



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE

Thirty-third Session

Rome, 19-26 November 2005

FIRST REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

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A. AGENDA FOR THE SESSION¹

1. The General Committee examined the Provisional Conference Agenda set forth in document C 2005/1 and noted that, following the request made by Angola, there will be an additional Sub-item 25.6 under Item 25 “Any Other Matters” on the use of Portuguese at the FAO Regional Conference for Africa in 2006. The General Committee also noted that the working group established to prepare a Declaration on the 60th Anniversary of the Organization has completed its work; the Declaration already agreed upon by the Regional Groups will be submitted for adoption under an additional Sub-item 25.7: “The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. A Declaration on its 60th Anniversary (17 October 2005). Ensuring Humanity’s Freedom from Hunger”. The former Sub-item 25.6 will consequently become Item 25.8. The Committee recommends that the Provisional Agenda be adopted by the Conference.
2. Having noted that the Provisional Agenda printed in document C 2005/1 was followed by a list of subjects on which information documents were tabled, the Committee also recommends that delegates wishing to comment on these documents be given an opportunity to do so under item 25: “Any Other Matters”.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSIONS AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE OF THE SESSION²

3. At its Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session the Council formulated proposals concerning the organization and timetable for the Thirty-third Session of the Conference. These proposals were communicated to all FAO Members and observers in document C 2005/12. The Committee recommends that the Conference establish two commissions to consider and report on Part I, and Part II of the Agenda respectively.
4. The Committee recommends that the Conference approve the Tentative Timetable proposed by the Council. It is understood that this Timetable may be subject to modifications according to progress made in the Plenary and in the Commissions.
5. The Committee noted that, since His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI would be granting an Audience for Conference participants on Thursday 24 November at 12:00 hrs., Conference proceedings will be suspended that day at 11:00 hrs.
6. The attention of the Conference is drawn to the fact that, in order to accommodate requests for speaking time by Ministers, the duration of each intervention should not exceed five minutes.

C. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSONS AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS³

7. In accordance with Rules VII and XXIV-5(b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) and as indicated in document C 2005/LIM/9, the Council at its Hundred and Twenty-ninth Session proposed the following candidates for chairing the Commissions:

¹ C 2005/1, C 2005/12, para.2, C 2005/INF/18

² C 2005/12

³ C 2005/LIM/9

Commission I: Ambassador Victoria Guardia de Hernández (Costa Rica)

Commission II: Ambassador Zohrab Malek (Armenia)

The Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the Council's proposal.

8. In accordance with Rule X-2 (c) GRO the Committee recommends that the Vice-chairpersons of the Commissions be as follows:

Commission I: Ambassador Alain Pierret (France)
Dr Hasan Qutaiba (Iraq)

Commission II: Ambassador Dato' Lily Zachariah (Malaysia)
Mr Willem Brakel (United States of America)

D. RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

9. The Council at its Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session had recommended the establishment of a Resolutions Committee of the Conference consisting of seven members, one from each FAO region. The Criteria for Conference resolutions as well as the functions and operating procedures of the Resolutions Committee are described in document C 2005/12 Appendix C.

10. The Committee recommends that the following Member Nations, identified by the region to which they belong, comprise the Resolutions Committee:

Australia

Cameroon

Ecuador

Egypt

Philippines

Romania

United States of America

Delegations of the countries concerned are requested to communicate to the Chairman of the Conference, as early as possible, the name of their representative on the Resolutions Committee.

E. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS FROM APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP⁴

11. As is customary, the Director-General has provisionally invited applicants for membership to be represented by observers until a decision has been taken on their application. The Conference will no doubt wish to confirm the invitations in respect of the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of Belarus.

⁴ C 2005/10

F. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS FROM NON-MEMBER NATIONS

12. The Director-General received from the Russian Federation a letter expressing the interest of the Government in attending the 33rd Session of the Conference. An invitation to attend the Conference in an observer capacity was sent to the Government of this country. It was pointed out, however, that it was subject to confirmation by the Conference, in accordance with the Principles Relating to the Granting of Observer Status to Nations (Basic Texts, Section L, para. B-1) which specify that Non-Member States of FAO may on request be invited “by the Conference... to be represented by an observer at a session of the Conference”. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the invitation.

G. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBER NATIONS⁵

13. In conformity with the provisions of Rule XIX of the General Rules of the Organization, the application for membership of the Republic of Belarus had been received by the deadline of 20 October 2005.

14. Under Article II-2 of the Constitution, the Conference decides on the admission of additional Member Nations by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization is present; “votes cast” means affirmative and negative votes and does not include abstentions or defective ballots (Rule XII-4(a) of the General Rules of the Organization-GRO). Membership becomes effective on the date when the Conference approves the application.

15. The Committee recommends that the Conference hold the vote for the admission of the Republic of Belarus at the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Saturday 19 November. The result of the vote will be announced later in the same meeting, followed by the admission ceremony. As is customary, the Chairperson will welcome the new Member, which may make a brief statement.

16. An application for membership was also received from the Principality of Andorra on 18 October, but, subsequently, the Government informed the Organization that it would not be able to complete on time the internal process for the acceptance of the Constitution, so that the Conference could take a decision at the present session.

H. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NEW MEMBER NATION

17. In accordance with Regulation 5.8 of the Financial Regulations, the Conference determines the amount of the contribution to be paid by the newly admitted Member Nation, beginning with the quarter in which the application is approved.

18. According to the established principles and customs, the minimum contribution due from the new member for the last quarter of 2005 and the advance to be made to the Working Capital fund are provisionally:

Nation	Contribution Last Quarter 2005		Working Capital Fund Advance	
	EURO	US \$	EURO	US \$
Republic of Belarus	8,325	8,085		4,770

⁵ C 2005/10

I. APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ⁶

19. By the date established by the Council, i.e. 8 April 2005, the following nomination had been received for the post of Director-General:

- Jacques Diouf (Senegal)

This nomination was notified to all Members by Circular Letter G/CF 4/2 of 12 April 2005.

20. Under the terms of Rule XXXVI.1(a) GRO, the General Committee determines and announces the date of the election, it being understood that the appointment of the Director-General at a regular Session shall begin and be effected within three working days following the opening date of the Session.

21. Notwithstanding the fact that only one candidate was nominated, a secret ballot is required. This is in accordance with Rule XII-10(a) GRO whereby the appointment of the Director-General is decided by secret ballot, as confirmed by the practice of the Organization in past situations when only one candidate was nominated and when a secret ballot was held.

22. The Committee recommends that a secret ballot for this appointment take place on the afternoon of Saturday 19 November 2005, as envisaged in document C 2005/12 Arrangements for the Thirty-third Session of the Conference.

J. APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL⁷

23. By the date determined by the Council, i.e. 9 September 2005, two nominations have been received for election to the office of Independent Chairman of the Council, namely:

Mr Mohammad Saeid Noori Naeini (the Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr Rudy Rabbinge (the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

These nominations were notified to all Members by circular letter G/CF 4/3 (a) of 16 September 2005.

24. Under the terms of reference of Rule XXIII-1(b) GRO, the General Committee determines and announces the date of the election. The Committee recommends that the election be held on Friday, 25 November in the afternoon.

K. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL⁸

25. Rule XXII-10(a) GRO provides that the Conference, on the recommendation of the General Committee, shall, not later than the end of the third day of the Conference Session, decide the date of election of members of the Council and the date by which nominations must be submitted.

26. The Committee accordingly recommends that:

⁶ C 2005/18

⁷ C 2005/9 and 2005/12

⁸ C 2005/11

- the election begin on the afternoon of Friday 25 November; and
- nominations for the Council seats to be filled at the present session be communicated to the Secretary-General of the Conference (B-202) by Saturday 19 November 2005 at the latest, to permit the General Committee to communicate to the Conference the valid nominations received at least three working days before the date selected for the election in accordance with Rule XXII-10(d) GRO.

