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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
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y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

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STATUS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES

I. BACKGROUND

1. Through this document, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) is invited to review proposals regarding the status of the Regional Conferences, with particular reference to the proposed Rules of Procedure. In this connection, Rule XXXV, paragraph 5 of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) provides that “*the Regional Conferences may (...) adopt and amend their Rules of Procedure, which shall be consistent with the Constitution and these Rules*”. For the sake of clarity, it is useful to recall the relevant provisions of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA), as well as the Constitution and the GRO concerning the Regional Conferences.

2. The IPA indicates, in general terms, that:

“Regional Conferences will have an important role to play in governance for: policy coherence for development in their region; discussion of global priorities as they relate to the region; providing inputs to the Council and Conference on FAO priorities and in discussing such issues as intra-regional trade and investment. This role may vary from region to region. They will become a full part of the governance structure, feeding into the Conference and Council”¹.

¹ Paragraph 25.

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3. More specifically, the relevant IPA action matrix reads as follows:

“Changes in lines of reporting, functions and ways of working will be introduced immediately in practice and followed up by Basic Text changes, including changing the status of the Regional Conferences to Committees of the FAO Conference (Action 2.52):

(a) Functions will include:

- (i) Develop issues for regional policy coherence & regional perspective on global policy issues & regulation – presenting its report to the FAO Conference;*
- (ii) Review and advise on the FAO programme for the region and the overall FAO programme as it affects the region – presenting its report to the Council through the Programme and Finance Committees (Action 2.53)*

(b) Ways of working – Regional Conferences will:

- (i) be convened normally once in every biennium on the decision of the Members of FAO from the region and with full consultation among members on agendas, formats, dates & duration and need for the Conference;*
- (ii) appoint a rapporteur;*
- (iii) the Chair and rapporteur will remain in office between sessions and the Chair, or if not available the rapporteur, will present the Regional Conference report to the FAO Council and Conference (with consideration also by the Programme and Finance Committees as appropriate) in line with the new cycle of governing body oversight and decision making for the programme and budget process;*
- (iv) to the extent possible, hold sessions in tandem with other intergovernmental regional bodies concerned with agriculture;*
- (v) papers for Regional Conferences will be focused with actionable recommendations (Action 2.54).*
- (vi) Introduce Basic Text changes for functions, reporting lines, etc” (Action 2.55)².*

² The IPA also includes actions regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring systems which impact upon the role of the Regional Conferences. In particular, under the new programme and budget cycle, in year 1 of the biennium, *“the Regional Conferences will with respect to their Regions, review and make recommendations on:*

- FAO performance in contributing to results against performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluations;*
- priorities and results planned under the Medium Term Plan, and suggest adjustments for the next biennium; and*
- policy issues for the region to be considered at global level or through additional action at regional level” (Action 3.8).*

4. Article IV, paragraph 6 of the Constitution, as amended at the Thirty-sixth Session of the Conference, reads as follows:

“There shall be such Regional Conferences as the Conference may establish. The status, functions and reporting procedures of the Regional Conferences shall be governed by rules adopted by the Conference”.

5. Aside from the above, the main provisions regarding the functioning of the Regional Conferences are set out in Rule XXXV of the GRO. This Rule, adopted after extensive discussions, reads as follows:

“1. There shall be Regional Conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East, which shall normally meet once every biennium in non-Conference years.

2. The functions of the Regional Conferences shall be:

- (a) To provide a forum for consultation on all matters pertaining to the mandate of the Organization within the region, including any special issues of interest to the Members in the concerned region;*
- (b) To provide a forum for the formulation of regional positions on global policy and regulatory issues within the mandate of the Organization or having implications in respect of the mandate and activities of the Organization, including with a view to promoting regional coherence on global policy and regulatory matters;*
- (c) To advise on and identify the special problems of their respective regions and priority areas of work which should be taken into account in the preparation of the planning, programme and budgetary documents of the Organization and suggest adjustments to these documents;*
- (d) To review and advise on the plans, programmes or projects carried out by the Organization which impact upon the region;*
- (e) To review and advise on the performance of the Organization in the region in contributing to the achievement of results against relevant performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluations.*

3. The Regional Conferences shall report to the Council through the Programme and Finance Committees, in the areas of their respective mandates, on programme and budget matters and to the Conference on policy and regulatory matters. The reports of the Regional Conferences shall be presented by the Chairperson.

