

March 2012



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة للأمم
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联合国
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Food and
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Organización
de las
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para la
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Twenty-third Session

Rome, 21 - 25 May 2012

Rules of Procedure of the Committee

Executive Summary

At its 139th Session¹, the Council invited the Technical Committees, to examine their Rules of Procedure, taking into account the considerations outlined in document CCLM 90/2 and the recommendations of the Report of the 90th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) (document CL 139/6). It acknowledged that authority to amend Rules of Procedure was vested in the Technical Committees. However, the Council stressed the desirability of consistency among the Rules of Procedure of all Technical Committees.

Annex I presents the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

Guidance sought from the Committee:

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the CCLM and Council, the Committee is invited to review its current Rules of Procedure set out in the Basic Texts, Volume 1, Part K and amend them as appropriate.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

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¹ CL 139/REP paras. 55-56.

I. Introduction

1. The Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA)² stated that:

The Committees will report to Council on FAO's budget, and the priorities and strategies for the programmes and directly to the FAO Conference on global policy and regulation becoming Committees of the Conference (action 2.56), and:

- a) *Chairs will remain in office between sessions and provide their reports to the Council and Conference (action 2.57);*
- b) *Ways of working – Technical Committees will:*
 - i) *Meet more flexibly as to duration and frequency, according to needs, normally once in each biennium. They will address priority emerging issues and may be convened especially for this purpose (action 2.58);*
 - ii) *The Chair will facilitate full consultation with Members, on agendas, formats and duration (action 2.59);*
 - iii) *More use will be made of parallel sessions and side events, taking care that countries with small delegations can participate (informal sessions will include NGOs and the private sector including representation from developing countries) (action 2.60).*

2. These actions were to be implemented through “changes in practices, including ways of working and reporting lines” (action 2.64) and through “Basic Texts changes for functions, reporting lines, etc” (action 2.65). Amendments to the Basic Text were approved by the Conference during its Thirty-sixth Session (19-23 November 2009). While the Technical Committees were given an enhanced status as a result of these amendments, further amendments might be needed, specifically to the Rules of Procedure of each Technical Committee.

3. At its 139th Session³, the Council: (a) invited the Technical Committees to examine their Rules of Procedure, taking into account the considerations outlined in document CCLM 90/2 and the recommendations of the Report of the 90th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM); and (b) acknowledged that authority to amend Rules of Procedure was vested in the Technical Committees. However, the Council stressed the desirability of consistency among the Rules of Procedure of all Technical Committees.

4. This document contains proposed amendments to Rules I, II and VI of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee set out in the Basic Texts, Volume 1, Part K.

II. Proposed Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

A. Proposed amendments to Rule I on “Officers”

a) Functions of the Steering Committee or Bureau

5. The CCLM at its 90th Session:

- recalled that the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) had called for an enhanced role of the Chairpersons of the Technical Committees, requiring them to facilitate full consultation with members in relation to agendas, formats and other matters;
- recommended that the Technical Committees be invited to amend their Rules of Procedure to provide for the establishment of a steering committee or a bureau which would act not only during sessions but also between sessions;
- considered that a generic reference to the functions of the steering committee or bureau such as “ensuring preparations for the sessions” could be added to the Rules of Procedure and that a more detailed description of the functions might not be required, considering the dynamic nature of the functions of bodies of this nature.

² C 2008/4 actions 2.56-2.60.

³ CL 139/REP paras. 55-56

6. With regard to cost implications, it was reported to the Open Ended Working Group on measures designed to increase the efficiency of Governing Bodies (OEWG) that if the bureau of the Technical Committees which meet on a biennial basis were to be convened two to four times between Sessions, the incremental costs could be on average around USD 30,000 to 60,000 per Bureau per biennium.

7. The number of formal meetings would be limited (2 to maximum 4) per biennium and many of the consultations could be carried out through modern technologies, including email communications. Should the members of the Bureau be all based in Rome, the cost of the meetings could be nil or kept to a minimum. The use of facilities such as video conference facilities could also help in reducing costs of Bureau meetings, should the use of this tool be agreeable to the Bureau members.

