



Report
on a rationalization of the proceedings
and documentation of the Conference
of the Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

by

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Joint Inspection Unit

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Foreword

1. This is a further study undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit^{1/} on one of the most pressing matters that has been of growing concern to member States in the whole United Nations family: the continuing increase in the number, duration and cost of conferences.
2. Two members of the Joint Inspection Unit attended the last biennial FAO Conference Session in Rome during November 1969 to study on the spot the organization and methods of work of the Conference. Earlier a visit had been paid to the Council meeting in June 1969.
3. The Conference, in paragraph 494 of its report, took note of the Inspectors' attendance and stated in a resolution that the report on their findings would be taken into consideration by the Council of FAO, the authority mainly responsible for the arrangements for sessions of the legislative body.
4. The Inspectors were able, during the Conference, to benefit from the presence of many delegates from all parts of the world, to discuss various points concerning the conduct of the Conference. They wish to express their appreciation for the co-operation that they received from delegates.
5. Similarly, the Inspectors had numerous exchanges of views with senior officials of the Secretariat, and also wish to record their appreciation for their co-operation and services in providing information for this study.

2. Background information

6. The Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, otherwise known as the Committee of Fourteen, in chapter IX

^{1/} The Joint Inspection Unit, the creation of which was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of Fourteen in para. 67B of its report to the General Assembly (document A/6343), came into existence on 1 January 1968 as a result of General Assembly resolutions 2150 (XXI) and 2360 (XXII). Apart from the United Nations, the following organizations participate in the inspection system by decision of their respective legislative or governing bodies: FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, ITU, WMO, IMCO, IAEA, ICAO and UPU. The members of the Unit, from eight countries designated by the President of the General Assembly, were appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after consultation with the other members of ACC. They are: Mr. Maurice Bertrand (France), Mr. L. Garcia del Solar (Argentina), Mr. Sreten Ilić (Yugoslavia), Mr. Robert M. Macy (United States of America), Mr. C.S. Jha (India), Mr. Joseph A. Sawe (Tanzania), Sir Leonard Scopes (U.K.) and Mr. Alexsei F. Sokirkin (U.S.S.R.).

of its second report (A/6343) made a number of recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly and the specialized agencies in an effort to mitigate some of the problems created by the growth in number of conferences, the number of participants and the volume of documentation.

7. As a follow up to the recommendations of the Committee of Fourteen, one of the tasks which the Joint Inspection Unit has on its work programme is to study the legislative meetings of the UN and the specialized agencies mainly with a view to achieving:

- (a) rationalization of methods which might be expected to result in more purposeful and effective deliberations;
- (b) savings on the conference expenses met by the organizations;
- (c) economies to member States sending delegations to such meetings.

8. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations convenes its Conference every second year. The system of biennial Programmes of Work and Budget in FAO was initiated some twenty years ago.

9. But the cost of the Conference is increasing at a rate higher than the general rate of increase in the Organization's regular budget; the estimates for "Sessions of the Conference" for 1970-1971 show an increase of 88.85 per cent over the adjusted figures for 1968-1969, whereas the expected increase in the general budget over the same period is 17.6 per cent.

10. The arrangements for the Conference are based on parliamentary techniques which correspond in broad outline to those applied in the United Nations General Assembly and the legislative meetings of the other larger specialized agencies. These techniques were laid down in the constitutional instruments adopted nearly twenty-five years ago, when the Organization had thirty-nine member States: with minor modifications, they are still in use. Meanwhile the number of member States had risen to 121 and the total funds available to FAO, which for its first year of existence amounted to \$5 million, reached \$200 million by the biennium 1968-1969.

11. Furthermore, FAO, like most of the large agencies in the United Nations family, has taken on an increasingly operational role in response to the growing demand which has made itself felt in terms of international co-operation.

12. These factors have confronted the specialized agencies with many problems, some of which affect the working of their institutional machinery and prevent it from performing its specific function as efficiently as it should. In FAO, as in UNESCO and other international organizations, the representatives of the many member States are unhappy about the working of the legislative organ, which sometimes leaves them

with a feeling of frustration. This is an understandable reaction to large-scale legislative meetings, for these afford many member States their only opportunity of feeling that they are really participating in the organizations' activity.

13. It would be unfair not to acknowledge that the Secretariats over the past few years have made commendable efforts to enable the legislative bodies to perform their tasks efficiently and economically. What happens in practice, however, is that circumstances override the combined will of all concerned, and that the enormous growth of the specialized agencies' activities makes it necessary not merely to apply measures of rationalization but to revise some basic ideas about the legislative body's role which was conceived at a time when the agencies were no more than a forum for inquiry, consultation and the dissemination of thought.

14. The problem has given the member States of FAO cause for concern, as was shown in resolution No. 22/67, adopted at the fourteenth session of the Conference. Then at the fifteenth session the Conference unanimously adopted resolution 6/69, which reads as follows:

"THE CONFERENCE

"Realizing that protracted Conference sessions make difficult participation by those countries whose representatives are unable to remain in Rome for such a long period of time;

"Considering that, in particular, the so-called 'General Discussion' is far from fulfilling its intended purpose as an exchange of ideas and opinions;

"Bearing in mind that the principal objective of the Conference must be to provide guidance for the work of the Organization, and that there are other bodies in it to deal with the food and agricultural situation at the world, regional and country levels;

"Considering that the Organization and its Member Nations can only benefit from any measure designed to improve the agenda of the Conference and to shorten its duration;

"Requests the Council, after analyzing the proceedings of the current session of the Conference, to consider the drawing up of an abridged agenda for the Conference, to enable it to deliberate more efficiently in a shorter period of time than at present."

15. It is our hope, therefore, that the recommendations made in this report will be of value to the FAO Council in its effort to implement the above resolution.

3. The main problems

16. In response to the request made by the Conference in resolution No. 22/67 the Director-General of FAO, in April 1968, submitted to the Programme Committee and Finance Committee of the Council for their consideration a report (PC 14/6 FC 19/25) stating what he regarded as the main problems involved in the functioning of the Conference and suggesting approaches to their solution. In the course of the biennium 1968-1969 the two Committees and the Council itself studied the report at successive meetings and, in the light of the initial discussions, the Director-General made some changes in his original suggestions and embodied these in document CL 51/11, which appeared in August 1968. Once approved by the Council at its fifty-second session, in June 1969, the suggestions were put into effect at the fifteenth session of the Conference, in November 1969.

17. The Conference of FAO performs its task in plenary meetings and meetings of three Commissions. These large Commissions - simply numbered I, II and III - report to the plenary. Neither in this procedure nor in the custom of beginning the Conference with general statements delivered by heads of delegations at plenary meetings does FAO practice differ in any fundamental way from the standard procedure for legislative meetings of the United Nations and the large specialized agencies.

18. Where FAO has made a significant departure from this procedure, however, is in convening, a few days before the opening of the Conference, the so-called Technical Committees.

19. This arrangement - which was designed to promote discussions of the Organization's activities from the purely technical point of view - appears to be the main bone of contention with regard to the organization of the Conference proceedings. At its fourteenth session, the Conference took the view that a satisfactory framework for the operation of the Technical Committees had not yet been evolved. It requested the Council to consider further the responsibilities and terms of reference of those Committees, if they were to be continued. (Report of the Fourteenth Session of the Conference, paras. 638-645)

20. In their turn, the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee, in their joint report to the Council at its fifty-first session, identified as one of two key issues in the matter of improving the organization of Conference sessions "The functions

and timing of the Technical Committees and their relationship to Commission II" (CL 51/5, para. 37). The Council and its two competent Committees gave their closest attention to this and to the other key issue - "General statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegations in plenary and their relationship to the work of Commission I" - without, of course, neglecting a variety of other matters, some connected with the two considered vital and others unrelated to them.

21. The proposals put forward for application at the fifteenth session of the Conference were of an experimental nature and, although it may be said in general terms that the delegations left Rome with more of a sense of work accomplished than they had done after the fourteenth session, the language of resolution 6/69 makes it clear that the key issues have still not been satisfactorily resolved.

22. For our part, in addition to noting some points of detail which will be taken up as they arise, we found room for improvement in several areas besides those already mentioned: for example, the problem created by the unequal attendance of delegates at Commission meetings, and the complex and time-consuming procedure for adoption of the Commissions' reports.

23. If remedies for all these fundamental weaknesses can be found through rationalization, it will be possible to increase the effectiveness and at the same time reduce the duration, and hence the cost, of the Conference.

24. However, the Conference cannot see everything or do everything if it is to do anything well in a shorter time than it takes at present.

25. What is the solution? This question raises a fundamental problem which is common to the larger specialized agencies, and which must be tackled if all the other measures of rationalization applied are not to mend matters in one direction and undo them in another. The problem is to make a choice, so that the legislative organs of those specialized agencies which are increasingly operational may concentrate on specified lines of activity. To do this, they will have to consider revising some of their own ideas about their specific role.

26. It cannot be maintained that the role of the legislative bodies should be to analyze in detail the action taken for the execution of the current programme, or to plunge into a purely academic discussion of particular policy issues. Nowadays, their fundamental role should be to serve as the main source of inspiration for the Organization's programmes which, for obvious reasons, must be mapped out several years in advance.

27. The nature of FAO's operations makes it imperative to formulate a strategy on a long-term basis.^{1/} The Organization should derive its strategic projections from the discussions held on policy matters in the Conference, seizing the opportunity created by the presence of delegations led by Ministers or very high-ranking officials, from all the member States.

28. If the Conference would agree to make this its priority role, there would be no great difficulty in recommending how the procedure of discussion might be reorganized to avoid a piecemeal dissipation of effort.

29. In our opinion it might perhaps be appropriate to make a sharper division of responsibilities between the Council and the Conference, so that the two organs might complement each other's functions and lighten each other's workload. We realize that this will not be easy: in the first place because the Conference which, unlike the Council, is composed of the totality of member States, cannot give up its specific function, which is to perform legislative duties as established in the constitutional texts; this in itself is an additional reason for aiming at a more rational distribution of duties among them.

30. We feel, however, that the democratic nature of the legislative body would not be affected if in such cases the Council were to act as any congress committee, which prepares the work for the House to take action on it at plenary meetings.

31. This is done in practice, but apparently the Conference does not always derive full benefit from the arrangement. Later in this report we shall see that, at the fifteenth session of the Conference, Commission III dealt expeditiously with the items referred to it - those of an administrative, legal and constitutional nature - mainly because it relied on the very specific recommendations it had received from the Council. The same applied to the approval of the budget ceiling. It did not, however, apply to the examination of the Programme of Work and Budget. If Commission II could find a way to concentrate its review of the Programme of Work and Budget on the specific points singled out for attention by the Council, not only would it save the time that

^{1/} The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in its report to the United Nations General Assembly at its last session (A/7805, para. 38), states that the recommendation of the Committee of Fourteen on which best progress has been made in the past twelve months concerns the introduction of procedures for long-term planning, and that action on this recommendation has been taken by the ILO, UNESCO, WHO and IMCO. The absence of any mention of FAO speaks for itself.

is now spent in examining the document chapter by chapter, but it would be on much firmer ground in making such changes as it deems necessary in the programme of work, whose present almost inviolable status is a source of frustration to many delegates.

32. Having identified the main problems of the FAO Conference we shall now proceed to analyse its methods of work and, in the light of that analysis, make recommendations which we hope will be useful for the purposes stated in paragraph 7.

II. COST

33. The costs of the Conference are of two kinds: general operating expenses and the cost of documentation.

34. The estimate of general operating expenses for the sixteenth session is \$261,000 (including \$30,000 for the Technical Committees), which represents an increase of 88.85 per cent over the appropriation for the fifteenth session, namely \$138,200. In the Programme of Work and Budget (C 69/3), approximately half this increase of \$122,800 is attributed to the introduction of two additional working languages: Arabic and German. The other half is attributed to additional expenses arising from higher pay rates of interpreters, verbatim writers and stenographers, increased overtime and communication.

35. The total cost of Conference documentation was \$432,874^{1/} for the fifteenth session. No comparative figures with the previous sessions are available.