4. (a) *At least six months prior to the proposed date for the Regional Conference, the Regional Representative of the Organization in the concerned region, after consultation with the Chairperson, shall send a communication to the Members of the Regional Conference. The communication shall contain a brief outline of the programmes of the Organization of interest to the region and of the outcome of the previous session of the Regional Conference and invite Members to formulate suggestions as to the organization of the next session of the Regional Conference, with particular reference to the agenda of the session.*

(b) *The Director-General shall, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Regional Conference, and taking into account the process mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) above, prepare a provisional agenda and despatch it to Members not less than 60 days in advance of the session.*

(c) *Any Member of the Regional Conference may request the Director-General, not less than 30 days before the date of a session, to insert an item in the provisional agenda. The Director-General shall thereupon, if necessary, circulate a revised provisional agenda to all Members together with any necessary papers.*

5. *The Regional Conferences will adopt such arrangements, consistent with the Constitution and these Rules, as may be necessary for their internal working, including the appointment of a rapporteur. The Regional Conferences may also adopt and amend their own Rules of Procedure which shall be consistent with the Constitution and these Rules”.*

6. At its Thirty-sixth Session, in November 2009, the Conference approved a definition of the Governing Bodies of FAO as follows: *“the bodies which directly or indirectly, through their parent bodies, contribute within their respective mandates to (a) the definition of the overall policies and regulatory frameworks of the Organization; (b) the establishment of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, and (c) exercise, or contribute to the oversight of the administration of the Organization”.* The Governing Bodies consist of the Conference, the Council, the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, the Technical Committees and the Regional Conferences.

7. At the same session, the Conference also adopted various resolutions which impact on the status of the Regional Conferences. Thus, Resolution 8/2009 on the implementation of the IPA actions regarding the Council calls upon the Council to exercise a major role in respect of planning of work and definition of performance measures for the Regional Conferences, as well as in respect of monitoring and reporting performance against performance indicators for the Regional Conferences. Resolution 10/2009 on the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system assigned to the Regional Conferences a key role in the preparation of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget. This Resolution introduced a revised schedule of sessions of the Governing Bodies for the implementation of the new programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system, which takes into account the fact that the Conference holds its regular session in June of the year prior to the beginning of the biennium, thus allowing the Governing Bodies to participate in the process of preparation and adjustment of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, and to monitor performance against relevant performance indicators.

8. At its Eighty-fourth and Eighty-fifth Sessions in February 2009, the CCLM reviewed document CCLM 84/5 entitled “*Regional Conferences*”, which was intended to implement IPA actions 2.52 to 2.55 and 3.8. **In the report of its Eighty-fifth Session, the CCLM emphasized that, while the implementation of actions required amendments to the Constitution and GRO and the adoption by the Regional Conferences themselves of Rules of Procedure, other actions could be accommodated through changes in practice and the development of suitable working methods. These important observations should be borne in mind when examining this document. They suggest that the adoption of Rules of Procedure is only a first step towards redefining the status of the Regional Conferences and that other matters will need to be addressed through other documents.**

9. This document reviews some matters that could be, or are traditionally addressed through Rules of Procedure. Matters, which do not call for specific observations, are also covered in the Rules of Procedure.

II. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Officers

10. As called for by the IPA and reflected in paragraph 5 of Rule XXXV of the GRO, the Regional Conferences will have to elect a Chairperson and a Rapporteur. It is proposed that, in line with the practice generally followed so far by some FAO Regional Conferences, one first Vice-Chairperson also be elected. The designation of a “*first Vice-Chairperson*” would reflect both reasons of convenience and the fact that in some Regional Conferences more than one Vice-Chairperson is elected³.

11. **Given the practice followed by the Regional Conferences whereby the Chairperson is normally a Minister of a Member, and in view of the functions that the Chairperson is called upon to perform during the inter-session period, there is reason to believe that situations may arise where the Chairperson will not be available to exercise those functions.** It is therefore necessary to make provision for the replacement of the Chairperson, traditionally a complex practical matter. An option would consist in resorting to the standard practice whereby the first Vice-Chairperson replaces the Chairperson. However, practice shows that this solution may be unsatisfactory because the first Vice-Chairperson may also be unavailable. It is suggested that another option be considered whereby, in the event that the Chairperson should not be able to exercise his or her functions, **these could be exercised by a high ranking official of the country of the Chairperson.** While not in line with the *ad personam* nature of the office of Chairperson, such a solution has obvious practical advantages as it is likely to operate in all circumstances. It is therefore strongly recommended that it be reflected in the Rules of Procedure.

