Rules. This would be without prejudice to any further arrangements that the General Committee might wish to recommend to the Conference, in line with the communication on this matter of the Assistant Director-General/Directeur de Cabinet of 19 June 2019.

F. Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council⁶

17. By the date determined by the Council, that is, 5 April 2019, one nomination had been received for election to the office of Independent Chairperson of the Council, namely:

- Mr Khalid Mehboob (Pakistan)

This nomination was notified by the Secretary-General to all Members by circular letter C/CF 4/3 of 22 January 2019.

18. In line with Rule XII.10(a) GRO, as there is only one candidate for the post of Independent Chairperson of the Council, the General Committee recommends that the appointment be decided by clear general consent.

G. Election of Members of the Council⁷

19. Rule XXII.10(a) of the GRO provides that the Conference, on the recommendation of the General Committee, shall, not later than the end of the third day of the Conference Session, decide the date of election of Members of the Council and the date by which nominations are to be submitted.

20. The Committee accordingly recommends that:

- a) nominations for the Council seats to be filled at the present session be communicated to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Council by 12.00 hours on Monday 24 June 2019; and
- b) the election be held in the morning of Friday 28 June 2019.

21. In this connection, the Conference will note in particular the following provisions of paragraphs 3 to 7 of Rule XXII of the GRO:

“3. In selecting Members of the Council, the Conference shall give due consideration to the desirability of:

- a) including in its membership a balanced geographical representation of nations interested in the production, distribution and consumption of food and agricultural products;
- b) ensuring the participation in the work of the Council of such Member Nations as contribute in a large measure toward the success of the Organization;
- c) giving to the greatest possible number of Member Nations an opportunity, by rotation of membership, to serve on the Council.

4. Member Nations shall be eligible for re-election.

5. No Member Nation shall be eligible for election to the Council if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years.

6. The Conference shall, at any regular or special session, fill all other vacancies on the Council which may have occurred since the last regular session. In the case of a special session, the General Committee shall recommend to the Conference such readjustments as circumstances may warrant to the time limits provided for in paragraph 10(a) and (d) below.

⁶ C 2019/9

⁷ C 2019/11

7. A Member of the Council shall be considered to have resigned if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years, or if it has not been represented at two consecutive sessions of the Council”.

H. Right of Reply

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

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

I. Verbatim Records

24. Rule XVIII of the GRO lays down that verbatim records shall be kept for all Conference Plenary and Commissions’ meetings and that delegates shall be given the opportunity to check the accuracy of the record of their interventions. Editorial amendments should be submitted by the delegation which made the statement within one week of publication of the draft verbatim record concerned.

25. The Committee noted that for the General Debate under item 10 – *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*, a dedicated Web page had been set up for statements provided by delegations and related audio recordings. Such statements and recordings would be uploaded immediately after delivery in the plenary meeting and treated as Verbatim Records for item 10.

26. In 1961 a procedure was formally adopted by the Conference whereby speakers who so desire may have their statements inserted in the record without delivering them in Plenary. The Committee recommends to follow this procedure in the interests of saving time on condition that:

- a) the Plenary, or the Commission concerned, be 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;
- b) the text handed over to the Chairperson for insertion should preferably be in digital format;
- c) the provisional verbatim record containing the additional statement be circulated before the close of the Session; and
- d) delegations attending the Session be able to avail themselves of the right of reply by having an opportunity to make, prior to the close of the Session, an intervention relating to the inserted statement.

J. Statements by Heads of Delegations

27. The Committee recommends that a list of speakers for the General Debate under item 10, *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture on the topic Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development*, be published daily in the Journal of the Conference, in the order in which they will be called upon to take the floor by the Chairperson, and further recommends that statements be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

K. Admission of Observers from Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations⁸

28. 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 2019/13 Rev.1. The invitations sent to Intergovernmental

⁸ C 2019/12; C 2019/13

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.

29. After having reviewed this list, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm such provisional invitations.

L. Attendance by Palestine

30. In conformity with the suggestion made by the Council at its 160th Session⁹, Palestine has been invited to attend the Conference in an observer capacity. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm this invitation, in line with the practice followed, and the terms applied, since 1975.

M. Conclusion

31. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm all the above arrangements for the Session.

⁹ C 2019/LIM/5