36. Hence the fifteenth session of the Conference cost \$571,074^{2/} and if no economies were made, the figure might increase to at least \$700,000 for the sixteenth session.

^{1/} The Programme of Work and Budget, unlike those of UNESCO and the ILO, do not identify the estimates for Conference documentation separately, and this renders analysis more difficult.

The figure of \$432,874 supplied by the Publications Division charges to the Conference two voluminous documents - the Indicative World Plan (IWP) and the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) - which are not intended exclusively for its use. On the other hand the Secretariat admits that the figures given to support such estimates probably are very much on the low side, because overheads and authorship of the documents are not taken into consideration. It adds that "until and unless a full cost-accounting system is introduced, these estimates must be regarded with some caution". Such a system is recommended by JIU in its report JIU/REP/69/2.

^{2/} See the reservations expressed in footnote ^{1/}.

37. It is clear, therefore, that if some formulae can be found which will shorten the next session, as requested by the Conference at its last session, and reduce the volume of documentation, these costs could be reduced considerable; the daily cost of the Conference is roughly calculated at \$6,000 plus \$7,400 for documentation.

38. On the other hand, the total estimated expense for member States in per diem for the delegations they have to send to Rome (calculated for 800 delegates at the current United Nations rate of per diem for Italy) might be of the order of \$14,000 a day.

III. DURATION

39. The Conference meets at Rome in November in the odd-numbered years. In theory, the Conference proper meets for approximately three weeks but, as was pointed out in paragraph 18, it has become the practice to precede the session by meetings of the "Technical Committees", which start in October and which add another week to the session, making a month in all.

40. The Technical Committees are established by the Conference and, as the Director-General states in paragraph 35 of his report to the Programme Committee at its fourteenth session (PC 14/6 FC 19/25), "they form part and act on behalf of the Conference".

41. In considering the duration of the Conference, therefore, we must be realistic and add to the length of the session proper the time taken up by the meetings of the Technical Committees.

42. The Technical Committees and the Conference alike met on working days at the rate of two meetings a day; from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Meetings were occasionally held on Saturdays; there is no fixed rule on the subject. Meetings are normally held on national holidays, as they are in WHO and the ILO but not in UNESCO.

43. The Technical Committees met from Thursday, 30 October, to Thursday, 6 November, which for the delegates means six days of work and eight days of residence. The Conference met from Saturday morning, 8 November, to Thursday afternoon, 27 November, which for the delegates meant fifteen days of work and twenty of residence. However, those representatives who went to Rome to attend both sets of meetings, and who presumably had to arrive on 29 October, had to spend exactly thirty days in Rome if they left on the closing day of the Conference.

44. The Conference, in its resolution 6/69, specifically requested that its session should be shortened, and this aim is therefore one of our fundamental concerns. The

Director-General himself anticipated this concern in his report to the Council at its fifty-first session (CL 51/11, para. 63), where he referred to the need for a more rational agenda for Commissions I and II and concluded that "there is, however, no overall cure other than a drastic reduction in the total number of meetings, and in the time allotted to meetings".

45. In view of the variety of subjects which, for constitutional reasons, have to be dealt with at the Conference, it is no easy task to reduce its duration. It is not, however, the items of detail which prolong the proceedings, for the Conference generally makes short work of them; the factor which most clearly gives the impression of excessive length is the time taken in advance of the session by the proceedings of the Technical Committees.

46. The main suggestions which we shall make in this report would allow the proceedings at present conducted by the Technical Committees and the Conference to cover a total period of nineteen days, corresponding to sixteen actual days of work.

47. To that end we suggest the following plan:

- (a) Proceedings of the kind held in the Technical Committees at the fifteenth session to be maintained, but as part of the Conference proper and in the form to be proposed later in ~~this~~ report.
- (b) Opening of the sixteenth session on Monday, 8 November 1971, without any previous meetings except those of the Council. Closure on Friday, 26 November.
- (c) Saturdays to be half working days, as they are in WHO and the ILO and as they are about to become in UNESCO.
- (d) National holidays to continue to be treated as normal working days.

48. If a plan of this kind could be put into effect, the Conference and, with it, the delegates' stay in Rome would be reduced by 33 per cent as compared with the fifteenth session.

IV. METHODS OF WORK

49. First we wish to state unequivocally that a very favourable impression was gained of the effort made by the Secretariat, from the administrative point of view, to ensure that the working arrangements of the fifteenth session of the Conference were satisfactory for the 808 representatives from 114 countries and observers. The arrangements, made suitably in advance, ensured excellent co-ordination of the arrangements for meetings, which were held without noticeable organizational or mechanical failures. Only exceptionally were representatives and Secretariat staff called upon to carry the physical burden of unduly long meetings.

1. Name of the legislative meeting

50. In the FAO Constitution, the legislative meeting is designated simply as "the Conference". For the outside observer, this name may cause some confusion, since FAO also holds regional conferences, moreover, as was pointed out at the fifty-first meeting of the Council by the member from the United Arab Republic (CL51/PV-8, p.20), the legislative meeting should have a designation which would "reflect the real function of the Conference as the highest deliberative and legislative organ of the Organization" and which "would be in line with the nomenclature employed by the United Nations and some agencies". UNESCO, the ILO and WHO have adopted designations which bring out the respective importance of their legislative meetings. As the term "Conference" has already become part of FAO practice, and the term "Assembly" should be reserved for the legislative body of the United Nations, in our view the term "General Conference" might be adopted by FAO for the purpose indicated.

2. Seating arrangements

51. On instructions from the Council, the Secretariat altered the seating arrangements in the Plenary Hall so as to make it into a kind of amphitheatre, in order to eliminate what the Programme and Finance Committee described as the "classroom atmosphere" which characterized the previous arrangement. The new arrangements proved to be very satisfactory.

52. We must mention, however, that only in the Plenary Hall did the delegations accredited as observers have comfortable and regularly identified places; in the Commission Rooms, the facilities given them were not so good and, although in the course of the Conference nameplates were put up, the seats proved to be not very suitable for note-taking.

3. Offices for delegations

53. The Secretariat made available offices in the headquarters building to those delegations which requested them. This arrangement proved to be very helpful to those who used it and, as far as possible, should be continued in the future. It was a very thoughtful measure on the part of the Secretariat, since the situation at FAO is different from that at UNESCO, where delegations have their own permanent offices in the building, or at WHO and the ILO, which are situated in a city that does not have the traffic problems of Rome.

4. The agenda

54. The two resolutions of the Conference dealing with its methods of work, (resolutions 22/67 and 6/69) mention the agenda as one of the problems and suggest that it should be shortened.

55. It is not easy to reconcile this logical aspiration with the fact that FAO is a steadily expanding organization which meets once every two years to review its activities and discuss its entire strategy for the future. It is the only occasion on which the representatives of member States come together for that purpose. The problem of inflation of agenda items is common to all the large organizations in the United Nations system. At its fourteenth session the Conference agenda comprised a total of fifty-two items, including those resulting from the sub-division of certain large items and excluding subjects dealt with by the Technical Committees.

56. The Council studied the matter and deleted from the provisional agenda of the fifteenth session two items, but two others had to be included. The agenda finally consisted of 48 items, plus those dealt with in the Technical Committees: this means only four less than for the fourteenth Session.

57. There is need, therefore, for greater selectivity in the preparation of the agenda. (Protein problems were dealt with, in one way or another, under at least four items of the agenda.) However, it may be that the problem cannot be solved simply by cutting down the number of items since it is linked to two underlying questions: the need for the Conference to concentrate more on establishing the broad lines of future strategy and less on the piecemeal examination of certain activities, and the question whether the discussions held in the Technical Committees should become part of the Conference proper.

5. Technical Committees

58. As stated in paragraphs 18-20, the problem of the Technical Committees appears, from the functional point of view, to be the Gordian knot of the Conference's working methods. The feeling of doubt about the working of these Committees - their continued usefulness has more than once been questioned by various member States and even by the Director-General himself - resulted in this question being the subject most discussed by the Council and its Committees in considering the arrangements for the Conference, and they finally agreed to try a new formula.

59. It may be said that, at the end of the fifteenth session, it was generally felt that the new formula had worked better than the old and that some of the problems arising from the unduly large number of Technical Committees and the subject-matter they discussed had been partly ironed out. Nevertheless, there still is a feeling that certain basic problems remain, and we shall therefore examine the functioning of these Committees in some detail.

60. (a) Their purpose and terms of reference: When the establishment of the Technical Committees was first conceived, the idea was to enable member States to send representatives to FAO Headquarters to consider the programmes of the organization from the purely technical standpoint in full-membership meetings; it was thought that this would act as an incentive for the technical staff who, at the national level, were dealing specifically with FAO matters and that their conclusions would constitute a valuable contribution to the Conference, which had to plan the organization's programme strategy. The idea cannot be faulted.

61. The terms of reference for the establishment of the Technical Committees are to be found in Rule XV/3 of the General Rules^{1/}. Comparing these terms of reference with the procedure of the Conference itself (Rule II 2 (c-iv. c-v)), with the functions of the Council (Rule XXIV 2. b) and with those of the Programme Committee (Rule XXVI 7. a and c), we may conclude that:

- (i) constitutionally and theoretically, it is proposed to assign to the Technical Committees a highly ambitious task which cannot be accomplished in a few days for a programme of today's size.

- (ii) similar functions are provided for in the terms of reference of other FAO bodies, in which the examination of topics from the technical standpoint is not excluded.

62. As will be seen later, the new formula whereby the Technical Committees no longer examine the programme of the organization vertically, sector by sector, has

^{1/} "The Conference may at any session appoint committees for the consideration of the technical activities of the Organization, to meet prior to the next session of the Conference, at such time as may be determined by the Council. The functions of each such committee shall, within its field of competence, primarily be to: (a) review the activities of the biennium coming to an end relating to the regular, technical assistance and other programmes; (b) consider from a technical standpoint the different chapters of the draft programme of work for the ensuing biennium; (c) consider the trends of the programme of work beyond the ensuing biennium; and (d) study such items as may be specifically referred to it by the Council".

superseded the terms of Rule XV/3, which, as drafted might lead to a duplication of effort. However, if by keeping the preamble to the said rule, the organization considered it as a safety valve so that the Conference could set up a technical committee for a specific purpose whenever that course was deemed advisable, it would continue to serve the purpose of the organization.

63. (b) The origin of the problem: Having pointed out the defect we have detected in the formulation of the terms of reference of the Technical Committees, we must now mention the practical drawbacks which gave rise to the general misgivings concerning their functioning under the old formula. Originally, the Technical Committees were set up by Commission II during the Conference session; later, they started their work one week before and overlapped for one week with the session: finally, it became the practice to convene them immediately prior to each session of the Conference, on the basis of six Committees (Agriculture; Economic and Social Affairs; Fisheries; Forestry; Nutrition; Publications; Public Relations and Legal Affairs). This arrangement brought about a kind of vertical examination of the organization's activities very similar to that which later, during the Conference itself, is normally carried out on the Draft Programme of Work and Budget in Commission II, which reviews the same activities chapter by chapter. Although the approach in the Technical Committees may have been technical, that cannot prevent many delegates from subsequently reopening discussion of technical aspects when Commission II goes through the various chapters of the Programme of Work and Budget, as is perfectly natural when such a document is examined, for criticism of it cannot be purely administrative.

64. The point most objected to, however, was the fact that such sectoral discussion of the programme stimulated representatives of the technical sectors of the Secretariat to influence delegations to support their respective plans, with the danger of producing imbalances in the programme.

65. In view of this, the Director-General proposed various alternative formulas including, in particular, the reduction of the number of Technical Committees to two which would constitute forums for the technicians to discuss, on a multi-disciplinary basis, a few topics requiring priority treatment by the organization and involving problems common to all the major branches of its activity. The debate in the Council and its Committees centred on this alternative and its variants, resulting in the elimination of what was regarded as the least practicable solution, which would have had the original Technical Committees meet well before the Conference and would have been expensive for the developing States, who are unable to finance frequent journeys of delegations abroad.