12. Precedents for this proposal exist in the Rules of Procedure of conferences held under the aegis of the United Nations. The matter was also extensively discussed in FAO in 2002 during preparations for the *World Food Summit: five years later*. On that occasion, it was noted that during the Summit of 1996 a situation arose where neither the Chairperson of the Summit, nor any of the Vice-Chairpersons were available and there was a need to replace them with officials from their country delegations. It was noted that the United Nations had developed special rules and practices, notably on the occasion of the Millennium Summit (General Assembly Resolution 54/281) which provided that, in the absence of the two Co-Chairpersons, “*the highest ranking in*

³ Attention is drawn to the explanatory footnote to Rule I, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure.

the delegation of these countries will sit instead". A slightly different approach was taken for the World Summit for Social Development of 1995: the Rules of Procedure of the Summit made provision for the election "*from among the representatives of participating States a President, 27 Vice-Presidents and an ex-officio Vice-President from the host country*". A Minister of the State of which the President was a national was elected *ex-officio* Vice-President and he chaired most of the plenary meetings. In the case of the *World Food Summit: five years later*, it was proposed that, in the absence of the Chairperson, one of the Vice-Chairpersons should take his or her place. As there had been extensive consultations for the designation of the Vice-Chairpersons, at that time it was considered desirable to retain this practice where possible.

13. Whatever the approach taken, it is essential that, given the fact that the Chairperson of a Regional Conference is traditionally a Cabinet Minister and that the Chairperson is expected to perform functions during the inter-session period, a suitable provision for the replacement of the Chairperson should be included in the Rules of Procedure. Two options are proposed in the attached draft Rules of Procedure.

14. A further question relates to the timing of the election of officers. The practice in Regional Conferences has been that the Chairpersons are elected at the beginning of the session, with the elected Chairperson being traditionally a Cabinet Minister from the host country. The timing of the election is reflected in the proposed Rules of Procedure⁴.

Sessions

15. Under paragraph 1 of Rule XXXV of the GRO the Regional Conferences "*shall normally meet once every biennium in non-Conference years*".

16. When scheduling the sessions, consideration must be given to the new calendar of sessions of the Conference and Council provided in paragraph 1 of Rules I and XXII of the GRO. In fact, the Conference emphasized, through Resolution 10/2009 regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system that, under the revised calendar of sessions and the framework established by the GRO, as well as the Rules of Procedure of the Programme and Finance Committees, that the Regional Conferences need to change the cycle of their sessions in order to play their role in the new programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system. This new system will only function effectively if the sessions of the Governing Bodies conform with paragraph 3 of Resolution 10/2009 and its appendix.

17. The Regional Conferences have generally consisted of a "*technical*" segment and a "*political*" one, although the manner in which they are organized vary, at times considerably, from one region to the other. In the case of the Regional Conference for Europe, the European Commission on Agriculture has, over the years, performed functions as a technical preparatory body for the Regional Conference⁵. In other cases, the Regional Conference itself includes a technical segment and a political one. It is proposed that the Rules of Procedure should not address such details, as the conditions differ between regions, but could generally provide that arrangements can be made to include a technical segment and a political segment.

⁴ Notwithstanding a recent trend in other Governing Bodies of FAO towards the election of officers at the end of the session.

⁵ The relationship between the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and the Regional Conference for Europe has evolved over time. For the past ten years, the ECA has functioned as a preparatory technical body for the Regional Conference. To perform this function, the ECA used to hold its session a few months before the Regional Conference. However, the ECA started meeting consecutively and immediately before the Regional Conference for reasons of economy and to achieve a reasonable level of attendance at both meetings. A proposal was made to revert to the "old" practice of holding the session of the ECA a few months before the Regional Conference or even in the year before the Regional Conference is held.

