



CONFERENCE

Forty-third Session

Rome, 1-7 July 2023

Arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference

Executive Summary

This document provides an outline of arrangements for the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023), including its architecture, key decisions it will take under its constitutional duties, measures to ensure efficiency in its conduct, and other relevant arrangements:

A) the architecture of the session consists of enabling instruments such as agenda, timetable, and hybrid modality; constituent components of the Conference, including the Plenary, Commissions and Committees; and Officers of the Conference

B) key decisions that the 43rd Session of the Conference will undertake under its constitutional duties includes appointment of the Director-General by in-person, secret ballot vote, mandated by rules and regulations of the Organization, even in the instance of one candidate only

C) measures to ensure efficiency at the 43rd Session of the Conference include the application of a written correspondence procedure, advance submission of keynote statements by delegates, speaking time limits, advance circulation of Secretariat introductions, and timeliness in the right of reply

D) other arrangements for the session include registration, representatives and observers invited to the Conference, and verbatim records.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The 43rd Session of the Conference will be held in Rome from 1 to 7 July 2023¹, as decided by the 42nd Session of the Conference (14-18 June 2021).
2. Arrangements for the 43rd Session are informed by the relevant provisions in the Basic Texts of the Organization, recommendations by the Conference and the Council, and established practice.
3. This document articulates these arrangements, which consist of: A) the architecture of the 43rd Session of the Conference; B) the key decisions the Conference will take; C) measures to ensure efficiency in the conduct of the Conference; and D) other arrangements for the Session.

A. ARCHITECTURE

4. The architecture of the 43rd Session of the Conference consists of three elements: a) enabling instruments, such as the Conference's modality, agenda, timetable, and topic for general debate; b) constituent components of the Conference, namely Plenary, Commissions I and II, the General Committee, and the Credentials Committee; and c) the Officers of the Conference.

Enabling Instruments

5. The 43rd Session of the Conference will be conducted in hybrid physical-virtual **modality**, ensuring participation on equal footing, in debate and discussion, of delegates attending in person at FAO headquarters in Rome, and those connecting online worldwide. The Conference will decide formally to hold its 43rd Session in hybrid modality, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, upon recommendation of its General Committee.
6. The Provisional **Agenda** for the 43rd Session of the Conference is given in document C 2023/1. It was previously reviewed by the 171st Session of the Council², which recommended its approval by the Conference.
7. The Provisional **Timetable** for the 43rd Session of the Conference is given in document C 2023/INF/1.
8. The **topic for general debate** at the 43rd Session of the Conference of "*Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals*" was proposed for approval by the Conference by the 171st Session of the Council³.

Constituent Components

9. There are five constituent components of the Conference: Plenary, Commission I, Commission II, General Committee, and Credentials Committee.
10. The main constituent component of the Conference is its **Plenary** occurrence. The Plenary is chaired by the Chairperson of the Conference, who is elected by the Conference along with three Vice-Chairpersons. The Plenary takes all the decisions of the Conference, promulgated ultimately by means of the Report of the Conference, which in turn contains specific Conference Resolutions.
11. Meetings of the Plenary are open to the entirety of FAO membership, are held in public through live webcast, and verbatim records are kept of its debates. Keynote statements by heads of delegation are delivered to the Conference in Plenary session in general debate under agenda item 10 – *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*.
12. In addition to the Plenary, there are two **Commissions** of the 43rd Session of the Conference:
 - **Commission I** to examine and review Substantive and Policy Matters; and

¹ C 2021/REP, para 81

² CL 171/REP, para 41

³ CL 171/REP, para 41 (c)

- **Commission II** to examine and review Programme and Budgetary Matters.

13. The establishment of these two Commissions for the 43rd Session of the Conference was proposed for approval by the Conference by the 172nd Session of the Council⁴, and is consistent with long held practice at the Conference. The two Commissions are chaired by Chairpersons elected by the Conference, their meetings are open to the entirety of FAO membership, are held in public through live webcast, and verbatim records are kept of their debates.

14. The Commissions make their recommendations to the Conference by means of their respective Reports, which are constructed through dedicated Drafting Committees, adopted by the individual Commissions, and transmitted to the Plenary. In turn, the Plenary reviews the Reports of the two Commissions for adoption, and ultimately for integration into the Report of the Conference.

15. The **General Committee** acts as the bureau of the Conference, and facilitates efficiency in the conduct of the Session of the Conference. Accordingly, it reviews and makes recommendations for approval by the Conference on enabling instruments and procedural matters of the Conference. In addition, the General Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Conference on requests for restoration of the voting rights by Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization.