66. The aforementioned proposal was accepted by the Council for implementation at the fifteenth session and it was agreed that, immediately prior to the session of the Conference, two Technical Committees would meet: one on Field Programmes and the other on Areas of Concentration.

67. (c) Arrangements for the meetings: The arrangements for the meetings scheduled five full working days (10 meetings) for each Committee, plus half a day for adoption of its report. This covered the period from 30 October to 7 November (the Conference to start on Saturday, 8 November) keeping the morning of 6 November free for drafting the reports and 7 November in reserve for any eventuality.

68. The Technical Committee on Field Programmes completed its work in four and a half days (9 meetings) and the Committee on Areas of Concentration in six days (12 meetings).

69. Since the Technical Committees are made up of the full membership, the Secretariat provides them with the necessary administrative facilities (large conference rooms, service staff, interpreters, Conference Journal, documents distribution service, etc.), and this entails a daily mobilization of resources, the cost of which is equivalent to that for any normal day of the subsequent Conference, except for the savings resulting from the fact that the said Committees do not use verbatim records.

70. (d) The deliberations: From the outset it was noted that the Technical Committee on Field Programmes found its place in the sun far more easily than the Committee on Areas of Concentration and rapidly obtained a clear "succès d'estime". The functions laid down for the former Committee implied, as regards the planning and execution of FAO operations, a pragmatic approach to the consideration of the tangible problems experienced by member States in the field.

71. The task of the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration was specifically designed to replace the old arrangement by focusing its deliberations on five topics: High-yielding varieties of basic food crops, Filling the protein gap, War on waste, Mobilization of human resources for rural development; Earning and saving foreign exchange. Actually, this amounted to emphasizing five great priorities, whose problems affected, in one way or another, all the operational sectors of the organization.

72. The idea of selecting a group of topics and assigning them priorities cannot be alien to any administration engaged in drawing up programmes of development: it is the cornerstone of its strategy and Committee of Fourteen strongly emphasized that the specialized agencies should endeavour to establish areas of priority.

73. The deliberations of this Technical Committee were constructive but disjointed, and did not fully satisfy the delegations, as may be seen from the discussion that took place in Commission II towards the conclusion of its examination of the Committee's report. The misgivings voiced can be summarized as follows:

- (i) The introductory material was too general, and therefore the discussions tended to be general

74. This may be solved by an effort on the part of the Secretariat to submit fuller synopses, with more specific conclusions, to help to systematize and focus discussion.

- (ii) A number of delegations considered that the areas of concentration would be strengthened if they were more limited in their approach and that their precision should be sharpened by establishing priorities within priorities more clearly. However, other delegations felt that the priorities chosen left aside other important areas of concentration

75. This reflects the conflicting feelings produced among the delegations. We are inclined to think that, if it is a question of priority areas, it would be better to have a few very carefully chosen areas. Otherwise, they cease to be priorities. Naturally, there will always be member States claiming that "their" problem has been neglected. The key to the problem may perhaps lie in the emergence of the choice of priorities from what had received major emphasis in the preceding Conference's discussions on policy matters: the Council, with the help of the Director-General, could decide on the priorities and draw attention to them well enough in advance to enable the member States to prepare themselves to discuss them. Once they are the result of the basic guidance given by the previous Conference and harmonized by the Council, it will be the member States themselves which, through the bodies in which they are represented, have made the choice of priorities, and if anyone at the Conference itself wants emphasis placed on another area, it can, if the others agree, be a priority area for the future.

- (iii) Some delegations felt that the arrangement did not allow truly technical discussion on basic sectors of activity such as fisheries, forestry, etc.

76. In the first place, this view reflects a contradiction of what had been decided by the Council when it developed the new formula for the deliberations of the Technical Committees. If the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration achieved anything, it was the elimination of the sectoral competition that had previously arisen.

77. The mistake perhaps lies in insisting that the Conference should try to deal with topics in purely technical terms, when there are other forums in FAO for that purpose. It is worth examining, in this connexion, to what extent technical officers were present in Rome to attend the meetings of these Committees.

78. During the first working week, out of a possible 119 member and associate States, the average attendance in the Technical Committee on Field Programmes was 48 per cent and in the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration 54 per cent; towards the end of the second week, i.e. as the date of the opening of the Conference approached, the averages converged somewhat, rising to 54 and 57 per cent, respectively.

79. During the same first week, only one-quarter of the Latin American member States were represented, about one-half of the African countries and a similar proportion from Asia and the Middle East: and out of about 90 which can be regarded as developing countries, only 25 were simultaneously represented in meetings of the two Technical Committees, a figure which rose to 31 towards the end of their deliberations; in other words, an appreciable majority - approximately two-thirds - could not be represented in more than one Committee. In his statement at the plenary meeting, the Head of the Delegation of Malta showed his concern about this situation when referring to the Technical Committees he said: "I hardly need mention the frustration of the representative to a meeting, who after all the difficulties he has to overcome in order to be present, discovers that the actual attendance is not sufficiently representative to find ways and means to solve the problem for which the meeting had been convened." The above figures differ from those showing the attendance for Commissions I and II, where the developing countries,

as will be seen below, are much better represented. It is, therefore, difficult to attain the Director-General's aspiration stated in paragraph 32 of his report to the Programme Committee (PC.14/6 FC.19/25), "that a broad analysis of the draft Programme of Work and Budget by technicians from all the member Nations is essential, and that the Technical Committees of the Conference should therefore continue to convene."

80. In theory, there can be no objection to the desire of member States to send technicians to the Conference. This not only gives them an opportunity to contribute as experts to the discussions but also enables them to make personal contact with their colleagues from other countries and with technical officials of the Secretariat, but, as the Brazilian representative stated at the fifty-first session of the Council (CL.51/PV-9, p.7) "my own experts got more benefit from contact with the other bodies of the organization than with the work of the Technical Committees themselves."

81. It is not a question, therefore, of finding reasons why the experts should not come to Rome, but of ascertaining whether there is justification for making the Conference last eight to ten days longer by having the Technical Committees meet beforehand, instead of having these same experts contribute to technical discussions at a shortened session of the Conference.

82. Consideration of this question prompts us to make a number of observations. In the first place, it is obviously a great effort for developing countries - the large majority of which are much further away from Rome than are the industrialized countries - to send delegations to the Conference, and when they do they are unable to send technicians for a few days to the Technical Committees and to replace them, as many industrialized countries do, by generalists for the Conference. The technicians from the developing countries must stay for the whole session. Moreover, the representatives of those countries at the Conference prefer to travel with the head of their delegation, who is generally a Minister, since this gives them perhaps their only opportunity to have any personal contact with him about their work before the Conference begins - a psychological factor which means more than it seems. From the point of view of a country's internal administration, it is easier, given the bureaucratic complexities involved in making up a delegation which is to go abroad, to make arrangements for the members of that delegation to travel as a group under their Ministers rather than to arrange separate journeys.

83. As for the technical speciality of the experts which each country must select to attend the meetings of the Technical Committees, on what criterion is the choice to be based? Shall he be a forestry expert, a fisheries expert or a cereals expert? The FAO programme is multi-disciplinary and not even the industrialized countries send a specialist for each discipline. The majority of the developing countries can scarcely send one or two pure technicians, and have to supplement their delegation with members of their mission in Rome - if there is one.

84. The Programme Committee, in considering this problem at its sixteenth session (CL 52/3, para. 313), pointed out that "the need for an integrated consideration of the subject-matter fields covered by the two Technical Committees would raise some problems in the composition of delegations. Delegates on these committees would have to be generalists and policy-level officials. They would require detailed technical background material ...". It suggested that such advice should be included in the letter of invitation for the guidance of member States, and that is exactly what was done in the document on arrangements for the fifteenth session of the Conference, in paragraph 7 dealing with the composition of delegations to the Technical Committees. The idea of technical specialists attending the meetings of the Technical Committees has had to be abandoned by force of circumstances, although this does not of course prevent member States wishing and able to do so from sending specialists in addition to or instead of the generalists, since that would be very useful for the purposes described in paragraph 80. Incidentally, the younger developing countries often have to combine all in one the functions of their technicians with those of administrators, and such is the kind of delegate they can afford to send to Rome.

85. Is the Conference thus the proper forum for discussing the activities of the Organization from a purely technical point of view? May we quote the view expressed by one representative in the debate reviewing the work of the Technical Committees (Commission II, 6th meeting, p. 11) when he said: "I do not believe that Technical Committees in the framework of the World Conference of FAO should be used for professional discussions. FAO has a lot of committees and meetings within FAO, in connexion with other organizations, and one could say that in the framework

of the FAO, professional discussions are very well covered." What are these other committees and meetings? The Director-General answered this question when, in supporting the need to reduce the number of Technical Committees (PC/14/6 FC/19/25, para. 33), he stated that "the sessions of the different regional and technical commissions and committees which meet during the biennium could serve to a greater extent than at present to ensure detailed coverage of most of these fields".

- (iv) Discussion of the reports of the Technical Committees in Commission II resulted in an obvious duplication of work, which prolonged the Conference

86. A few figures will serve to illustrate this. The topics allocated to the Technical Committees were discussed in those Committees in the first instance and then, during the drafting of their respective reports, as always happens, some items were reopened for discussion. These two stages took up a total of thirteen meetings in the case of the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration. In the third instance, a few days later and with practically the same representatives - except that more attended - six meetings of Commission II were devoted to discussing the Committees' reports. Finally, there was a very detailed debate on the sections of the final report of Commission II relating to the Technical Committees, which took up four meetings. In other words, the Conference and its prolegomena required twenty-three meetings (eleven and a half days) in all to deal with the Technical Committees, their work and their reports, a great deal of time considering that the proceedings of both the Technical Committees and the Conference lasted for twenty-two working days.

6. Plenary meetings

87. One of the main concerns of the Council was the arrangements for the plenary meetings and especially those devoted to the so-called "General discussion".

88. (a) Opening meetings: FAO has established an excellent time-saving practice of having the Council, before the opening of the Conference, nominate the Chairman of the Conference and the Chairmen of the Commissions and elect the Nominations Committee.

89. The fifteenth session of the Conference opened on Saturday, 8 November, at 11 a.m. and the first meeting completed all its work in forty-five minutes (opening address by the Director-General, election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, appointment of the General Committee and Credentials Committee and statement by

the Chairman-elect). The meeting rose before noon, having convened the General Committee for 2.30 p.m. In the afternoon, the plenary meeting began at precisely 4.50 p.m. and completed its task of considering the report of the General Committee in forty minutes. On the opening day, therefore, the Conference met for a total of one hour and twenty-five minutes. After the weekend break, there were several ceremonies in the morning and afternoon of Monday, 10 November, which must also be regarded as opening procedures: an official visit and message on behalf of the Government of Italy, the McDougall Memorial Lecture delivered by Dr. Lleras Camargo, presentation of the B. R. Sen Awards, presentation of new senior officials and the admission of new member States.

90. In other words, the inaugural procedures before the beginning of the "General discussion" took up one and a half days. Considering that on the opening day the Conference met for only one hour and twenty-five minutes in all, we believe that these procedures could be programmed more tightly so as to save one meeting of half a day. If the opening of the Conference took place at 10.30 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. (the Nominations Committee being convened for 9 a.m.), the presentation of the B. R. Sen Awards - a praiseworthy initiative of FAO - and the presentation of new senior officials could take place that same morning. The General Committee could meet at 12 noon. It could work continuously, as is the practice in WHO, with a very short break for lunch, so that its report could be ready for submission at the end of the afternoon meeting. The afternoon meeting could then consist of the visit and address of the official representative of the Host Government or other dignitary from a member State - should it take place - and the McDougall Memorial Lecture (which takes only an hour). The meeting could then consider the report of the General Committee and the admission of new member States.

91. Under this plan, the "General discussion" could begin on the morning of the second day of the Conference.

92. (b) General discussion: The mixed feelings which this aspect of the Conference arouses in FAO are common to the main organizations of the United Nations family, since it is the practice of all legislative meetings to afford heads of delegations an opportunity of making their policy statements at the outset of the proceedings. This exercise occupies a place of special importance by reason of the fact that as a rule the delegations are headed by Ministers who are present to give weight to the views of their governments in the Conference.