Agenda

18. The IPA addresses changes regarding the agenda, including its format and the duration of the meeting, and that it should be more “*focused*”. IPA action 2.54 clearly indicates that the agenda of the Regional Conference should correspond to the wishes of the Members of the regions and be prepared with their involvement in an inclusive and participatory way. In order to ensure full consultation of Members of the region, a three-step process for the preparation of the provisional agenda was provided for in paragraph 4, Rule XXXV of the GRO. While it could be argued that it is not good legal practice to reproduce these provisions in the Rules of Procedure – as the repetition of legal provisions should preferably be avoided – it is proposed to do so in this particular case, for the sake of clarity and given the importance of the process of preparation of the agendas for Regional Conferences, a matter which has been under discussion for a number of years. This would be supplemented with provisions of a “*standard nature*” regarding the adoption of the agenda by the Regional Conference, as well as possible changes thereto after approval⁶.

19. Various proposals regarding the agenda of Regional Conferences, and the possible insertion of “*standing items*”, have been made. It is proposed that this matter should not be addressed directly in the Rules of Procedure, as it might introduce an element of rigidity in the Rules, but rather in a revised Manual for the Regional Conference, or in a document on working practices⁷.

Attendance

20. Issues related to the attendance to Regional Conferences are addressed, in general terms, in the Rules of Procedure. One of these is the participation in the Regional Conference as a Member rather than as an observer. For some Regional Conferences, a clear determination of the Members has been made, but this is not the case with other Regional Conferences where the matter remains under review and where, on the basis of past practice, Member Nations of FAO have been participating as Members in more than one Regional Conference. The Rules of Procedure do not make a determination of the countries which participate in each Regional Conference as Members. Participation as an observer is, and would continue to be, on the basis of requests by the interested Members, as per established practice in the Organization.

⁶ The preparation of the agenda for the Regional Conference for Europe presents distinct features which rely extensively on informal consultation and on the role of the ECA and its Executive Committee. This practice is compatible with the framework set forth in Rule XXXV, paragraph 4 of the GRO.

⁷ References have been made to the desirability that regional bodies established under Articles VI and XIV of the Constitution should report to the relevant Regional Conference. While in some cases this might be appropriate, the matter is more complex than it seems and would call for a detailed review taking into account, *inter alia*, the observations in paragraphs 88 to 91 of document CCLM 88/3 - “*Preliminary review of statutory bodies with a view to allowing them to exercise greater financial and administrative authority while remaining within the framework of FAO*”. In particular, the statutory bodies under Article VI of the Constitution have detailed reporting lines set out in the relevant decision of the Conference or Council. A process of adjustment of such reporting lines to take into account the new governance structure of the Organization could be required. In addition, bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution are set up by treaties and, at times, are entrusted with the authority to adopt regulatory measures directly binding upon the Parties. While information on their activities could be made available to Regional Conferences, it would not be appropriate, in legal or policy terms, that they should report to Regional Conferences. **However given the future role of the Regional Conferences in the definition of priorities for the work of the Organization in their region informal proposals have been made that the Regional Conferences should be able to rely on technical inputs provided by statutory bodies. This might suggest that the new role of the Regional Conferences in priority setting and their contribution to the preparation of the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, would imply that the “reporting lines” of statutory bodies active in a given region might need to be reconsidered. This could be a long-term process.**

21. The issue of the participation of intergovernmental organizations and other organizations as observers is to be addressed in accordance with the relevant principles and procedures contained in the Basic Texts governing invitations to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. However, it is important to recall that a process of review of this complex matter, involving sensitivity in some regions and different regional features, has been launched in FAO.

Reports and records

22. As part of the reform of the governance structure of the Organization, the IPA called for new reporting lines for the Regional Conferences, comparable to those of the Technical Committees. This issue has been reflected in paragraph 3 of Rule XXXV of the GRO and it is proposed that the reporting lines also be reflected in the Rules of Procedure. A mention to this effect was made in paragraph 1 of Rule VI of the proposed Rules of Procedure. This is consistent with the recommendations made by the CCLM – and endorsed by the Council – to the Technical Committees regarding their own Rules of Procedure.

Adjustments to take into consideration specific regional needs

23. The CCLM may wish to advise on whether some provisions of the Rules of Procedure should be adjusted to take into consideration specific regional needs. While harmonization, if not uniformity, in the status of the Regional Conferences is being pursued, it might be desirable that some adjustments be made to the Rules of Procedure (alternative options are proposed for Rule I, for example). The CCLM may wish to offer its views on this matter.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

24. The Committee is invited to review this document, in particular its appendix containing the proposed Rules of Procedure, and provide such guidance, as deemed appropriate.