16. The General Committee is established under Rule X of the General Rules of the Organization (GROs), it is chaired by the Chairperson of the Conference, and its membership consists in addition of the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference, and seven Member Nations elected by the Conference. Its meetings are held in private, and no verbatim records are kept.

17. The **Credentials Committee** is mandated to examine for approval by the Conference the credentials of delegations deposited by Members of the Conference. It is established under GRO III, and consists of nine Member Nations elected by the Conference, and is chaired by a Chairperson elected by the Credentials Committee itself. Meetings of the Credentials Committee are held in private, and no verbatim records are kept.

Officers of the 43rd Session of the Conference

18. In accordance with GRO XXIV.5(b), the 172nd Session of the Council nominated⁵ 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 Committee.

19. Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food of Canada was nominated⁶ for election by the Conference as **Chairperson of the 43rd Session of the Conference**.

20. The following three nominations⁷ for **Vice-Chairpersons of the 43rd Session of the Conference** are submitted:

- Mr Morten von Hanno Aasland, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Norway
- Mr Khalid Mehboob, Alternate Permanent Representative, Pakistan
- Mr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Subaie, Minister for Municipality, Qatar

21. For the two Commissions of the Conference, the following nominations⁸ are submitted:

- **Chairperson, Commission I** – Mr Marcel Beukeboom, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)

⁴ CL 171/REP, para 41 (a)

⁵ CL 172/REP, paras 32-36.

⁶ CL 172/REP, para 32

⁷ CL 172/REP, para 33

⁸ CL 172/REP, para 34

- **Chairperson of Commission II** – Mr Abdul Rahman Abdul Wahab, Alternate Permanent Representative, Malaysia
22. For the **General Committee**, the following seven nominations⁹ are submitted:
- Australia
 - China
 - Egypt
 - Ethiopia¹⁰
 - France
 - United States of America
 - Venezuela
23. For the **Credentials Committee**, the following nine nominations¹¹ are submitted:
- Bangladesh
 - Canada
 - Germany
 - Lebanon
 - New Zealand
 - Panama
 - Russian Federation
 - United States of America
 - Zambia

B. DECISIONS

24. 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 budget.¹²

25. In this regard, the 43rd Session of the Conference has the constitutional duty to take the following four decisions by vote: appointment of the Director-General, appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Conference, election of Council Members, and approval of the Budgetary Appropriations for the 2024-25 biennium.

26. In order to participate in any votes during the 43rd Session of the Conference, including the four described in paragraph 25 above, Member Nations which have automatically lost their voting rights due to arrears in their financial contributions to the Organization under Article III.4 of the Constitution, must have said voting rights restored beforehand by the Conference.

27. Major decisions by the Conference are promulgated within its Report by means of the formal instrument of a Conference Resolution, which are adopted by the Conference further to criteria established by the Conference itself.

⁹ CL 172/REP, para 35

¹⁰ Nomination received after the 172nd Session of the Council, in substitution of Algeria

¹¹ CL 172/REP, para 36

¹² Conference Resolution 7/2009

Appointment of the Director-General

28. Appointment of the Director-General for the term of office from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2027 will be undertaken by means of an in-person, **secret ballot vote** in the Plenary Hall at the Rome headquarters premises on **Sunday, 2 July 2023 at 10.30am (Rome time)**, in full conformity with the provisions of the Basic Texts of the FAO.
29. There is a sole candidate at the 43rd Session of the Conference for the office of Director-General:
- **QU Dongyu** – China
30. The holding of a secret ballot vote for appointment of the Director-General is mandatory under the rules and regulations of the Organization, **including in the instance of one candidate only**. Specifically, GRO XII.10(a) states that “*The appointment of the Director-General shall be decided by secret ballot.*”
31. Arrangements for the conduct of the secret ballot vote for appointment of the Director-General at the 43rd Session include:
- the voting population, and thus the **quorum** for the vote, shall be determined solely on the basis of delegates present physically in the Plenary Hall at the time
 - 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
 - two **tellers** will be appointed among the delegates by the Chairperson of the Conference, to oversee the vote, including supervision of the balloting and counting procedures
 - the candidate may appoint a **scrutineer** to attend the count of the votes, without taking part in the counting itself
 - the Secretariat will request that **electronic recording or communication appliances**, such as mobile telephones and tablets, be handed over to provide for their exclusion from the voting area during the casting of ballots, as well as from the counting room during the counting of votes
 - the **Elections Officer** will be responsible for ensuring adherence to the provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization during the voting and electoral procedure

Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council

32. The Conference will appoint the Independent Chairperson of the Council for the term of office from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference to the end of the 44th Session of the Conference under agenda item 7, on **Thursday, 6 July 2023**.
33. There is a sole candidate at the 43rd Session of the Conference for the post of the Independent Chairperson of the Council:
- **Hans Hoogeveen** – Netherlands (Kingdom of)

34. In line with GRO XII.10(a), as there is only one candidate for the post of Independent Chairperson of the Council, the Conference may decide to make the appointment by clear general consent.