8. In October 2010 the Committee on Forestry (COFO) inserted a new paragraph in Rule I of its Rules of Procedure as follows: *“Between sessions, the Steering Committee shall facilitate consultation with Members in relation to agendas, formats and other matters, and perform other actions relevant for ensuring preparations for the sessions”*. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) is following a similar approach to modify its Rules of Procedure. Similar wording is proposed for COAG in Annex 1.

b) Number of Officers

9. The CCLM considered that broader membership in order to ensure representation of all regions could be achieved in some Technical Committees through an increase in the overall number of officers up to seven (one per geographic region). The CCLM underlined that this was a matter to be reviewed by each Technical Committee, taking into account all relevant considerations including the fact that some regions could have difficulties in fulfilling all the positions. There has been no consensus on this matter in the OEWG and each Committee is expected to determine the composition of its own Bureau based on specific requirements.

10. In October 2010, COFO amended its Rules of Procedure in order to have a steering committee composed of seven members (the Chairperson and the six Chairpersons of the Regional Forestry Commissions). COFI is in the process of broadening membership to seven.

11. At its 21st Session (April 2009), COAG supported the proposal that the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons should act as a bureau during the inter-sessional period in order to prepare the work of the Committee and liaise with the secretariat, as appropriate. The Committee took note of the proposal that in order to ensure adequate representation and pending the amendment of the Rules of Procedure, representatives of all regions should be part of the bureau⁴. At its 22nd Session the Committee stressed that the Bureau would consult with countries and regional groups in order to establish the agenda⁵. Regional representation in the Bureau was found to be a useful tool in facilitating efficient communication with the Members.

12. On the basis of the above, it is proposed to enlarge membership of the Bureau to seven members (see Annex 1).

c) Secretary of the Committee

13. Rule I of all the Technical Committees specifies that *“the Director-General of the Organization shall appoint a Secretary, who shall perform such duties as the work of the Committee may require”*. It is therefore proposed to add a paragraph at the end of Rule I (see Annex 1).

d) Timing of the Election

14. At its 22nd Session, COAG agreed to elect the Bureau at the end of the Session. The OEWG supported the emerging trend of having the elections take place at the end of the Session. The CCLM considered that current Rules of Procedure of the Technical Committees do not specify whether the election of officers takes place at the beginning or at the end of the Session of the Committee, thus

⁴ CL 136/5 para. 44.

⁵ CL 140/3 para. 41.

providing sufficient flexibility for an election either at the beginning or at the end of the Session. Therefore no amendments are proposed.

B. Proposed amendments to Rule II on “Sessions”

15. The CCLM noted the observations made in document CCLM 90/2 regarding the need for the timing of Technical Committee sessions in accordance with the schedule of sessions appended to Conference Resolution 10/2009 entitled “*Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action on Reform of Programming, Budgeting and Results-based Monitoring System*” (IPA Actions 3.1 to 3.11) to enable the Programme and Finance Committees to take into consideration their reports in formulating advice to the Council under the new budget cycle. The CCLM invited the Technical Committees to examine whether their Rules of Procedure should be amended in that respect⁶.

16. COFO amended its Rules of Procedure as follows: “*Sessions of the Committee shall normally be held once in each biennium, with timing that enables the Programme and Finance Committees to take into consideration the report of the Committee in formulating advice to the Council*”. The same wording is proposed for COAG (see Annex I).

C. Proposed amendments to Rule VI on “Reports”

17. The CCLM recalled that in future the Technical Committees will report to the Council on programme and budget matters and to the Conference on policy and regulatory matters (IPA action 2.56) and that, in order to implement this action the Conference adopted, at its Thirty-sixth Session, amendments to the Constitution and to the GRO. The CCLM noted that the implementation of this action involved consequential amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committees, and recalled that at its Eighty-fourth Session (2-4 February 2009) it had already recommended a possible amendment to the Rules of Procedure along the following lines: “*At each session, the Committee shall approve a report embodying its views and recommendations, including when requested, a statement of minority views. The Committee shall make every effort to ensure that recommendations are precise and can be implemented. Policy and regulatory matters shall be referred to the Conference whereas programme and budget matters shall be referred to the Council. Any recommendations adopted by the Committee which affect the programme or finances of the Organization shall be reported to the Council with the comments of the appropriate committees of the Council*” (insertions are indicated using underlined text).