- (i) One of the things that distresses delegations is that this phase of the legislative meeting becomes a series of disconnected monologues, which bears little relationship to a discussion

93. We believe that this view of things denotes some confusion about the purpose of the so-called "discussion" which in part is due to the misleading name given to this phase of the Conference proceedings. It would be better to use a title along the lines of "statements of general policy", since the purpose of this exercise is not to engage in a "discussion" but to enable each delegation to make known, through its most senior member, its basic ideas concerning the business of the organization. Therefore, it is neither feasible nor indeed desirable to avoid monologues; the actual "discussion" should start spontaneously in other settings, for instance, when specific topics are taken up in the Commissions.

94. This is not to say that, when the series of statements comes to an end, the appropriate conclusions could not be drawn by a single authority, which in our opinion should be the Chairman of the Conference with the assistance of the Vice-Chairman. In such a case, his statement could be one of the fundamental contributions to something that we have in mind: a resolution to be adopted at the end of the Conference giving the Director-General guidance on future programmes.

- (ii) Another problem which is a matter of concern to some delegations is the tendency of many heads of delegations to describe what has been done at the national level

95. Expositions of this kind, often destined for home consumption, fail to make useful contribution to the legislative meeting, whose purpose is to provide inspiration for the organization's long-term strategy.

96. FAO, like UNESCO, has made efforts to persuade the representatives of member States to limit this practice. In both cases, through the combined efforts of the governing bodies and the Secretariats, some suggestions have been put into practice which, without encroaching upon the sovereign right of member States to express their views, have made it possible to channel the "discussion" in a direction more in keeping with its essential purpose. In order to encourage member States to make their contributions as useful as possible by avoiding detailed descriptions of what has been done at the national level, a system has been put into practice based on the suggestion of topics selected in advance. In the case

of FAO, the Council, "while recognizing that Heads of Delegations in making their statements in plenary should be free to raise any matters considered relevant to the Agenda and vital to the work of the Organization", invited them to give particular attention to the State of Food and Agriculture, Main findings of the Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development and Action proposals for implementing FAO's development strategy with special reference to the five areas of concentration. In UNESCO, the Executive Board perhaps participates more directly than the FAO Council in the selection of topics.

97. In addition FAO invited heads of delegations who wished to present factual evidence of the results of national development policies to submit such material in writing, for inclusion in the verbatim records.

98. In UNESCO, the campaign is yielding increasingly positive results and the proportion of heads of delegations who avoid references to national activities has been increasing from Conference to Conference and has reached fifty per cent; moreover, those who do refer to them tend to do so more and more concisely. But in FAO at the fifteenth session only 30 per cent of the representatives did not describe such activities. As to specifically submitting such material in writing, not one delegation did so.

99. It is probable that, in spite of these efforts, some heads of delegations will inevitably wish to make certain references to national achievements; perhaps, as an alternative for the suggestion that they should submit that part of their statement in writing, they might be invited, if they wish to present it orally, to limit it to one quarter of their statement. In this respect we find a pertinent example in the speech made by the Head of the Tanzanian delegation.

(iii) Duplication between the "General discussion" and deliberations in Commission I

100. The Director-General stated in document PC 14/6 FC 19/25, paragraph 13, that the Conference should not deal with too many broad policy issues and that "the items should cover identifiable areas and be sufficiently specific for adequate appraisal and drawing up of realistic recommendations".

101. Still, one of the things that was of concern to the Council in discussing the arrangements for the plenary meetings was the fact that Commission I usually discusses policy issues; inevitably duplication with what has happened in the plenary occurs and, to remedy this, the procedure has been adopted of appointing a Rapporteur to inform Commission I of the salient points made by heads of delegations in their general statements.

102. How can this problem be remedied? It is our impression that, as compared with other legislative meetings, the work of the FAO plenary is very limited in scope: opening ceremonies, the "general discussion", elections, and the adoption of reports at the end of the session. Otherwise it does not sit.

103. Under the arrangements we have suggested so far, this period of inactivity would be even greater and we think that, as in the United Nations and UNESCO, the plenary could be employed to deal with some specific broad policy issues of the kind discussed in Commission I, such as Salient Features in the World Situation to mention an item appearing in the agenda of Commission I at the fifteenth session.

104. Perhaps the Council could participate in the selection of topics by trying to suggest some which more truly reflect what is of concern to States at the time of the Conference. Purely as an example, and with apologies for touching on an area that is outside our task of analysing the Conference's methods of work, we would mention that many delegations referred to the problem of international obstacles to the marketing of their commodities, a topic which did not appear on the agenda and which many heads of delegations had in mind.

105. This arrangement might offer the following advantages:

- (1) encouraging the Ministers or high officials heading delegations to stay longer in Rome and giving them an occasion for making a second statement in the forum corresponding to their rank;
- (2) relieving Commission I of the items which duplicate those of the plenary, thereby making room for the inclusion in the Commission's agenda of the items of one of the two Technical Committees;
- (3) eliminating the necessity of using a Rapporteur whose laudable efforts to avoid duplication in Commission I of what is discussed in the plenary cannot achieve their purpose, since the problem will not be solved by encouraging a delegate in Commission I to have an ear cocked to what is said in one conference room while he is making a speech in another, but by rectifying the error of using two forums for broad policy issues.

106. Under this plan, after a discussion of two days (four meetings) which would constitute the second part of the plenary's work, the deliberations might be summed up by the Chairman of the Conference in a statement which, like his summing-up of the "general discussion", would constitute a further contribution to the resolution on future programmes.

(iv) Observance of time-limits for statements

107. As regards the length of speeches, the Council urged speakers to observe a time-limit of twenty minutes, and, on the whole, this rule was respected since the average speaking-time was 18'50"; there were 98 speakers and the schedule of fourteen meetings (seven full days) was strictly adhered to. This was helped by the punctuality with which the Chairman, Ambassador Santa Cruz, opened the meetings; they usually started within ten minutes of the time scheduled. Attendance at the plenary meetings was distinctly better than in the Technical Committees and rather better than in the Commissions.

108. All in all, we think that the total number of meetings devoted to the "general discussion" should be reduced; this would be a major contribution to the more active role we have suggested for the plenary meetings and would help to shorten the Conference as sought by resolution 6/69.

109. Under the existing arrangement, it was planned to have eight speakers per meeting, each having the floor for twenty minutes. In ILO, the constitutional time-limit for speeches is fifteen minutes, speakers' attention being called by both a light signal and a bell. The rule is applied ruthlessly. This has made it possible for twelve speakers to address the ILO Conference at each meeting and the number has occasionally been raised to thirteen if the Secretariat was able to estimate from the written text of the speeches that they would last less than the prescribed fifteen minutes. WHO, at its twentieth Assembly, adopted a resolution suggesting a ten-minute time-limit for each speaker, the latter's attention being called by means of a signal lamp; it was also decided that, whatever their rank, heads of delegations would speak from their seats, since it was calculated that when speakers address the Assembly from the rostrum, it entails a time-loss of $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes per speaker and a total time-loss of about four hours for an average roster of 100 speakers. The system has worked successfully.

110. With a view to achieving the desired shortening of the "general discussion", it would be well to consider reducing the FAO recommended time allowance further - to fifteen minutes; this would bring the practice closer to the time-limits applied in the general debate of other organizations and, in the case of an average speaker, would represent $2\frac{1}{2}$ printed pages of the provisional verbatim record (2,000 words). In keeping with our suggestion in paragraph 100, heads of delegations would be advised, where they felt it indispensable to refer to national achievements, to devote a maximum of four minutes (500 words) to them. All these suggestions should be included in document C../20, which contains the arrangements for the session of the Conference. Under the

time-schedule proposed above, the "general discussion" would not take up more than five days (10 meetings). As regards the debate in plenary meetings on specific major policy issues suggested in (iii) above, a time limit of eight minutes could be recommended for each speaker.

7. The Commissions

111. Basically, the work of the Conference is divided into three large groups of items which are allocated to as many full-membership Commissions: I (Major Trends and Policy Questions in Food and Agriculture), II (Activities and Programmes of the Organization), and III (Constitutional and Administrative Matters). The division is brought out very clearly in an excellent document, C../1.

112. The administrative arrangements for the FAO Conference offer a limited capacity as regards the number of full-membership meetings; only three of the four main bodies (Plenary, Commissions I, II and III) can meet at one and the same time. Consequently, the arrangements for the meetings of these bodies must take this factor into account and this, incidentally, facilitates the work of the delegations - particularly those of the developing countries - since the smaller the number of bodies the greater the possibility of their being represented in them.

113. In examining the work of the Commissions, let us first consider Commission III, which is a very special case.

114. (a) Commission III: This Commission, for the reasons given in paragraph 112, met when the plenary was not in session. It had a sixteen-item agenda for which six days (twelve meetings) were allowed, but it succeeded in completing its work in two and a half days (five meetings) or somewhat less, since the last two meetings each lasted one hour.

115. What was the reason for this rapidity, especially since Commission III had on its agenda twice as many items as the other two Commissions?

116. In the first place, the intrinsic nature of its items facilitates short debates: they are constitutional, legal and administrative items with factual premises and precise solutions. More important, however, they are submitted to the Conference in a form which facilitates speedy action: most of them have been the subject of meticulous prior study by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, by the Finance Committee and by the Council, which gives its opinion in substantive form in its reports

to the Conference, frequently through draft resolutions which submit to the Conference the work which has been done. As an illustration of this, document C 69/1 (Agenda) reveals that most of the items for Commission III are based on paragraphs in the Report of the fifty-second session of the Council. It will be seen that a total of sixty-one paragraphs of this report are quoted, or the equivalent of ten pages. On the other hand, in the case of the much more substantial Commission II item involving consideration of the Programme of Work and Budget, the quotations from the prior Council study amount to only twenty-two paragraphs, or only four pages of the Council's views. It is evident, therefore, that Commission III has its work served up on a platter and can digest it easily and rapidly.

117. If Commission III was a model as regards the efficiency of its work, the attendance of delegates at its deliberations left much to be desired; in this respect it is clearly the weakest of the three Commissions. The average attendance was 41 per cent, 18 per cent of which was contributed by the group of industrialized countries (23 per cent of the total membership of the Organization) and 23 per cent by the developing States (77 per cent of the Organization). This consistently poor attendance has been a matter of concern to delegations and has given rise to a number of problems. At the first meeting of Commission III, the representative of New Zealand said he "... wished to draw attention ... to the lack of quorum which has hampered the work of Commission III at the last Conference ...".

118. In our view, the situation is quite serious: it means that, in decisions by the Commission where the position of the various economic groups may be divergent, the natural balance of representation in the Organization is upset and, although the final decision is taken in plenary - where the genuine balance is restored - it may be influenced by the conclusions adopted in a body in which representation is unbalanced.

119. Why is there such a limited attendance of delegates from the developing countries in Commission III? For the simple reason that Governments with a restricted capacity for sending delegates to the Conference logically decide in favour of sending representatives to take part in the debates on the programme, the items of which are less arid than the legal and administrative items; they cannot afford the luxury of sending administrators or legal speakers.

