

# **NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION**

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **Rule I**

#### **Membership**

1. Membership in the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the territories of which are situated wholly or partly in the region concerned as defined by the Organization, or which are responsible for the international relations of any non-self-governing territories in that region. Membership shall comprise such eligible Nations as have notified the Director-General of the Organization of their desire to be considered as Members.
2. Each Member of the Commission shall communicate to the Director-General of the Organization the name of its representative before the opening of each session of the Commission.

### **Rule II**

#### **Officers**

1. The Commission shall elect a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson and a second Vice-Chairperson from among the representatives of the Member Nations of the Commission. The office of Chairperson, first Vice-Chairperson and second Vice-Chairperson shall be assumed in turn by each of the Members of the Commission on a two-year rotating basis.
2. The Chairperson, or in his absence a Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at sessions of the Commission and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Commission. The Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.
3. In the event that both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons are unable to serve, the Member of the Commission holding the Chairpersonship shall designate another representative to preside.
4. The Commission shall elect from among its Members, at the end of each session, a Bureau of Alternates. The Bureau of Alternates shall consist of three members who are the alternates in the delegation of the three Member Nations of the Commission, as referred to in Rule III, par. 4. The Office of Chairperson of the Bureau of Alternates shall be assumed in turn by each of the alternates on a two-year rotating basis, generally coinciding with the chairmanship of the Member Nation of the Commission. The Bureau of Alternates shall direct and conduct the business and affairs of the Commission between its sessions, including preparation of each session, and monitor the implementation of decisions of the Commission.

5. The Bureau of Alternates will generally convene at least once a year. More frequent meetings may be convened at the discretion of the members.
6. Each alternate will serve as special liaison to at least one Study Group, providing Study Group Chairs direct access to the Bureau of Alternates for support and advocacy. The assignment of alternates to Study Groups as special liaison will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Bureau.
7. The Director-General of the Organization shall appoint from among the staff of the Organization a Secretary of the Commission who shall be responsible to him. The Director-General shall make appropriate arrangements to utilize, for the benefit of the Commission members, the facilities of the Organization's North American Regional Office. The Secretary of the Commission shall perform in liaison with the Bureau of Alternates such duties as the work of the Commission may require.

### **Rule III**

#### **Sessions**

1. The Commission shall hold sessions at such periodic intervals as shall be requested by a majority of the Members of the Commission or considered necessary by the Director-General. Ordinarily, sessions of the Commission shall be held once every two years.
2. The sessions of the Commission shall be convened, and the place where they are to be held shall be determined, in consultation with the Director-General.
3. Notice of the date and place of each session of the Commission shall be communicated to all the Members of the Commission by the Director-General at least two months before the opening of the session. Such notice shall be accompanied by the provisional agenda as well as information on arrangements for each session.
4. Each Member of the Commission shall have one representative who shall be accompanied by one alternate. Each Member may also be accompanied by advisers as deemed necessary.
5. Meetings of the Commission shall be held in public unless the Commission decides otherwise.
6. A majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum.

**Rule IV****Agenda**

1. The Director-General, after consultation with the Chairperson, shall prepare a provisional agenda for each session of the Commission.
2. The first item on the provisional agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda.
3. Any Member of the Commission may request the Director-General to include specific items in the provisional agenda. Such items will be considered for inclusion when the agenda is adopted.
4. Any Member of the Commission, and the Director-General of the Organization, may, after the despatch of the provisional agenda, propose the inclusion of specific items in the agenda with respect to matters of an urgent nature. These items shall be placed on a supplementary list, which, if time permits before the opening of the session, shall be despatched by the Director-General of the Organization to all Members of the Commission, failing which the items shall be communicated to the Chairperson for submission to the Commission.
5. After the agenda has been adopted, the Commission may, by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item. No matter referred to the Commission by the Conference or Council of the Organization may be omitted from the agenda.
6. Documents to be submitted to the Commission at any session shall be furnished to the Members of the Commission, either by the country that prepares a particular paper or by the Director-General of the Organization, in accordance with arrangements worked out by the Bureau of Alternates and Secretary. They shall also be submitted to other Member Nations and to Associate Members of the Organization, non-member nations of the Organization and international organizations invited to be represented in an observer capacity in accordance with the provisions of Rule VI. Such documents should be distributed when the agenda is despatched, or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Rule V****Voting and procedures**

1. Each Member of the Commission shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Commission shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast, unless otherwise provided in these Rules.
3. Upon request of any Member of the Commission, voting shall be by roll-call, in which case the vote of each Member shall be recorded.