Election of Council Members

35. In line with Article V.1 of the Constitution, the Conference elects the Members of the Council. There will be elections at the 43rd Session of the Conference for four sets of seats of the Council:
- 16 seats falling vacant at the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference
 - 16 seats falling vacant on 30 June 2024
 - 1 seat falling vacant at the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until 30 June 2024

- 1 seat falling vacant at the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until the end of the 44th Session of the Conference

36. Details for election of Council Members at the 43rd Session are outlined in document C 2023/11, which also sets out the procedure for submission of nominations.

37. The elections are scheduled in the Provisional Timetable for **Thursday, 6 July 2023**. The **deadline for the receipt of nominations** proposed accordingly by the 171st Session of the Council is **9.00 hours (Rome time) on Monday, 3 July 2023**.¹³

38. In line with GRO XII.10(a), elections for Council Members will be undertaken by in-person, secret ballot vote, **or by clear general consent** where the number of nominations does not exceed the number vacant seats in question.

39. In case of a secret ballot vote, the voting population, and thus the quorum for the vote, shall be determined solely on the basis of delegates present physically in the Plenary Hall at the time.

Budgetary Appropriations 2024-25

40. The 43rd Session of the Conference will approve the budget level for the 2024-25 biennium by adoption of a **draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution** prepared by the Director-General and submitted to the Conference for approval, in line with established practice and the provisions of the Basic Texts of the Organization, including FAO's constitution¹⁴, General Rules of the Organization¹⁵ and its Financial Regulations¹⁶.

41. The adoption of this draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution by the Conference is scheduled for on **Thursday 6 July 2023**, and will be undertaken by a **roll-call vote** requiring a **two-thirds majority** of votes cast, in line with Article XVIII.5 of the Constitution, and GRO XII.7(a).

42. In line with established practice, the voting population, and thus the quorum for this vote, will be determined on the basis of delegates present in-person in the Plenary Hall, as well as those connected online virtually.

Right to vote

43. According to Article III.4 of the Constitution, "*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.*" However, the same article continues, "*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.*"

44. In line with established practice, a Member Nation in arrears may request special consideration under Article III.4 for restoration of its voting rights by the Conference. In such cases, the General Committee of the Conference assesses whether the arrears of the Member Nation concerned resulted from conditions beyond its control, and makes a recommendation to the Conference accordingly. The Conference then decides on restoration of voting rights of the Member Nation in question.

Conference Resolutions

45. The existing criteria for Conference Resolutions, which are confined to formal matters, and were first adopted by the Conference in 1975, may be found in **Appendix A**.

¹³ CL 171/REP para 41(b)

¹⁴ Articles IV.1 and XVIII.1 of the Constitution

¹⁵ GROs II-2(c)ii and XX(a)

¹⁶ Financial Regulations 3.1 and 3.6

C. EFFICIENCY

46. Measures to imbue efficiency in the conduct of the Conference include the use of a written correspondence procedure, advance submission of keynote statements by delegates, speaking time limits, advance circulation of Secretariat introductions, and timeliness in the right of reply.

Written Correspondence Procedure

47. A written correspondence procedure will be applied at the 43rd Session of the Conference, as per established practice in FAO Governing Bodies, to allow more time for the discussions of the Conference in its meetings, and to address all items on the Agenda in a timely manner.

48. Under the written correspondence procedure, Members will submit no later than 12 June 2023, written inputs on items addressed through this procedure. Said inputs will be compiled and published on a dedicated section on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference. Secretariat responses, where applicable, will be published at the same location, in all languages of the Organization, no later than 30 June 2023.

49. The advance written exchange between the Membership and the Secretariat will substitute the oral debate during the 43rd Session, and enable the Conference to address solely the draft conclusions of relevant agenda items during its meetings.

50. The status of decisions and outcomes of agenda items addressed through a written correspondence procedure is identical to any other agenda item. Comments submitted by Members through the written correspondence will be included in the Verbatim Records of the Session of the Conference.