120. In view of our proposal that more should be done in the plenary and that the Conference should permit only three major bodies to meet simultaneously, we would suggest that Commission III be abolished and its items considered in Commission II on the basis of the following conclusions which we would add to the preceding arguments:

- (i) Experience has shown that the work of the Commission can be carried out in a very small number of meetings. Despite the fact that the fifteenth session was exceptional for Commission III in that its items were less complex than at previous sessions, it is also true that, for the fifteenth session, the Council produced superior work than in the past; if it keeps up that practice, there is no reason to suppose that the legal and administrative items would not be rapidly disposed of in the future even if some complex item should recur.
- (ii) In view of the limited capacity for simultaneous meetings, it does not seem reasonable that the administrative apparatus should be mobilized to service a Commission which completes its work so rapidly and which, as the Director-General stated (document PC 14/6 FC 19/25, paragraph 40), deals with "matters which are necessarily secondary to main purposes of the Conference and the Organization".
- (iii) Later in this report, the proposal will be made that Commission II should be responsible for all items other than broad policy issues and, basically, for the examination of the draft Programme of Work and Budget. It is clear that analysis of the Programme and Budget will entail discussion of many administrative aspects (see para. 132). Moreover, the agenda of Commission II has, in practice, included administrative items such as the approval of the budgetary, legal and other matters closely connected with the work of Commission III, such as inter-agency relations.
- (iv) If Commission III items are inserted in the agenda of Commission II this will lead to a better attended discussion of important constitutional and administrative matters than has been customary in Commission III. Once a representative has been assigned to a Commission at the outset, he tends to remain there. The Director-General has already expressed this view in paragraph 62 of his document CL 51/11, in which he refers to the problem of quorums: "The only satisfactory measure that can be taken is to reduce the total number of concurrent and overlapping meetings to enable delegations to be represented at all meetings".
- (v) Should the Secretariat foresee that an administrative or legal matter, because of its nature or its political connotations, might provoke lengthy discussions, it could be assigned to the plenary, for which some free days have been planned in our tentative timetable. Such practice is followed in the UN and in UNESCO.

121. (b) Commission I: This normally deals with major trends and policies in food and agriculture and is the main forum for the discussion of broad policy questions. It completed its work in seven days (fourteen meetings) and recorded an average attendance of 58 per cent, an improvement on Commission III, owing to an appreciably better attendance by representatives of the developing States.

122. The characteristic features of the functions assigned to it - broad policy issued - are such that it is impossible to prevent statements made in the Plenary from being repeated in this Commission, despite the conscientious efforts of the special rapporteur to avoid this. This has been a constant problem and, during discussion in the Council of the arrangements for the fifteenth session, several representatives proposed that the Commission should be abolished. There was also marked duplication of the work of the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration. In his statement at the twelfth meeting of Commission I, the rapporteur said: "without detracting in any way from the great importance of filling the protein gap, I cannot help but comment that, at this Conference, this subject is about to suffer from over-exposure".

123. In the Council, it was finally decided that this Commission should be retained, not because the doubts concerning duplication of the work of the Plenary had been dispelled, but because the fifteenth session was to consider the Indicative World Plan, which would give rise to a major debate, and it was thought that the ideal forum for this was Commission I. In other words, a circumstantial reason somewhat influenced the decision despite the fact that the Indicative World Plan was among the proposed items which the heads of delegation were to comment upon in the Plenary.

124. In keeping with the arrangements which we are proposing, we believe that Commission I should be retained but that its terms of reference should be amended so as to establish a clear line of demarcation between its responsibilities and those of the Plenary. The latter body should be the sole forum for discussion of "broad policy issues"; Commission I would be the forum for the specific discussion of priority matters and for reaching conclusions on guidelines for future agricultural strategy. We consider, therefore, that the Commission should begin by taking over the exchange of technical ideas which normally occurs in the Technical Committee on Areas of Concentration. If desirable, the possibility of splitting the work of this Commission into some sub-commissions could be envisaged for discussion of the "Areas of Concentration" according to the nature of the problems: Economic and Social, Human Resources, etc. These deliberations would culminate in a direct report to the Plenary which might, however, contain some useful ideas for the proposed resolution on future programmes. After dealing with any special item which, because of the arrangement of the meetings of the Commissions, might have to be dealt with by the Conference, Commission I would end its work by devoting the remainder of its time to the adoption of a resolution on future programmes.

125. As we pointed out in paragraphs 27 and 28 FAO has still not fully adapted itself to the concept of meticulous long-term programming. The authorities of the organization have been concerned about this, as the Director-General points out in his report (PC 14/6 FC 19/25, para. 25): "An aspect which has never been given adequate overall attention ... is the question of forward planning beyond the immediately ensuing biennium." The Committee of Fourteen recommended that the specialized agencies should draw up two-, four- and six-year plans, a principle which some agencies have already incorporated in their official policies. It is possible that this formula cannot be literally applied in FAO, since an agricultural strategy requires a longer term approach: this was well brought out by the Director-General in paragraph 8 of the same document where he says: "... it is clear that once a long-term agricultural development strategy has been established it will be possible to pay greater attention to the medium-term programme proposals covering the subsequent four- or six-year period."

126. In our view, however, there is no better formula for establishing the foundations of such a strategy than that based on the ideas put forward by the spokesmen of the member States in the Conference in two of its organs, the Plenary and Commission I.

127. A very important factor for the discussion on the future programme is that Commission I should have at its disposal a document by the Director-General which would serve as a basis for its work. In paragraph 54 of the above-mentioned document, the Director-General states: "with regard to future trends and medium-term proposals the fourteenth Conference felt that a view of them could only be effectively formed if member Governments were to be provided with a paper far enough ahead of the Conference session to enable Governments to evaluate together the work of the concluding biennium, of the immediately ensuing biennium and future trends. This paper, which would comprise the medium-term programme proposals, should include the practicability and desirability of shifts in emphasis".

128. Unfortunately, document C 69/33 "Proposals for Medium-Term Activities and Programmes" left much to be desired in the opinion of delegations which subjected it to some criticism. In general, it was thought that its five pages lacked substantive suggestions which could serve as a basis for a long-term programme. In fairness to the Director-General, it should be pointed out that the document itself stressed its provisional nature which was attributed to the heavy work-load during the biennium due to the problems of reorganizing the Secretariat. Be that as it may, the document ended with a proposal that the Director-General should be authorised to increase the budget for the biennium 1972/73 by a percentage amount based on a calculation of future costs. Relying upon a somewhat far-fetched interpretation of the recommendations by the Committee of Fourteen on the establishment of costs for future planning, the document seemed designed rather to obtain this increase than to assist the Conference in preparing a long-term programme.

129. We feel that the first part of the paper should contain a summary of the conclusions derived from the document "The Work of FAO", in other words, an evaluation of what was achieved in the preceding biennium and of the work in progress; this would be followed by a prospective analysis - for which the Indicative World Plan would undoubtedly come in useful - identifying a group of priorities having a four- or six-year horizon (medium-term) and another group covering periods of over six-years (long-term). In the case of potential medium-term projects, budget estimates should, where possible, be given, as the Committee of Fourteen did, in fact, request. Thus conceived, this would be one of the most important Conference documents since, in conjunction with the conclusions of the "general discussion" and the debate on major policy issues in the Plenary, it would supply the basic elements for the discussion and preparation of the draft resolution on the future programme which could be divided into two parts: one devoted to the four- and/or six-year prospect (to be dealt with in Commission II) and the other to longer projections (for Commission I). Commission I would thus be the principal mechanism of the Conference by performing the role which, throughout this report, we have put forward as the basis for the legislative meeting: concentrating on fixing the organization's future strategy for agricultural development.

130. (c) Commission II: As the Director-General has described them (CL 51/11, para. 22), "the functions of Commission II are mainly to consider the work of the Organization in relation to past activities, to the Director-General's Draft Programme of Work and Budget for the immediately ensuing biennium, and to the field programmes, to which should be added the medium-term programme proposals". It will be seen that the Commission's task is an ambitious one which is difficult to carry out within the allotted time. We will advocate simplification of this Commission's functions so as to enable it to concentrate more effectively on a few of the fields of action traditionally assigned to it. Our formula will be based on the concept that this Commission should not deal with the past as such, except in so far as it is linked with the present (field operations), nor with the distant future, but with the immediate future (draft Programme of Work and Budget, constitutional and administrative matters), and the medium-term programmes.

131. The average attendance in this Commission was 60 per cent, i.e. it was the best attended. As regards the time it took for its work, we may point out that its work-load was notably increased by the clear duplication of tasks that took place between it and the Technical Committees, in spite of the fact that, at its 52nd meeting, the Council adopted a recommendation (para. 117 (ii)) to the effect that "matters thoroughly debated in the Technical Committees should not be redebated in Commissions at the expense of consideration of other aspects of the work of the Organization". In practice, exactly the opposite took place. Thirteen meetings were scheduled for Commission II, plus two for the adoption of its report. Since, however, the debate on the work of the Technical Committees took up six meetings and the section of the Commission's report devoted to that debate required four meetings, the Commission had to hold a total of nineteen meetings instead of the fifteen. This means that more than half the Commission's time had to be spent on the work of the Technical Committees, which when the Conference opened, had already sat for a week. In the Commission, many points were debated anew, if only because the delegates who had not arrived in time to participate in the work of the Technical Committee took advantage of the situation to make their points.

132. There was also occasional duplication of efforts with Commission III, since the technical aspects of certain administrative or constitutional items mainly discussed in that forum are referred to Commission II (see paragraph 120). Such dismemberment affects harmonious treatment of some items as, for example, in the case of the item on the establishment of a Technical Committee on Olive Production, which was considered in the two Commissions (see 69/II/PV-14, page 27, item 32).

133. As regards the work itself of Commission II, we shall dwell on two aspects: the consideration of field activities and the discussion of the Draft Programme of Work and Budget.

134. (i) On the first point, it is obvious that there is an increasing awareness in FAO of the need to offer member States the opportunity of discussing field problems, which now represent by far the major portion of FAO's activities. Being thoroughly convinced of such a need, the Director-General rightly maintained, in paragraph 24 of document CL 51/II, para. 27, that field activities should receive thorough consideration in Commission II and he proposed that this should be the first item on its agenda. At the same time, and with equal justification, he expressed apprehension that the field activities might be discussed on divisional lines instead of across the board. Since, however, the same forum considers the report on the work of the Technical Committees, one of which deals with this very item, it was decided that field activities should continue to be considered on the basis of the report of the Technical Committee concerned and that it would be repetitive to include it as a specific item of the Commission II agenda.

135. In the last analysis, it makes no difference; what is important is that delegations to the Conference should review the field activities from both the technical and operational viewpoints, analysing the practical problems which arise during their execution. It seems to us, therefore, that it would be very useful for Commission II to begin its work by examining these activities, i.e. the immediate past and the present, adopting an approach similar to that prescribed for the Technical Committee on Field Operations during the 15th session. The basis of discussion should include, in addition to the documents on the Work of FAO and the Review of FAO Field Activities (which in our opinion could be merged into a single volume) one which summarizes the views of the Regional Conferences on the subject. In this connexion, the opinions expressed by the representative of Chile at the 51st meeting of the Council (CL 51/PV.9, page 15) are very relevant. He said: "Would it not also be a solution to transform the regional conferences into a forum for this technical exchange, particularly between the Secretariat and the technical experts of the countries in the region, since it is easier for them to go to meetings within their own region?" We believe that the most useful work that these conferences could do would be to assess the execution of FAO programmes in the field, expressing their conclusions in a document which would serve as a basis for discussion in Commission II. This

would not only provide a suitable substitute for the Technical Committees and avoid the duplication they create in the deliberations of Commission II, but it would also justify the very existence of the regional conferences whose role has occasionally caused some doubts in certain sectors.

136. Lastly, the document from the regional conferences should also contain a chapter concerning discussion on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit which deal with the FAO field activities in each region. These reports are not at the moment being sufficiently discussed by members of the organization.

137. (ii) One of the things that causes misgivings about the handling of the Draft Programme of Work and Budget is analogous to what has occurred in other international organizations: the Conference receives a printed document, carefully designed and meticulously finished, with an air of inviolability about it which has disturbed more than one delegate. It is only fair to say that the Draft Programme of Work and Budget is the product of an exhaustive effort by the Director-General based on innumerable views expressed by the Conference, in the reports of technical meetings, and other sources of inspiration available to the organization. All this has to be fitted into the budgetary limits, which are always narrow when measured by the needs of agricultural development. The document does not come to the Conference straight from the Director-General's office: it has previously been submitted to the Council and its Committees which give their views on it. However, the item is presented in Commission II in such a way that member States have to review the Draft Programme of Work and Budget, chapter by chapter, in three days. Consequently, all that some delegates succeed in doing is to make scattered suggestions that the budgetary or operational emphasis should be reduced or increased here or there, efforts which do not prosper since, as a general rule, the members of the Secretariat furnish the arguments needed to defend what already appears in print.