4. When the Commission so decides, voting shall be by secret ballot.
5. Formal proposals relating to items on the agenda and amendments thereto shall be introduced in writing and handed to the Chairperson who shall circulate copies to the representatives.
6. In addition to the above Rules, the provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

## **Rule VI      Observers**

1. Any Member Nation of the Organization that is not a Member of the Commission, or any Associate Member that has a special interest in the work of the Commission, may, upon request communicated to the Director-General of the Organization at least 15 days before a session of the Commission, participate in such sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies in the capacity of observer, subject to the relevant provisions governing "observer status" adopted by the Conference.
2. States which, while not Member Nations or Associate Members of the Organization, are Members of the United Nations, any of its Specialized Agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, may, upon their request and subject to the provisions relating to the granting of observer status to nations, adopted by the Conference of the Organization, be invited to attend sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies in an observer capacity. The status of nations invited to such sessions shall be governed by the relevant provisions adopted by the Conference of the Organization.
3. Participation of international organizations in the work of the Commission and the relations between the Commission and such organizations shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization, as well as by the rules on relations with international organizations, adopted by the Conference or Council of the Organization. All such relations shall be dealt with by the Director-General of the Organization.

## **Rule VII      Records and reports**

1. At each session the Commission shall approve a report embodying its views, recommendations and decisions, including, when requested, a statement of minority views. Such other records, for its own use, as the Commission may on occasion decide, shall also be maintained.
2. The conclusions and recommendations of the Commission shall be transmitted to the Director-General of the Organization at the close of each session, who shall circulate them to Members of the Commission, nations and international organizations that were represented at the session for their information and, upon request, to other Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization. Reports of

subsidiary bodies of the Commission provided for in Rule VIII shall be transmitted to the Director-General through the Commission. Pending the formal transmission of these reports, the Director-General may communicate them informally to the Members of the Commission.

3. Recommendations having policy, programme or financial implications for the Organization shall be brought by the Director-General to the attention of the Conference or Council of the Organization for appropriate action.
4. Subject to the provisions of the preceding paragraph, the Director-General of the Organization may request Members of the Commission to supply the Commission with information on action taken on the basis of recommendations made by the Commission.

#### **Rule VIII      Subsidiary bodies**

1. The Commission may establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the accomplishment of its tasks. One such subsidiary body shall be known as Study Groups.
2. Membership in these subsidiary bodies shall comprise at least two Members that have common interests in the problem for which a particular subsidiary body is established. For the purpose of Study Groups, however, membership will generally be comprised of no less than two and no more than three representatives from each Member Nation and be approved by the Bureau of Alternates. At least one of the members from each Member Nation shall be from the government agency responsible for forests. Observers will be part of Study Groups at the discretion of individual Chairs, with no limit on their number. A diversity of affiliations among members and observers is encouraged from such groups as industry, aboriginals, government and non-governmental organizations.
3. The terms of reference of the subsidiary bodies shall be determined by the Commission. In addition, each Study Group will develop a charter to describe the needs to be addressed, objectives, structure, operational strategies and activities proposed to carry out its mandate. The Bureau of Alternates will review each charter with the relevant Study Group Chair prior to its adoption.
4. Each Study Group will develop an action plan covering a two-year period which will include the timing of activities, responsible personnel and anticipated effects. The Bureau of Alternates will approve such action plans.
5. Study Groups will report on a regular basis to the Bureau of Alternates and to the Commission at each of its sessions.

6. The Office of Chair of each Study Group shall be assumed in turn by each of the Member Nations, usually on a two-year rotating basis and generally immediately after the biennial meeting of the Commission.
7. The establishment of subsidiary bodies, if they involve financial commitments for FAO, shall be subject to the availability of the necessary funds in the relevant chapter of the approved budget of the Organization. Before taking any decision involving expenditures in connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the administrative and financial implications thereof.
8. Each subsidiary body shall elect its own officers who shall be eligible for re-election.
9. The Rules of the Commission shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to its subsidiary bodies.

#### **Rule IX Expenses**

1. Expenses incurred by representatives of Members of the Commission and by their alternates or advisers, when attending sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the expenses incurred by observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.
2. Any financial operations of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, insofar as they involve FAO funds, shall be governed by the appropriate provisions of the financial regulations of the Organization.
3. Research and other projects may be undertaken jointly by Members of the Commission in accordance with arrangements made between such Members.

#### **Rule X Languages**

1. English and Spanish shall be the official languages of the Commission.
2. Both languages shall be used at each session of the Commission. Any representative using a language other than an official language shall provide for interpretation into an official language.
3. A Member originating documents for consideration by the Commission shall prepare them in the official language appropriate to that Member, but, in addition, shall provide abstracts in the other official language.

#### **Rule XI Amendment and suspension of Rules**

1. Amendment of, or additions to, these Rules may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Commission, provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the amendment or addition has

been given. Amendments or additions to these Rules shall come into force upon approval by the Director-General of the Organization.

2. Any of the above Rules of the Commission, other than Rule I-1, Rule II-5, Rule III-2, 3 and 5, Rule IV-5, Rule V-2, Rule VI, Rule VII-3, Rule VIII-3 and 4, Rule IX and Rule XI-1, may be suspended by the Commission by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given. Such notice may be waived if no representative of the Members of the Commission objects.