18. It is therefore proposed to amend paragraph 1 of Rule VI along those lines (see Annex 1).

III. GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMITTEE

19. Based on the guidance given by the Council, and the recommendations of the CCLM, the Committee may wish to review and adopt the proposed amendments to its Rules of Procedure.

⁶ CL 139/6 para. 16

Annex 1

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE

In the text of the draft amendments reproduced below, the proposals regarding deletions are indicated using ~~struck-out text~~ and the proposals for insertions are indicated using *underlined italics*.

Rule I

Officers

1. At the first session in each biennium, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson and ~~a second~~ *five other* Vice-Chairpersons from among the representatives of its Members, who shall remain in office until the election of a new Chairperson and new Vice-Chairpersons *and who will act as a Bureau during sessions and between sessions*.
2. The Chairperson, or in his absence ~~one of the~~ *first* Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at meetings of the Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event of the Chairperson and the *first* Vice-Chairperson not being able to preside at a meeting, the Committee shall appoint ~~a representative of one of its Members~~ *one of the other Vice-Chairpersons* to take the chair.
3. *Between sessions, the Bureau shall facilitate consultation with Members in relation to agendas, format and other matters, and perform other actions relevant for ensuring preparations for the sessions.*
4. *The Director-General of the Organization shall appoint a Secretary, who shall perform such duties as the work of the Committee may require.*

Rule II

Sessions

1. The Committee shall hold sessions as provided in Rule XXXII, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the General Rules of the Organization.
2. Any number of separate meetings may be held during each session of the Committee.
3. Sessions of the Committee shall normally be held once in each biennium, ~~preferably early in Conference years~~ *with timing that enables the Programme and Finance Committees to take into consideration the report of the Committee in formulating advice to the Council*. Sessions shall be convened by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee taking into account any proposals made by the Committee.
4. If required, the Committee may hold additional sessions on the call of the Director-General in consultation with its Chairperson, or on request submitted in writing to the Director-General by the majority of the Members of the Committee.
5. Notice of the date and place of each session shall normally be communicated at least two months in advance of the session to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization, and to such non-member States and international organizations as may have been invited to attend the session.
6. Each Member of the Committee may appoint alternates, associates and advisers to its representative on the Committee.

7. Presence of representatives of a majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for any formal action by the Committee.

(...)

Rule VI

Reports

1. At each session, the Committee shall approve a report ~~to the Council~~ embodying its views, recommendations and decisions, including, when requested, a statement of minority views. *The Committee shall make every effort to ensure that recommendations are precise and can be implemented. Policy and regulatory matters shall be referred to the Conference whereas programme and budget matters shall be referred to the Council.* Any recommendations adopted by the Committee which affect the programme or finances of the Organization shall be reported to the Council with the comments of the appropriate subsidiary committees of the Council. ~~The reports of the Committee shall also be placed before the Conference.~~
2. Reports of sessions shall be circulated to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and to non-member States invited to attend the session, as well as to interested international organizations entitled to be represented at the session.
3. The comments of the Committee on the report of any of its subsidiary bodies and, if one or more Members of the Committee so request, the views of those Members shall be incorporated into the Committee's report. If any Member so requests, this part of the Committee's report shall be circulated as soon as possible by the Director-General to the States or international organizations which normally receive the reports of the subsidiary body in question. The Committee may also request the Director-General, in transmitting the report and records of its proceedings to Members, to call particular attention to its views and comments on the report of any of its subsidiary bodies.
4. The Committee shall determine the procedures in regard to press communiqués concerning its activities.

(...)