



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Item 1 of the Provisional Agenda

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

7 – 8 December 2021

Annotated Provisional Agenda

Introduction

1. This First Special Session of the Governing Body is convened under the provisions of Article 19 of the International Treaty and is open to all Contracting Parties and observers.
2. Article 19.10 of the Treaty provides for the possibility of special sessions of the Governing Body and, as provided under Rule 2.2 of the *Rules of Procedures*, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons “shall serve as the Bureau of any special session held during their terms of office, and provide guidance to the Secretary with regard to the preparations for, and conduct of, sessions of the Governing Body”.
3. In accordance with Rule 4.3 of the *Rules of Procedure of the Governing Body*, the Session is convened by the Chairperson of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, in agreement with the Bureau, and in consultation with the Director-General of the FAO and the Secretary.
4. Due to the extraordinary circumstances arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, originally scheduled for December 2021, has been postponed to May 2022. Consequently, this Special Session is being convened to adopt an *interim* budget for 2022, to enable continued functioning of the Treaty and its Secretariat, pending when the Governing Body adopts the regular budget for the 2022 – 2023 biennium.
5. The Session will be held virtually, on **7 and 8 December 2021**, in accordance with the guidance provided by the Bureau.
6. In accordance with Rule 7 of the *Rules of Procedure of the Governing Body*, the Secretary has notified those governmental or non-governmental bodies and agencies, which have informed the Secretariat of their wish to be represented at the session, so that they may be admitted as observers.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda

7. The Provisional Agenda was prepared by the Secretary under the guidance of the Bureau of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, in accordance with Rule 5.1 of the *Rules of Procedure*.
8. The Governing Body is invited to consider the Provisional Agenda contained in the document, IT/GB-Sp1/21/1, *Provisional Agenda*, in order to adopt its Agenda and organize its work for this Session.
9. In adopting its Agenda, the Governing Body will confirm that this virtual meeting constitutes a session of the Governing Body, taking into account the information and descriptions contained in the

Documents can be consulted at <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1397828/>

Appendix to this document, which outlines the special procedures proposed for this Session in connection with its virtual modality. This decision shall be reflected in the final Report of this Session.

Item 2. Organizational matters

10. In accordance with Rule 2.1 of the *Rules of Procedure*, “*the Governing Body shall elect [...] a Rapporteur from among the delegates, alternates, experts and advisers of the Contracting Parties*”. The Governing Body is invited to do so under this Agenda Item. In order to streamline the process, it is suggested that the Bureau nominate the *Rapporteur* from among its members.
11. Article 19.4 of the International Treaty provides that each Contracting Party shall have one vote and may be represented at sessions of the Governing Body by a single delegate, who may be accompanied by an alternate, and by experts and advisers. Alternates, experts and advisers may take part in the proceedings of the Governing Body, but may not vote, except in the case of their being duly authorized to substitute for the delegate.
12. According to Rule 4.5 of the *Rules of Procedure*, “*...each Contracting Party shall communicate to the Secretary of the Treaty the name of its representatives on the Governing Body before the opening of each session of the Governing Body*”.
13. The list of observers that have requested approval to participate at the First Special Session of the Governing Body is contained in the document, IT/GB-Sp1/21/2.
14. Rule 13 of the *Rules of Procedure* further states that “*the provisions of the General Rules of the FAO shall apply mutatis mutandis to all matters not specifically dealt with under the Treaty or the present Rules*”. According to Rules 3.3 and 3.4 of the General Rules of the FAO, a Credentials Committee shall be established to examine credentials.
15. The Governing Body is invited to confirm the delegation of the functions of the Credentials Committee to the Bureau for this Session.

Item 3. The Interim Budget for 2022

16. According to the *Financial Rules of the Governing Body*, the regular financial period is two calendar years, coinciding with the financial period of FAO, and Rule 3.4 provides that the draft budget shall be prepared by the Secretary and circulated to Contracting Parties before regular Sessions of the Governing Body.
17. The biennial financial period for the current budget is up to 31 December 2021. The Work Programme and Budget for the 2022 – 2023 biennium was expected to be adopted at the Ninth Session of the Governing, originally scheduled to be held from 6 – 11 December 2021.
18. However, the extraordinary circumstances arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic led to the postponement of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body to May 2022. Consequently, the Bureau requested the Secretary to develop a proposal for an *interim* budget for its review, in order to ensure the continued operations of the Treaty mechanisms and the functioning of its Secretariat throughout the year 2022. Following the review and agreement by the Bureau, the draft *Interim* Budget for 2022 was prepared and presented for the consideration of the First Special Session of the Governing Body, as contained in the document, IT/GB-Sp1/21/3.
19. The document also contains a draft Resolution, which indicates, among other things, that the adoption of the *interim* budget is without prejudice to any decisions that the Governing Body may take on the Core Administrative Budget for the 2022-2023 biennium at its Ninth Session.
20. Additionally, the Bureau agreed on the application of a correspondence procedure, similar to the one used by other FAO’s governing bodies in 2021, to allow Contracting Parties to submit comments and raise questions on the draft *interim* budget. Such submissions, if any, should be received by 19 November 2021, and will be posted along with the replies provided by the Secretary on the website of the

International Treaty, on the meeting page of the First Special Session. The description of this procedure is contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

21. Based on the recommendation of the Bureau and submissions from Contracting Parties, if any, the Governing Body is invited to adopt the Resolution on the *Interim* Budget for 2022.