138. We are firmly convinced that it is an illusion to think that the Conference can undertake a detailed study of the Draft Programme of Work and Budget in the limited time available. In our view, this is not a task of the legislative body, nor the regional conferences, nor the Technical Committees. This document is not a technical programme, but the administrative expression of the implementation of such a programme during a budgetary period. As such, its details consideration belongs to the governing body and its machinery. In the case of FAO, it is the Council and its Programme and Finance Committees which are constitutionally responsible for this task, and, accordingly, at its spring session before the Conference, the Council studies the Director-General's documents and, in a draft resolution addressed to the Conference, makes its recommendation concerning the budget.

139. However, a study of the proceedings of Commission II reveals that the Conference, in discussing the Draft Programme of Work and Budget, relies little if at all on the work already done by the Council, unlike Commission III, which, as we have already pointed out (see para.116), on almost all topics, makes numerous references to specific paragraphs of the Council's report and bases its decisions on the governing body's views, thus making it much easier to focus on the problems. Our impression is borne out by the opinion of some delegations. At one of the Council meetings discussing the arrangements for the Conference and, in particular, which organ should be responsible for studying the Programme of Work and Budget, chapter by chapter, the representative of Nigeria said: "Nobody wants to do this job, and it would appear that we as Council do not want the work done properly". (CL 52/PV/.13, p.18). And the representative of Chile added: "As to Commission II, I believe that the work of that Commission might be better concentrated and more efficient if the Council, for its part, can do a better job of preparing the organization's programme and budget; that is to say, if the Council has an opportunity to discuss the Director-General's programme and budget properly".

140. Of course, we do not know whether under the present arrangements for the Council's sessions, it can find time, even with the assistance of its Committees, to make a detailed study of the Draft Programme of Work and Budget. There is no doubt, however, that if some way of doing this could be found, Commission II, instead of skimming through the document, with the danger of overlooking important details, could concentrate on the points brought to its attention by the Council. Some of these might even involve modifications of the Director-General's proposals, with a greater chance of their being adopted than the isolated efforts of delegates in Commission II, since they would be the product of thorough discussion in the Council with all the authority and prestige of that representative body. This does not prevent the document as such from being discussed, since that is an essential requirement of the Conference, but its approval would be facilitated by the work already done by the Council.

141. This is what seems to have been in the mind of the Director-General when, in his report CL 51/11, he recommended "that the Council should assume greater responsibility for all the items being included on the Conference, giving guidance, and, where possible, preparing the Conference's decisions as it already does in the case of many Commission II items."

As regards the timing of the Council's work on this task, the Director-General expressed a pertinent view in document PC 14/6 FC 19/25, para. 84: since there is not "a mere rational spacing of the sessions of the Council and its Committees in relation to the Conference (it) results in the Conference receiving very little guidance from the Council".

142. However, the introduction by FAO of programme budgeting might assist both the Council and the Conference to examine the Draft Programme of Works and Budget in a more rational and purposeful manner. Commission II might, upon conclusion of the debate on this item discuss a draft resolution approving the Programme of Work and Budget and giving a set of concrete guidelines on medium-term (4- and 6-year) programmes. This proposed draft resolution would be part A of the resolution to be approved in plenary and which would include in part B the long-term projections.

8. Punctual starting of meetings and quorum

143. The FAO Conference, like the WHO Assembly, was a model of punctuality so far as the start of meetings is concerned, and in this connection we must pay tribute not only to the Chairman of the Conference and the Commissions but also to the Secretariat, whose work of organization contributes so much to this.

144. With regard to the question of quorum requirements, an unusual event occurred during the fourteenth session of the FAO Conference which was without precedent in meetings of other bodies. In Commission III, where we have stated attendance is always low, one representative claimed that there was no quorum for closure of the debate. Under Rule XIII-5 of the General Rules, one third of the members of a Commission constituted a quorum, but a simple majority was necessary for voting. It was the interpretation of that representative that a procedural question, such as the closure of a debate should also be governed by the rule of the simple majority and not by the one-third rule.

145. It would be difficult for chairmen of plenary or committee meetings of international organizations if, before the conclusion of debate on an agenda item, they had to pass round a list to see if a majority of the members were present, as they must do before holding a formal vote; such a practice would interfere with the smooth conduct of meetings, since representatives come and go, and, when the hour is late, some of them begin to depart, unless they know there is going to be an important vote. The notion of "closure of debate", as it is understood in the United Nations in political discussions, often constitutes a tactical move and is only rarely applicable to the natural "closure" of discussions of a technical nature in the specialized agencies, where it is more the "conclusion of substantive consideration of the agenda item in question". In FAO, many debates are concluded without giving rise to draft resolutions and the decision to close the debate,

which takes the form of a consensus, is recorded in the report. In our view, therefore, it would be difficult for a chairman to check, in each case, whether there was a simple majority before going on to the next item.

146. This question was referred to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal matters, which submitted to the Council - and the Council then submitted to the Conference - the following solution: the one-third rule should continue to apply for the opening of a debate and for deciding all procedural questions, except for closure of the debate, for which the simple majority rule would apply as for decisions on substantive questions.

147. Since some doubt still remained regarding the interpretation of the new rule, including the question of identifying what is meant by "substantive questions", it was agreed that certain additional practical steps should be taken, such as greater care to announce votes and more use of the authority of the Chairman and of the General Committee in the application of the rule.

148. The debate in Commission III on this point showed that several delegations (New Zealand, Finland, France, Madagascar, Nigeria and Mauritania) in principle favoured a much more flexible rule. They, however, accepted the compromise proposed by the Council under which a simple majority for closure of the debate is still required.

149. We are inclined to go along with this point of view since the jurisprudence and general practice within the system have demonstrated that such flexibility is appropriate on this question and that the rule of a simple majority exists and is applied only in the case of very formal votes.

150. Lastly, there is a matter of detail. FAO does not follow the practice of the United Nations, UNESCO and other agencies of having conference staff of the Secretariat go through the room shortly after a meeting starts and note down on a printed form the name of each representative or observer occupying the main seat of the delegation. This is a very useful procedure for statistical purposes.

9. Resolutions

151. There is no doubt that the most accurate way of reflecting the decisions taken by the organs of a conference is by means of resolutions; the instruction given to the executive head by this procedure generally does not give rise to any uncertainty and is the result of a vote in which the member States have placed their views clearly on record.

152. Nevertheless, the abuse of this practice leads to certain difficulties, as has traditionally been the case in UNESCO, since the excessive number of draft resolutions prolongs the discussion; delegations propose amendments and the discussions bog down in drafting details which distract attention from the substance of the problems. UNESCO, therefore, has decided to adopt drastic measures in order to reduce the number of draft resolutions.

153. FAO has followed the sound practice of limiting as far as possible the number of draft resolutions and the Council has decided (C 69/20, para. 36) that "resolutions should be kept to a minimum and confined to matters requiring a formal decision by the Conference". As a result, only seventeen resolutions were adopted at the fifteenth session, of which six were proposed by member States and eleven by the Council and the Director-General.

154. As in UNESCO and ILO, it is the practice of the FAO Conference to set up a Resolutions Committee composed of four members of the General Committee and the Chairmen of the Programme, Finance and Constitutional and Legal Committees. On the basis of a number of principles set forth in document C 69/20-Sup.1, this Committee functioned effectively at the fifteenth and earlier sessions, as far as preventing the proliferation of draft resolutions was concerned.

155. In spite of the fact that only thirteen draft resolutions were proposed by member States, the Committee had some difficulty in carrying out its task. Many of its recommendations, which were forwarded to the Commissions where the draft resolutions were to be considered, gave rise to debates, some of them very lengthy, which even required the presence of members of the Resolutions Committee (see ninth, tenth and eleventh meetings of Committee I, and seventh and eighth meetings of Committee II) to provide explanations. During these debates, some delegations not wanting their drafts to be the subject of unfavourable recommendations by the Committee - which in such cases generally recommends that the contents be included in the report of the Commission in question - entered into discussions about the Committee's powers. Valuable time was lost in those discussions. It would perhaps be necessary to seek greater precision in the criteria for the drafting of resolutions, since the present list of the requirements which resolutions must satisfy in order to be receivable seems to give rise to some confusion. It would perhaps be helpful to establish different time-limits for submission of draft resolutions according to their category: in FAO, Rule XI provides that any draft

resolution may be submitted while the Conference is in progress. In ILO, WHO and UNESCO, if a draft refers to a matter which is not included in the agenda or if it involves new activities and/or if it has budgetary implications, it must be submitted within time-limits varying between eleven and two weeks before the beginning of the Conference.

156. Another detail worth mentioning is the question of the time when reports of the Resolutions Committee reach the Commissions: in general, what happens is that while a certain topic is being considered, the discussion is interrupted to consider a report of that Committee containing its opinion on one, two or three draft resolutions on the most varied subjects. These subjects are thus raised out of context and the representatives specifically designated to deal with the items under which the drafts should be considered may not be present. We believe that it would be more logical if the Committee's report on a draft resolution was not considered until the relevant agenda item was taken up.

157. Finally, in order to avoid discussion concerning the non-receivability of a draft resolution, we would recommend that the Resolutions Committee intensify its practice of discussing the question directly with the sponsors of the draft.

158. However, just as we express agreement with the policy of limiting draft resolutions to a minimum - which prevents those responsible for the technical sectors from exerting any pressure on representatives to increase the attention paid by the Conference to their particular work programme - we believe that what is lacking in FAO is a general resolution which, at the conclusion of the Conference, would provide a rough outline of the future programmes and which would constitute a specific directive on the subject for the Director-General. We have therefore advocated such a measure in referring to the activities of Commissions I and II.

10. Voting

159. For constitutional reasons, the formal adoption of the reports of the Commissions and the draft resolutions submitted to the Conference takes place in Plenary. The principle has therefore been generally accepted that votes taken in the Commissions are of an "indicative" nature; the Chairmen of the Commissions generally try to achieve agreement by consensus, whether express or implied. Since this is not always possible, however, a vote is taken by a show of hands on some questions, although with a certain degree of informality. Although it seems to us a very constructive approach to try to arrive at decisions by consensus, the idea that the votes in the Commissions - where the work is done - should be merely

"indicative" appears to depart somewhat from the practice in the United Nations system and that generally followed in any parliament. In our opinion, a decision by a subsidiary body, no matter how small it may be, is a formal decision, regardless of the way in which it is arrived at, and the responsibility of the Plenary is to confirm it formally or to reverse it, if it considers that necessary.

160. For this reason, we believe that the decisions of the Commissions, when they require a vote, should be adopted with greater formality, even where the voting is by show of hands, and that the result should be recorded not only in the summary of the meeting, but also in the following day's journal.

161. In Plenary, the Chairman used good judgement in not submitting resolutions collectively but having them voted on in turn as they came up in the different reports of the Commissions. For requesting the floor there was a system of electric buttons which seems to be helpful but which not all representatives learned to use; whether for this reason or owing to some defect in the organization of the team in charge of the operation some fluctuations in the functioning of the system were noted which led to confusion.

162. With respect to voting in elections, we are compelled to state that it is generally very slow, so that this problem calls for urgent solutions: the time lost counting the votes amounts to many hours if we add the meetings of the Council to those which the Conference devoted to this question. Furthermore, whenever elections took place, the activities of all other Commissions were suspended for the duration of the election, thus adding to the loss of valuable time, when all that was needed was the presence of a member of each delegation.

11. Length of statements

163. One of the factors which has an appreciable effect in prolonging policy-making meetings of international bodies is the time taken up by members of the Secretariat when they speak for various reasons during the discussions.

164. It should be pointed out that in FAO there is little to criticize in the general approach to this question. The Director-General is the only official who makes a policy speech at the beginning of the general debate, and this statement takes less than an hour. In addition, the Director-General speaks very briefly at the opening of the Conference in connexion with the election of officers and he says a few concluding words at the close of the session. He speaks occasionally during the session when some important topic requires his presence; otherwise, the Deputy Director-General represents him consistently in the Commissions, intervening occasionally to express the Director-General's view on those matters raised which require high-level explanations.