51. The **items** on the Provisional Agenda of the 43rd Session of the Conference to be addressed through the **written correspondence procedure** may be found in **Appendix B**.

Advance submission of statements

52. Delegates may submit keynote statements under agenda item 10 – *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture* **in advance** of the meeting, **in lieu** of delivering them during Plenary session, as follows:

- **Text-only statements**, limited to 1250 words in length for single-Member statements and 2000 words in length for multi-Member statements. The statements must be submitted in one of the languages of the Organization, to Conference-Statements@fao.org no later than Friday, 23 June 2023, and will be published on the 43rd Session of the Conference
- **Video-statements**, with a maximum length of three minutes for single-Member statements and five minutes for multi-Member statements. Such pre-recorded video statements must be submitted to Conference-Statements@fao.org no later than Friday, 23 June 2023, and will be published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference

Speaking time limits

53. In the interest of efficient conduct of the 43rd Session of the Conference, keynote statements by delegates under **agenda item 10** delivered in Plenary during the Session will be limited to a maximum of **five minutes**, whether delivered in-person or online.

54. For all other **agenda items**, interventions by Members will be limited to a maximum of **three minutes**, and multi-Member statements will be limited to a maximum of **five minutes**.

Advance circulation of introductions

55. In order to streamline the proceedings of the 43rd Session of the Conference, introductions to agenda items are circulated in writing in advance of the Session.

Right of Reply

56. The Right of Reply, reflecting general practice in the United Nations system, and long-established practice at FAO, gives Members the opportunity to respond to criticism of their Government.

57. In the interest of efficient and orderly conduct, the practice at the Conference is for delegates who wish to reply to criticisms of their Government, to do so preferably 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, as well as being brief in their interventions.

D. OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

58. Other arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference relate to registration, observers and representatives invited to the Conference, and verbatim records.

Registration

59. Members must register all their delegates to the 43rd Session of the Conference well in advance of the Session. 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. All Members of the Delegations will receive the link for accessing the virtual meeting platform directly on the email account indicated at the registration.

Observers and Representatives

60. In addition to FAO Members, a number of **observers** and **representatives** are invited to attend the 43rd Session of the Conference, as follows:

- 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, **for approval by the Conference.**

61. The complete list of representatives and observers of international organisations invited to the 43rd Session of the Conference is given in document C 2023/13.

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

63. The 171st Session of the Council recommended that, following previous practice, Palestine be invited to attend the 43rd Session of the Conference in an observer capacity.¹⁷

¹⁷ CL 171/REP, para. 43.

Verbatim records

64. In accordance with GRO XVIII, verbatim records are to be kept for all Conference Plenary and Commissions' meetings, and delegates are 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.

65. As noted above, verbatim records are kept of all keynote statements by delegates under item 10, irrespective of whether they are submitted in advance, or delivered in Plenary during the Session.

Appendix A**Criteria for Conference Resolutions**

Resolutions should be confined 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; and
- ix) tributes and commemorations of special importance to FAO.

Appendix B**Written Correspondence Procedure Items**

Item 11: Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory matters arising from:

- 11.1 Report of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 11-14 April 2022)
- 11.2 Report of the 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 8-11 March 2022)
- 11.3 Report of the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022)
- 11.4 Report of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, Ecuador, 28 March-1 April 2022)
- 11.5 Report of the 36th Session of the Regional Conference of the Near East (Baghdad, Iraq, Senior Officers Meeting 10-13 January 2022 and Ministerial Meeting 7-8 February 2022)
- 11.6 Report of the Seventh Informal Regional Conference for North America (United States of America, 12-14 April 2022)

Item 12: Global Policy and Regulatory matters arising from:

- 12.1 Report of the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (18-22 July 2022)
- 12.2 Report of the 75th Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems (13-15 July 2022)
- 12.3 Report of the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (5-9 September 2022)
- 12.4 Report of the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry (3-7 October 2022)

Item 13: Reports of the 48th (Special) (4 June 2021), 49th (11-14 October 2021) and 50th (10-13 October and 19 December 2022) Sessions of the Committee on World Food Security

Item 14: Progress report on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System

Item 15: International Years and Days:

- 15.1: Evaluation of the International Year of Plant Health 2020
- 15.2: Evaluation of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021
- 15.3: Evaluation of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022
- 15.4: Proposal for an International Day of the Potato

Item 16: United Nations/FAO World Food Programme

Item 17: Biennial Theme 2024-25

Item 18: Programme Implementation Report 2020-21

Item 19: Programme Evaluation Report 2023

Appendix C**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.