Item 4. Adoption of the Report

22. According to Rule 8.1 of the Rules of Procedure, “[a]t each session, the Governing Body shall approve a report embodying its decisions, views, recommendations and conclusions”.

23. This final agenda item, therefore, provides for the approval of the Report of the First Special Session of the Governing Body.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

1. The procedures outlined in this document apply on an exceptional basis to the First Special Session of the Governing Body in light of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting virtual modality of this Session. The adoption of such procedures shall not create a precedent for the working methods of the Governing Body or any other subsidiary body of the International Treaty for their future meetings.

CONDUCT OF SESSION

2. All plenary meetings of the First Special Session will be conducted through the Zoom platform. Contracting Parties and Observers will be granted equal accessibility and capability inside the Zoom platform, ensuring their ability to be seen, and to view who is in attendance in the virtual meeting, and to address the Governing Body.

3. Contracting Parties may request the floor by using the ‘raise hand’ function in the Zoom platform. This will draw up a list of speakers that the Chairperson will use to call participants to take the floor.

4. The list of observers that have requested to participate at the First Special Session of the Governing Body is contained in the document IT/GB-Sp1/21/2.

5. Simultaneous interpretation in all six languages of the FAO will be provided during the First Special Session.

6. Given the virtual modality of the First Special Session of the Governing Body and the need to streamline the proceedings to ensure sufficient time during the session to complete the agenda, participants are encouraged to limit interventions to three minutes, and regional interventions to five minutes. Regional statements are particularly encouraged to maximize the efficiency of the proceedings.

7. To facilitate interpretation and reporting, all participants are requested to provide written copies of their statements to the Secretariat prior to the commencement of First Special Session or as early as possible before delivery, and sent to: FAO-Interpretation@fao.org and PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org.

8. Participants may use the chat function of the Zoom platform for exchanging information. However, views that should be taken into account in the preparation of the meeting report need to be orally expressed during the session.

AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND DOCUMENTATION

9. All the documents for the session are prepared and made available as per established practice on the website of the International Treaty, under the section “Meetings”, selecting the First Special Session.¹

10. The time zone applicable to the First Special Session will be Central European Time (CET = UTC+1). This is the time zone of the FAO headquarters.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1397828/>

11. The Session is scheduled from 12:00 to 15:00 hours on both 7 and 8 December, with a provision for an additional three-hour session on 8 December, should it be needed.

12. The Chairperson of the Governing Body may call for a short break of up to ten minutes at any time during the session.

13. At the beginning of the First Special Session, the Governing Body will be invited to declare any rules incompatible with the virtual modality not applicable. All other working methods of the Governing Body outlined in this Note, in relation to the agenda, timetable, documentation, written correspondence, and conduct of the session, will be applied.

CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURE

14. Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda will be addressed through a correspondence procedure. Under the correspondence procedure, Contracting Parties will be asked to submit any comments and questions in writing to the Secretariat, and will be provided with written responses where applicable.

15. Contracting Parties are invited to submit the comments or questions related to the relevant item through PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org no later than **17:00 (CET) on 19 November 2021**.

16. All inputs received will be posted on the meeting webpage in the original language and with translation into English, and the Secretary will provide a written response in English soon afterwards.² Courtesy translation into other languages may also be provided when possible, depending on the time and length of the submission.

17. The Chairperson of the Governing Body, in consultation with the Bureau members and the concerned Contracting Party or Parties, will make every effort, before the commencement of the virtual Session, to resolve any outstanding or new substantive issues arising from the correspondence procedure that cannot be resolved by a response from the Secretary.

18. The Chairperson will draft summary conclusions for the agenda item considered through the correspondence procedure on the basis of the written exchanges or the further consultations, if any, for the consideration of the Governing Body at the virtual meeting of the First Special Session.

RECORDS AND REPORTS

19. According to the Rules of Procedure, “*at each session, the Governing Body shall approve a report embodying its decisions, views, recommendations and conclusions*”. The draft report of the First Special Session will be prepared by the *Rapporteur* of the Governing Body with the assistance of the Secretary.

20. All other working methods of the Governing Body outlined in this Note for the First Special Session shall be recorded in the report.

21. The report of the Governing Body “*shall be circulated, for their information, by the Secretary within sixty days of approval to all Contracting Parties and observers that were represented at the session the Director-General of FAO, and, upon request, to other Members and Associate Members of the FAO.*”

² <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1397828/>