165. All officials of the Secretariat who are present in Plenary or in the Commissions conduct themselves with exemplary discretion and speak during the discussion only when asked by representatives to provide information: the only comment which we could make concerning this is that, sometimes, not all the senior substantive officials responsible for the item under discussion are present behind the podium, and on more than one occasion the Deputy Director-General has had to pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

166. We have no advice to give, therefore, with respect to rationalizing the statements by members of the Secretariat in the course of debates; on the other hand, attention should be drawn to the time taken by them in introducing items and replying to the points made by representatives. In the joint report (CL 51/5, para. 45) of the Programme and Finance Committees at the 51st session of the Council, we read the following:

"There was general agreement that there was a need for drastically reducing the time taken up by members of the Secretariat in introducing agenda items, interventions and summing up. Interventions should be limited to bringing up to date the relevant documents and time should be allowed at the end of the debate for replying to questions".

167. At the fifteenth session, the average length of Secretariat introductions was, in Commission I, 15 minutes (varying from 5 to 30 minutes). The total time spent on introductions and replies was 300 minutes, or 5 hours, i.e. nearly two meetings, which meant 9 per cent of the overall time of the Commission. In Commission II, the proportion of the overall time was greater: 13.5 per cent.

168. In our opinion, the introduction by the Heads of Departments and Divisions should be dispensed with. As the Director-General pointed out in paragraph 31 of his report (CL 51/II): "(v) the content and method of presentation of these documents (of the Conference) ... should contain all the important material which is to be discussed ... In this way the necessity for lengthy introductory statements and the circulation of additional material by the technical divisions could be avoided".

169. When an agenda item is taken up, the representatives of the Secretariat should only indicate, very accurately, the symbols of the documents on which the discussion is to be based. A greater effort is needed here, as it was noted that this has been done somewhat casually, which is a drawback for representatives who have to leave their seats several times in order to seek additional documents. Moreover, this list of documents should be repeated when consideration of an item is resumed if it was interrupted at a previous meeting. Apart from this, the representatives of the Secretariat should make statements only in exceptional cases and in very concise form, in order to provide information which is considered essential.

170. On the other hand, no restriction should be placed on the need for senior technical officials to reply to the points made by representatives after the discussion of each item has been concluded. The duration of such statements should not, however, exceed fifteen minutes.

171. As the custom has become established in FAO of setting time limits for the statements by heads of delegations in the general debate in Plenary, we believe that it would be a major contribution to the organization of the debates in the Commissions if a time-limit were recommended for the statements by representatives. We share the opinion expressed on this subject at the sixth meeting of Commission II by the representative of Poland in connexion with the discussions in the Technical Committees, although we feel that it is also applicable to the Commissions. As she pointed out, since the pressure of time compelled Commission II - as well as the Technical Committees - to set a time limit for statements, those who were favoured were speakers who had taken all the time they desired at the beginning, as no time-limit had yet been set at that time.

172. We consider, therefore, that the Chairman of the Commissions might, at the outset, propose that no statement should exceed six minutes, which represents one page in the printed verbatim record (800 words) or two unbroken double spaced typed pages.

12. Restricted meetings

173. The Council wisely decided that informal meetings of regional or similar groups should not be convened during regular Conference hours: this helped to avoid over-burdening Conference facilities. Similar criteria should be encouraged in the case of meetings of such Conference bodies as the General Committee, Credentials Committee, Resolutions Committee, etc. But if these meetings are closed, it should be duly announced in the Journal and indicated at the door of the meeting rooms; as is the case in other international organizations, in order to avoid misunderstandings.

V. DOCUMENTATION

1. Volume and quality

174. The figures contained in paragraph 35 show that documentation accounts for 76 per cent of the total cost of the Conference; but these figures may be unrealistic and probably quite low, since they do not include the cost of certain items which are difficult to identify.

175. In FAO, as in the other organizations within the United Nations system, the problem of the growth of documentation is of great concern to the member States and to the Secretariat. There are two reasons for this concern: the enormous incidence of documentation in the budget, mainly because of the cost of translation (the addition of new working languages contributes greatly to increases in such costs); and the difficulty experienced by delegations in digesting the mountains of paper which they receive (at the fifteenth session of the FAO Conference, 21 tons of paper were consumed and each delegation had to read 2,726 printed pages).

176. FAO is a technical, scientific and operational organization and as such member States have a right to expect from it documents that reflect this scientific background by their clarity, precision and brevity in words. This needs a lot of planning and co-operation in every Department and Division of the FAO Secretariat that has to supply the various documents for the member States and especially those intended for the Conferences and Council meeting.

177. The problem has been a matter of great concern to the Director-General of FAO, who in paragraph 49 of document PC 14/6 FC 19/25 stated: "Delegates had (at the fourteenth session) the greatest difficulty in following discussions since they rarely had time to locate and study the documents carefully in advance of the discussion ..."and he recommended that steps should be taken to simplify and reduce the bulk of documentation. The Council, at its fifty-first session, endorsed the recommendations of the Director-General and approved the following opinion of the Programme and Finance Committees: "The Committees welcomed the Director-General's proposals for improving the Conference documentation and for limiting the number of documents issued, especially those issued immediately before, and as far as possible those issued during the session. The Committees stressed that documents should include a clear statement listing the points for decision or comment."

178. In order to achieve the goal of making documents shorter, the Director-General urged a 20% general reduction in their volume with respect to that of the fourteenth session. This objective was met in many cases but we noted some examples of the opposite trend as in the case of chapter VI-D of the document of Programme of Work and Budget. Similar comment is applicable to the chapter containing the Summary of Recommendations of Regional Conferences.

179. On the overall picture the following figures show that the measures taken have been only partially successful:

Preparatory documents

	14th Session	15th Session	%
Number of documents	88 ^{1/}	54	-38.63
Number of pages	1916	2.726	+42
Number of page impressions	7.085.405	10.457.525	+48

In-session documents

	14th Session	15th Session	%
Number of documents	172	182	+5.8
Number of pages	1733	1918	+10
Number of page impressions	8.990.665	7.628.850	-15.14

180. These tables prove that:

- (i) Although the number of preparatory documents has not increased, their length actually has and also the number of copies reproduced.
 - (ii) The number of in-session documents and their length has increased.
- There has been a reduction in the reproduction.

181. On the other hand, in the opinion of the majority of delegates, there was an improvement in the quality and usefulness of the working papers at the fifteenth session. The Secretariat must be congratulated on its efforts in some of these papers to comply with the desire of the Council that they should end with a summary of possible courses of action: a good example was document C 69/32, "The Protein Problem in relation to the World Food Supply".

2. Distribution

182. With respect to the increase shown above in the number of copies and page-unit impressions of the preparatory documents reproduced, it is possible that this is due to an unduly liberal policy as far as mailing lists and internal distribution patterns are concerned.

183. There were many criticisms of the late distribution of certain documents, despite the word of warning from the United Kingdom representative at the thirteenth plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the Council:

"... the Conference will be in a chaotic situation on important matters ... if the documentation does not reach governments in sufficient time ... I know there were special difficulties experienced by the Secretariat, but it really will not do for the Conference ... if we do not get the documentation in very good time."

^{1/} This figure is not altogether adequate for comparison purposes since it includes an unprecedented number of documents for the Technical Committees: 30.

184. Oddly enough, the General Rules of the Conference say nothing specific about the time-limit for the distribution of Conference documents to member States, while in the respective rules of ECOSOC, UNESCO and WHO the periods vary between six weeks and twenty-five days before the opening of the sessions.

3. Convocation and information documents

185. The Conference is convened by a circular letter, accompanied by a document giving the provisional agenda of the Conference (C../1) and a document containing the arrangement of the Conference and the agenda of the Technical Committees (C../20). The three documents are clear and concise; document C../20 contains a series of very useful practical instructions for delegates and annexed are some diagrams which serve as an excellent guide for the meetings.

186. It would perhaps be useful if document C../20 or the excellent booklet "Information for Delegates and Observers", which representatives keep, also contained the rules about accreditation of delegations which at present appear only in the circular letter, since this letter may have been left behind to be filed in the appropriate government archives. This might be of some help in avoiding certain problems on the subject.

4. Main documents

187. The basic documents of the Conference are: The State of Food and Agriculture, The Work of FAO, Review of FAO's Field Programmes, the draft Programme of Work and Budget and the document on future programmes. Several comments on these documents are made below:

188. (a) The State of Food and Agriculture: The changes made in the presentation of this document, as a result of the concern expressed by the Council, resulted in a new format which was generally warmly approved. Delegates also approved its content, but made a number of suggestions, which the Secretariat will undoubtedly note, for example that there was insufficient coverage of the problem of human resources or of the terms of trade for agricultural products, etc. (the representative of France, Mr. Cépède, made particularly interesting observations on this document in his statement at the first meeting of Commission I).

189. This document was the basis for discussion in Commission I of the policy issue "World Situation and Outlook", an item which, under the schema we propose in this report, would be better discussed directly in plenary; the statement made by the Special Rapporteur serving as a link between both forums, at the beginning of the discussion of this item, did not prevent many repetitions during the subsequent debate of the views expressed by the heads of delegations in plenary.

190. Two versions of this document appeared: first a provisional version (C 69/2), which appeared in the month of August and to which a supplement was added in September, and then, once the Conference had already started, the final version was issued, attractively printed. The cost of the first version was \$15,730 and that of the final version \$13,770. Considerable savings might have been effected if it had been possible to eliminate one version.

191. (b) The Work of FAO: This document (C 69/29) is intended to provide member States with an evaluation of the work accomplished during the closing biennium; but logically enough, since many of the activities are continuing, it also covers the present. Consequently, it is a basic element for the discussion of the items allocated to the Technical Committees which we now propose should be discussed initially by Commissions I and II. The Council played an important part in the new presentation of this document in response to the request of the fourteenth session of the Conference, which had considered the previous version unsatisfactory as a basis for evaluation. Although the Conference last year found that the new version was useful, it agreed that there was scope for improvement, as suggested in paragraph 539 of the final Report. The length of the document - about 500 pages - could, however, be considerably reduced, if the repetition of explanations of the functions of the different parts of the Secretariat were avoided, since this is a clear duplication of what appears, much more appropriately, in the document on the Programme of Work and Budget. For example, paragraphs 188-191 of document C 69/29 are a repetition of paragraphs 1-7 on page 145 of document C 69/3; paragraph 239 of document C 69/29 is a repetition of paragraph 7 on page 234 of document C 69/3; and there are many such cases.

192. For The Work of FAO to be purely an evaluation of past and current activities, its descriptive passages should be drafted in a more telegraphic style, referring almost exclusively to specific achievements, and - most important - pointing to what might be regarded as "dead wood". This would facilitate the task of the Council and the Council's recommendations to the Conference on "shifts of emphasis". We have no comments to make, on the other hand, on the material expressed in tabular form.

193. (c) Review of FAO's Field Activities: This document (C 69/18) was extremely useful for the discussions in the Technical Committee on Field Programmes. It analyses the problems connected with current field activities and is, therefore, a typical Commission II document. It received general praise from the delegations but we feel it could be somewhat less dense or be merged with the "Work of FAO".

194. Finally, we think it should give full treatment to the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning the field programmes.

195. (d) Programme of Work and Budget: The delegations consulted thought that this document (C 69/3), in which improvements were also introduced for the fifteenth session, was both easy to understand and easy to read. It constitutes the basic element for the execution of the programme in the biennium following the Conference and it should, therefore, be considered by Commission II.

196. The introduction of programme budgeting in FAO will necessarily affect the structure of this document: still, it might be useful to mention a few observations arising from its present presentation.

197. The Director-General's introduction, like those in the WHO and ILO budget documents, is short and straightforward. The introductions to the different chapters contain all the necessary information and give a comprehensive description of the structures and functions of the different Departments and Division. Any oral introduction during the debates would be redundant. On the other hand, there are often no explanations of the reasons for the creation or transfer of posts.

