



COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

Ninety-first Session

Rome, 20-22 September 2010

REVISED NOTE ON THE METHODS OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL

BACKGROUND

1. The *Note on the Methods of Work of the Council* was originally adopted at the 60th Session of the Council in June 1973, upon a recommendation by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)¹. The *Note* remained unchanged until November 2000, when it was updated at the 109th Session of the Council, following its review by the CCLM, as over the years part of its content had become obsolete².
2. Since 1973, the *Note* has been regularly made available to the Membership at the Council sessions. This practice was discontinued in 2008, pending the revision of the *Note* to take account of the governance reforms mandated by the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA) adopted by the Conference in 2008.
3. At its 36th Session held in 2009, the Conference adopted amendments to the Basic Texts regarding the Council, together with Resolution 8/2009 on the role and functions of the Council, reflecting the reforms introduced by the IPA³.

REVISION OF THE NOTE

4. The *Note on the Methods of Work of the Council* was therefore revised by the Secretariat, taking into consideration the amended rules relating to the Council and its new operating pattern.

¹ CL 60/REP, paras 170-174 and Appendix G.

² CL 119/REP, para 77 and Appendix D.

³ C 2009/REP, paras 139-141.

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5. While the structure of the *Note* was not modified, its substance was updated in various respects. In the draft revised *Note*, major changes were made as regards the functions of the Council, emphasizing its prominent role as the executive organ of the Conference, including on strategic, programme and budget matters. Other changes made to the *Note* relate to the Council documents, which should be more concise and be dispatched in all the languages of the Organization in a timely manner, in accordance with the new cycle of the Governing Body sessions. The *Note* was also adjusted with regard to the Council reports, which should clearly refer to the conclusions, decisions and recommendations made on matters discussed at the sessions, as called for by the IPA.
6. The draft revised *Note* was considered by the *Open-ended Working Group on measures designed to increase the efficiency of Governing Bodies, including representation* (OEWG) at its first meeting held on 13 July 2010. The OEWG recognized that the *Note* was a useful reference document which required updating to reflect the revised role, functions, practices and ways of working of the Council set out in the IPA. In addition to the changes already made, the OEWG agreed that the revised *Note* should be further modified to provide for: (i) the Council functions as described in the Basic Texts; (ii) Membership engagement and interaction in the work of the Council, with the Independent Chairperson performing an enhanced facilitation role in the process; (iii) Membership involvement in inter-sessional work, including in agenda setting; (iv) standard formats for Council documents; and (v) information on voting arrangements.
7. The OEWG also agreed that the subsequent steps in the revision process should be as follows: (i) review of the revised *Note* by the CCLM at its 91st Session, which would make appropriate recommendations to the Council regarding the *Note*; (ii) consideration and possible approval of the revised *Note* at the 140th Session of the Council in November-December 2010, in the light of the guidance provided by the CCLM.
8. Following the meeting of the OEWG, and taking into account its recommendations, the Secretariat further revised the *Note on the Methods of Work of the Council*, the text of which is appended to this document.
- SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE**
9. The Committee is invited to review the revised *Note on the Methods of Work of the Council* and provide such guidance as it deems appropriate.
10. In particular, the Committee is invited to determine whether the revised *Note* is in line with the relevant provisions of the Basic Texts of the Organization.
11. If the revised *Note* is found to be consistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization, the Committee may wish to recommend that it be endorsed by the Council at its 140th Session in November-December 2010.