25. The CCLM is, in particular, invited:

- (a) to review and endorse draft Rules of Procedure for the Regional Conference and recommend to the Council that they be referred to the concerned Regional Conferences for review and approval⁸;
- (b) to advise on the extent to which the Regional Conferences may make adjustments to these Rules of Procedure in the light of their functional requirements, taking into account a requirement of uniformity and consistency in the status and Rules of Procedure of the Regional Conferences;
- (c) to note that there will be a need to supplement the Rules of Procedure by a document on working methods for the Regional Conferences, or in a revised Manual on Regional Conferences.

⁸ The Rules of Procedure contain some footnotes intended to clarify some issues and facilitate review of the Rules by the CCLM. These notes are not part of the Rules.

APPENDIX**PROPOSED RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR REGIONAL CONFERENCES****Rule I
Officers**

1. At the beginning of the session, the Regional Conference shall elect a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson [and (number) Vice-Chairpersons]⁹ and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its Members, who shall remain in office until the election of a new Chairperson, a new Vice-Chairperson and a new Rapporteur, who shall collectively act as a bureau during sessions.

First option:

2. The Chairperson, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at meetings of the Regional Conference and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event that the Chairperson should not be able to exercise functions foreseen under these Rules of Procedure, a high ranking official of his or her country may be designated to take the chair and perform such functions related thereto as required.

Second option:

2. The Chairperson, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at meetings of the Regional Conference and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event that the Chairperson should not be able to exercise functions foreseen under these Rules of Procedure, the first Vice-Chairperson shall take the chair and perform such functions related thereto as required. In the event that the first Vice-Chairperson should not be able to exercise these functions, a high ranking official of his or her country may be designated to take the chair and perform such functions related thereto as required.

3. The Regional Representative of the Organization in the concerned region shall appoint a secretary, and such other support officers as may be required, who shall perform such duties as the functioning and work of the Regional Conference may require, including the preparation of the records of its proceedings. The secretary shall work under the authority of the Regional Conference and perform such functions as required to service the Regional Conference.

⁹ The distinction between a first Vice-Chairperson and other Vice-Chairpersons seeks, in a number to be defined, to go some way towards the recognition of the practice whereby two Regional Conferences elect one Chairperson and many other Vice-Chairpersons and at times all heads of delegation are considered to be Vice-Chairpersons. However, while this approach could have some merit from a policy viewpoint, it is legally questionable. In addition, the functioning of the new operating model of the Regional Conferences implies that there should be a restricted number of officers to constitute a "bureau". A "bureau" consisting of all heads of delegation would defeat the purpose of the institution.

**Rule II
Sessions**

1. The sessions of the Regional Conference shall be held in the territory of one its Members in pursuance of a decision taken by the Regional Conference in consultation with the Director-General.
2. The Regional Conference shall hold sessions normally once every biennium, as provided for in paragraph 1 of Rule XXXV of the General Rules of the Organization. The date of the sessions shall conform to the schedule of sessions of the Governing Bodies as set out in the annex to Conference Resolution 10/2009 for the implementation of the new programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system and, in particular, the Programme of Work and Budget.
3. Any number of separate meetings may be held during each session of the Regional Conference. Arrangements may be made by the Regional Conference to ensure technical preparations for its sessions, which may include a technical segment, as well as a policy segment, under such conditions as the Regional Conference may establish.
4. Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule IV of these Rules of Procedure concerning the preparation of the provisional agenda, notice of the date and place of each session shall normally be communicated at least two months in advance of the session to all Members of the Regional Conference.
5. The presence of representatives of more than half of the Members of the Regional Conference shall constitute a quorum for any formal action by the Regional Conference.

**Rule III
Attendance**

1. The Regional Conference shall be composed of representatives of Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization of the concerned region.
2. Representatives of other Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization may be provisionally invited to participate as observers in sessions of the Regional Conference, upon request, subject to approval of the Regional Conference.
3. Participation of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations in an observer capacity in the work of the Regional Conference shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization¹⁰, as well as by the relevant resolutions of the Conference.
4. Attendance by non-member States of the Organization at sessions of the Regional Conference shall be governed by the relevant principles relating to the granting of observer status to nations adopted by the Conference.