27. In this connection, the Conference will note in particular the following provisions of paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 7 of Rule XXII of the General Rules of the Organization:

“3. In selecting Members of the Council, the Conference shall give due consideration to the desirability of:

- a) including in its membership a balanced geographical representation of nations interested in the production, distribution and consumption of food and agricultural products;
- b) ensuring the participation in the work of the Council of such Member Nations as contribute in a large measure toward the success of the Organization;
- c) giving to the greatest possible number of Member Nations an opportunity, by rotation of membership, to serve on the Council”.

“4. Member Nations shall be eligible for re-election”.

“5. No Member Nation shall be eligible for election to the Council if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years”.

“7. A Member of the Council shall be considered to have resigned if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years, or if it has not been represented at two consecutive sessions of the Council”.

28. The Committee recommends that for the Council elections on 25 November 2005 the Republic of Belarus be in the FAO Europe Region, and that the distribution of other Member Nations by region remain as shown in document C 2005/11, which provides all relevant information concerning the seats for which nominations must be submitted and the forms for submitting nominations.

L. RIGHT TO VOTE

29. The General Committee notes that the following 31 Member Nations have not paid sufficient amount of their assessed contributions to retain their vote in the Conference:

Member Nations with Potential Voting Rights Problems as at 14 November 2005

Member Nation	Consolidated Arrears Expressed in US\$	Consolidated Contributions Due for Two Preceding Years	Minimum Payment required to Ensure Vote in US\$
1 Afghanistan	\$ 288,687.35	\$ 63,270.14	\$ 225,418.21
2 Antigua and Barbuda	\$ 336,998.77	\$ 14,060.63	\$ 322,939.14
3 Argentina	\$ 21,952,200.38	\$ 8,079,497.09	\$ 13,872,704.29
4 Azerbaijan	\$ 998,648.10	\$ 28,121.26	\$ 970,527.84
5 Burundi	\$ 141,996.73	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 135,002.38
6 Cambodia	\$ 30,896.00	\$ 14,060.63	\$ 16,836.37
7 Central African Republic	\$ 209,415.16	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 202,420.81
8 Comoros	\$ 271,713.54	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 264,719.19
9 Costa Rica	\$ 232,476.01	\$ 140,638.59	\$ 91,838.42
10 Democratic Republic of Congo	\$ 42,957.60	\$ 28,121.26	\$ 14,837.34
11 Dominica	\$ 14,575.63	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 7,581.28
12 Dominican Republic	\$ 670,697.95	\$ 161,726.82	\$ 508,972.13
13 Gambia	\$ 104,583.48	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 97,589.13
14 Grenada	\$ 37,640.13	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 30,645.78
15 Guinea-Bissau	\$ 99,424.16	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 92,429.81
16 Iraq	\$ 5,753,228.50	\$ 956,305.77	\$ 4,796,923.73
17 Kyrgyz Republic	\$ 867,652.66	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 860,658.31
18 Latvia	\$ 752,232.12	\$ 70,335.43	\$ 681,897.69
19 Liberia	\$ 338,758.76	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 331,764.41
20 Nauru	\$ 11,024.54	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 4,030.19
21 Nicaragua	\$ 142,740.72	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 135,746.37
22 Paraguay	\$ 192,544.79	\$ 112,517.32	\$ 80,028.47
23 Sao Tome and Principe	\$ 268,934.16	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 261,939.81
24 Seychelles	\$ 146,852.34	\$ 14,060.63	\$ 132,792.71
25 Sierra Leone	\$ 144,978.49	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 137,984.14
26 Solomon Islands	\$ 36,137.73	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 29,143.38
27 Somalia	\$ 344,838.16	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 337,843.81
28 Sudan	\$ 43,952.68	\$ 42,181.91	\$ 1,771.77
29 Suriname	\$ 24,908.72	\$ 14,060.63	\$ 10,849.09
30 Tajikistan	\$ 146,012.83	\$ 6,995.35	\$ 139,018.48
31 Turkmenistan	\$ 427,910.67	\$ 21,088.22	\$ 406,823.45
	\$ 35,075,618.82	\$ 9,871,971.89	\$ 25,203,677.93

30. Article III.4 of the Constitution states: "A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution 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. 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".

31. In the meantime, however, the Committee recommends to the Conference in accordance with past practice, that all Member Nations in attendance be authorized to vote on Saturday 19 November on the understanding that contacts with those in arrears shall be continued with a view to regularizing their situation. The Committee also expressed its concern at the large number of Member Nations in arrears.

M. RIGHT TO REPLY

32. At its previous sessions, the Conference had decided that, if delegates wished to reply to criticisms of their Governments' policy, they should preferably do so on the day on which such

criticisms had been voiced after all those wishing to participate in the discussion had had an opportunity to speak.

33. The Committee recommends that these same arrangements be followed at the present session.

N. VERBATIM RECORDS

34. Rule XVIII-1 GRO lays down that verbatim records shall be kept for all Conference plenary and commission meetings. The right of delegates to check the accuracy of the record of their interventions is expressly recognized in Rule XVIII-2 GRO.

35. The accuracy of the records may be maintained either by correcting typing and other errors, or by amending a word or phrase actually used. In practice such corrections or amendments to statements are accepted only from the delegation which made the statement, and should be submitted within 48 hours of circulation of the draft verbatim record concerned.

36. In 1961 a procedure was formally adopted by the Conference whereby speakers who so desire may have their statements inserted in the record without delivering them in Plenary. This procedure is still followed and is recommended in the interests of saving time.

37. While the Committee sees no objection in principle to the insertion of statements in the records when time does not permit them to be delivered, it recognizes the difficulties which might arise if no occasion is given to delegates to exercise the "right of reply" to any criticism of their government's policy made in the inserted statement.

38. The Committee therefore recommends that the Conference continue to permit the insertion of such statements on condition that:

- a) the Plenary, or the Commission concerned, is informed by its Chairman that a statement not actually delivered, or a substantive addition to a statement that has been delivered, is being inserted in the record;
- b) the text handed over to the Chairman for insertion is in Arabic, Chinese, English, French or Spanish;
- c) the provisional verbatim record containing the additional statement is circulated at least three days before the close of the Session; and
- d) delegations attending the Session are able to avail themselves of the right of reply by having an opportunity to make, prior to the close of the Session, a statement relating to the additional statement.

O. STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

39. The Committee recommends that a list of speakers be published daily in the Journal of the Conference, in the order in which they will be called upon by the Chairman, and further recommends that statements be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

P. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS⁹

40. The list of Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations which have been invited by the Director-General to be represented in an observer capacity at this session of the Conference is given in documents C 2005/13. The invitations sent to Intergovernmental

⁹ C 2005/12, C 2005/13

Organizations with which FAO does not have a formal agreement and to International Non-Governmental Organizations which do not have consultative status with FAO are extended on a provisional basis and are subject to approval by the Conference.

41. After having reviewed this list, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the said provisional invitations.

Q. STATEMENTS IN PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE BY INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVING CONSULTATIVE STATUS

42. The General Committee was appraised of requests from the following International Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with FAO, to address the Plenary of the Conference:

International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)

43. Having examined this request, the Committee, in accordance with Rule X-2(g) of the General Rules of the Organization, is now reporting to the Conference, and recommends that the Conference grant speaking time not exceeding four minutes to the above mentioned organizations on the understanding that in no case will such organizations be given priority in speaking over representatives of FAO Members.

R. INFORMAL MEETING OF OBSERVERS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

44. The Council at its June session recommended that, as at previous sessions of the Conference, observers from Non-Governmental Organizations be invited to attend an informal meeting, so that their advice and suggestions on the Organization's activities and programmes may be communicated to the Conference. It is suggested that this meeting take place on Saturday 19 November. The Committee recommends that the Conference accept this proposal.

S. ATTENDANCE BY LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

45. In conformity with the suggestion made by the Council at its Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session, the Palestine Liberation Organization has been invited to attend the Conference in an observer capacity. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm this invitation.

T. CONCLUSION

46. Lastly, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm all the detailed arrangements for the session and that, the normal working hours for meetings of both Plenary and Commissions be 09:30 to 12:30 hours, and 14:30 to 17:30 hours with the exception of Monday 21 November where the two Commissions will start their work at 10.30 and the afternoon Plenary session will end at 18:30 hours. The Committee also invites all delegations to observe the working hours with the maximum punctuality.