¹⁰ It is understood that in this context the terms "Constitution" and "the General Rules of the Organization" are to be taken to include all general rules and policy statements formally adopted by the Conference and intended to supplement the Constitution and the Rules, such as the "Statement of principles relating to the granting of observer status to nations", and the general rules regarding relationships between the Organization and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

5.
 - a. Meetings of the Regional Conference shall be held in public, unless the Regional Conference decides to meet in private for discussion of any items on its agenda. Rule V, paragraph 3 of the General Rules of the Organization applies *mutatis mutandis* to meetings of the Regional Conference.
 - b. Subject to the provisions of subparagraph (c) below, any Member Nation not represented on the Regional Conference, any Associate Member or any non-member State invited to attend in an observer capacity of a session of the Regional Conference may submit memoranda and participate without a vote in any discussion at a public or private meeting of the Regional Conference.
 - c. In exceptional circumstances, the Regional Conference may decide to restrict attendance at private meetings to the representative or observer of each Member Nation of the Organization.

Rule IV Agenda and Documents

1. At least six months prior to the proposed date for the Regional Conference, the Regional Representative of the Organization in the concerned region, after consultation with the Chairperson, shall send a communication to the Members of the Regional Conference. The communication shall contain a brief outline of the programmes of the Organization of interest to the region and of the outcome of the previous session of the Regional Conference and invite Members to review suggestions made concerning the organization of the next session of the Regional Conference, with particular reference to the agenda of the session.
2. The Director-General shall, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Regional Conference, and taking into account the process mentioned in paragraph 1 above, prepare a provisional agenda and despatch it to Members, under cover of a formal invitation letter, not less than 60 days in advance of the session.
3. Any Member of the Regional Conference may request the Director-General, not less than 30 days before the date of a session, to insert an item in the provisional agenda. The Director-General shall thereupon, if necessary, circulate a revised provisional agenda to all Members and to other participants as may have been invited to attend the session together with any necessary papers.
4. The first item on the provisional agenda shall be either the election of officers under Rule I of the Rules of Procedure or the adoption of the agenda. After approval of the agenda, the Regional Conference in session may, by clear general consent, amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item, provided however that no matter referred to it by the Council or on the request of the Conference shall be omitted from the agenda.
5. Documents not already circulated shall be dispatched with the provisional agenda, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Rule V
Voting

1. Each Member of the Regional Conference shall have one vote.
2. The decisions of the Regional Conference shall be ascertained by the Chairperson, who shall resort, upon the request of one or more Members, to a vote, in which case the pertinent provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule VI
Reports and Records

1. At each session, the Regional Conference shall approve a report embodying its conclusions, recommendations and decisions including, when requested, a statement of minority views¹¹.
2. The Regional Conference shall make every effort to ensure that its recommendations and decisions are precise and can be implemented. The Regional Conference shall report to the Council, through the Programme and Finance Committees, in the areas of their respective mandates, on programme and budget matters, and to the Conference on policy and regulatory matters. These reporting requirements shall be, as far as practicable, reflected in the structure of the reports of the Regional Conference.
3. The presentation of the report of the Regional Conference, as per paragraph 3 of Rule XXXV of the General Rules of the Organization, shall be made by the Chairperson. In the event that the Chairperson should not be available Rule I, paragraph 2 of these Rules shall apply.
4. Reports of sessions shall be made available to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization of the concerned region, as well as to observers, non-member States invited to attend the session, and the organizations that participated in the session
5. The Regional Conference may establish applicable procedures in regard to press communiqués concerning its activities.

Rule VII
Suspension of Rules

The Regional Conference may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, decide to suspend any of the foregoing Rules of Procedure, provided that a 24 hours notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given and that the action contemplated is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization¹². Such notice may be waived if no Member objects.

¹¹ Some discussion surrounded the question of whether specific provision should be made for a drafting committee, consisting of a number of Members of the Regional Conference and placed under the chairmanship of the Rapporteur. It was noted that drafting committees in FAO are never explicitly foreseen in any Rules of Procedure, even where they correspond to a well established practice. Taking into account these considerations, it is proposed that the Rules of Procedure should not refer specifically to drafting committees. It is considered that the matter should be addressed in the Manual on Regional Conferences, or a document on working practices and methods.

¹² See footnote to Rule III, paragraph 3.

Rule VIII
Amendment of Rules

The Regional Conference may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, amend its Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendment is consistent with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization. No proposal for the amendment of these Rules shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Regional Conference unless notice thereof has been dispatched by the Director-General to Members of the Regional Conference at least 30 days before the opening of the session.