198. In a spirit of perfectionism, we might say that the document would gain even more in clarity if, as in the UNESCO Programme and Budget, before each programme there was a small table showing the relevant budget figures, including the figures relating to extra-budgetary funds and showing the percentage increase or reduction in relation to the previous biennium, without prejudice to the inclusion of the general summary by Office, Department or Division.

199. (e) Proposals for Medium-Term Activities and Programmes: We referred to this document (C 69/33) in paragraphs 127 to 129. It is of great importance and, since its purpose is to help establish the broad lines of future action, it should cover also the long-term programmes and be available to Commissions I and II. Of all the basic documents submitted at the fifteenth session, it is the only one requiring radical improvement, as regards both its structure and the purpose it was intended to serve in the fifteenth session. Moreover, this is requested by the Conference itself, in resolution 9/69.

5. Report of the Conference

200. Two meetings (one day) had been scheduled for adoption of the reports of the three Commissions. Commission III, whose discussion was based on a specific study

carried out by the Council, adopted its report in one meeting of forty minutes. Commission I required four meetings (two days) and Commission II took five meetings (two and a half days) for discussion and adoption of its report, since it was obliged to interrupt that work to take up items which were still pending. In this last case, however, as we saw in paragraph 131, the Commission had to devote an additional six meetings (three days) to the discussion of the reports of the Technical Committees.

201. FAO has adopted a restrictive policy with respect to draft resolutions, preferring whenever possible to have the conclusions and consensuses on the discussions recorded in the report of the Conference. We consider this arrangement fundamentally sound but cannot help feeling that the complex system of reporting must result in time lacking for the discussion of the more important points.

202. The instructions given to the Secretariat officials responsible for preparing the draft reports of the Commissions (15/CONF/3), include the following passage:

"The objective is to produce a Conference Report that is concise but readable, free from redundancy, easy to handle through an adequate use of clear sub-headings and consistent in presentation. Sections of the draft Commission Reports should always be written as the Report of the Conference. Broadly speaking, the framework for each section will be: (a) a very brief introduction giving where appropriate background history and documentary references; (b) significant points made in the discussion (without reference to individual interventions or delegations); (c) conclusions and/or recommendations."

203. The problem lies in the excessive amount of time which the Commissions have to spend in discussing the draft reports, of which they receive one section after another, (twenty-one sections at the fifteenth session): the instructions given to the Secretariat drafting officers set a maximum of 60,000 words for the overall draft of the report on the latter session, but it finally amounted to 80,000 words. This is because, as the Director-General rightly pointed out in document CL 51/11, para. 57: "In FAO there has been an evolution from an action type of Conference report to the summary record type ...". The report has thus become very long, as is shown by the views expressed by various representatives in Commission I when the consideration of its report was begun. The representative of Canada, for example, said "... the report is rather wordy and there is a tendency to use too many adjectives ... members of the Council should take a hard look and see if they can agree to a tightly written report which does not repeat what has been said in other documents".

204. As these reports contain references to the positions of delegations - although without naming them - the Commissions become drafting committees, where delegations seek to insert their points of view, if they feel that they have not been properly recorded, and to make corrections in the wording. This inevitably leads to a prolongation of the proceedings, since in certain cases the discussion is reopened in the Commission - and even in the plenary. It is impossible, therefore, to avoid the redundancies against which the above-mentioned instructions warn. Examples: paragraphs 65 and 409 of the report repeat the same ideas, as do also paragraphs 33 and 426; paragraphs 331 and 430 are also redundant, with the additional disadvantage that they refer to points which were discussed in the same Commission; the case of paragraphs 236 and 425 is even more flagrant.

205. All this prevents the conclusions and decisions from being suitably brought out in the text so that the Council and member States in general can have a clear idea of the action which should be taken by the Secretariat. How can this situation be remedied?

206. We believe that FAO could make better use of one of its existing very sound practices: all of its proceedings, in plenary and in Commissions, are reproduced in verbatim records (in the most economical form, which is now being proposed in the United Nations, i.e., in the original languages, with the exception of statements in Arabic and German, which are translated into English and French). In this way, the positions of the representatives are accurately recorded and, as it is right to point out, the verbatim records are distributed during the Conference with exemplary rapidity, in general within 24 to 36 hours after the meeting to which they relate.

207. Why, then, would it not be possible to reduce drastically the contents of the reports, to draft the conclusions in telegraphic style and to omit the "summary record", or rather "minute", style in which it is explained that "a group of delegations supported such and such a point", but that "one delegation maintained the contrary view", etc.? This kind of wording sometimes also induces members of the Secretariat to invoke such positions allegedly taken by "a member of a delegation" to gather support for projects they are interested in.

208. In any case, delegations are not separately identified and if any one wishes to learn their precise views these are recorded with complete accuracy in the verbatim record. In our opinion, a reference to the record or records of the relevant meetings could be given directly below the heading of each section of the reports. Moreover, if

this were done, as concisely as possible, the conclusions should be summarized in a form similar to the list of suggestions regarding the Indicative World Plan in paragraphs 129 and 130 of the report of the fifteenth session, the decisions which call for action being specially identified. A model of the type of draft suggested is attached as annex II.

6. Conference Journal

209. As in the case of other international organizations, FAO issues a daily journal providing information on the day's programme and the work of the previous day, printed in a different colour for each of the three official languages of the agency; this system of distinguishing by colours, which is extremely useful, is applied to all the in-session documentation of the Conference.

210. However, its content could be improved somewhat, particularly as regards the information on the meetings of the previous day, which merely mentions the agenda items that were dealt with. In our view, the information would be really useful for delegations if, as in the journal issued by the United Nations during the General Assembly, the information on the previous day's work were a "summary of meetings", as it is specifically called in New York; i.e. very concise references to the decisions adopted and the draft resolutions submitted, identification of the countries whose representatives spoke in the debates and the results of voting in the Commissions.

211. Moreover, in the FAO Conference Journal, the names of the different bodies whose daily agenda is being announced - Commission I, the Council, the Nominations Committee, etc. - should be printed in much clearer type. With the type now used, the way the titles of some of the meetings, particularly those of the smaller bodies is presented seems confusing. In the Journal of the United Nations during the General Assembly, the different meetings, large or small, are easily distinguished.

212. Lastly, we noticed that sometimes the Journal does not announce the consideration of items which are added in the course of the Conference and which should be inserted in the agenda previously established; for example, in Journal No. 17, between items 17 and 19, which were to be discussed at the thirteenth meeting of Commission II, no mention was made of the consideration of a report from the Resolutions Committee. That report contained a number of draft resolutions, including a very important draft resolution on budget appropriations. As a result, the number of representatives who adopted that resolution in the Commission was low - a situation which might not have occurred if the Journal had clearly publicized the scheduled proceedings.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

213. In order to assist the Conference in its consideration of ways and means of enabling it to "deliberate more efficiently in a shorter time than at present" (res.6/69) we have analysed the procedures of the legislative meeting in as detailed a manner as possible. In forming our opinions, we have paid due regard to the observations made to us by representatives of member States and by members of the Secretariat of FAO, to our own experience in following the proceedings of the fifteenth session, and to comparisons with the practices of other specialized agencies.

214. We have taken an independent look at the Conference and in setting forth our views we have tried to be extremely frank, and we hope that both member States and the Secretariat will find them useful.

215. Our specific recommendations are contained in chapter VII, but the basic conclusions and suggestions of our study are as follows:

(1) The unprecedented growth in the activities of the specialized agencies, their tendency to become more and more operational, and the increase in the number of member States are all factors which profoundly affect the functioning of their institutions.

(2) If, as is desired, the deliberations of the legislative body are to become purposeful and effective, formulas must be sought to prevent the dissipation of its efforts through attention to details which could be considered by other bodies within the institutional machinery. Basing itself on their views, the Conference should adopt a more expeditious approach in reviewing such matters so as to be able to concentrate on a really purposeful task, without relinquishing its functions as the legislative body of the organization.

(3) For the FAO Conference that task, which must have absolute priority, would be the determination of the broad lines of future strategy. During the biennium following each session, the Director-General would use those guidelines - which consist of the views of the Governments harmonized in the form of a resolution on medium and long-term planning - as a basis for the preparation of the Draft Programme of Work and Budget.

(4) Once the main function of the Conference has been defined with a view to making its deliberations more purposeful, practical ways must be sought for shortening the Conference without prejudice to that objective.

(5) The total duration of the Conference session comprises not only the Conference proceedings proper but also the deliberations of the Technical Committees, which at the fifteenth session amounted in all to a period of twenty-nine consecutive days. In the light of the study we have made, we are of the opinion that the Conference should not keep delegations in Rome for more than twenty consecutive days, which to all of these might represent a total saving in the order of \$110,000 to \$150,000. A tentative plan for attaining that target is attached as annex I.

(6) The factor which is primarily responsible for the impression that the Conference is too long is the prior series of meetings of the Technical Committees. However these have a low attendance and deliberations taking place in them are unavoidably repeated in the Commissions of the Conference; for these and other grounds explained in the body of our report we suggest that they should be abolished, which would result in a direct saving of at least \$30,000 plus \$5,000 in documentation.

(7) On the other hand, since discussions on the topics covered by the Technical Committees have proved to be very useful, they should continue to be dealt with under the two items "Field Operations" and "Areas of Concentration" which would be shifted to the Conference proper.

(8) More intensive use should be made of the plenary meetings. The "general discussion" by heads of delegations could be followed by consideration of the major policy issues that are traditionally dealt with in Commission I, which might encourage Ministers and senior officials to prolong their stay in Rome in order to take part in a real discussion. The Chairman of the Conference would be responsible, at the end of the "general discussion" and with the assistance of the Vice-Chairmen, for drawing conclusions from them, and he would do the same at the end of the discussion of major policy issues.

(9) For technical reasons, only three full-membership meetings can be held simultaneously, and small delegations have difficulty in attending the three of them. Thus, the Commission chosen by many delegations to forego attendance is Commission III, which, by the way, completes its work in a very rapid and expeditious manner. It is, therefore, not very representative and the mobilization of the administrative resources needed to maintain it is uneconomic. Consequently, we have suggested that it should be abolished and its items dealt with by Commission II.

(10) Commissions I and II discuss the substance of the FAO programmes and it is these two Commissions which attract the greatest interest of the delegates. Attendance is definitely higher than in the Technical Committees and in Commission III.

(11) Commission I should be mainly responsible for discussing the priority areas and for establishing the guidelines for long-term policies and programmes (beyond 6 years). Commission II should consequently deal with questions relating to the current activities, the immediate future and the medium-term programmes (4 and 6 years).

(12) As for documentation, the most important reform that we recommend concerns the Report of the Conference, the discussion of which in the Commissions wastes a great deal of time.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

216. Recommendation 1. The legislative meeting of FAO should be called the FAO "General Conference" (paragraph 50).

217. Recommendation 2. The fundamental role of the Conference should be to discuss and determine the broad lines of strategy for medium- and long-range policies and programmes in nutrition, food and agriculture. As regards other functions assigned to it under the Constitution, the Conference - without relinquishing its role as the legislative body of the organization - should try to concentrate its discussions on the recommendations it receives from the Council, so as to make its work less diffuse and more expeditious (paragraphs 16-32).

218. Recommendation 3. The Conference should be shortened so that the whole proceedings require a session of not more than twenty consecutive days (see annex I) (paragraphs 39-48). With this end in view:

(i) Saturday morning should be treated as a normal working day; Saturday afternoon should be free, except where special circumstances require the holding of a meeting of a small body (paragraph 47(c)).

(ii) Official holidays should continue to be treated as normal working days (paragraph 47(d)).

(iii) The opening session of the Conference should take place on a Monday morning, the Nominations Committee being convened just before. The presentation of the B.R. Sen Awards and the presentation of new senior officials could take place on the same occasion (paragraphs 87-91).

(iv) The General Committee could meet at noon the same day and work continuously with a short break for lunch in order to have its report ready for the afternoon plenary meeting (paragraph 90).

(v) The McDougall Memorial Lecture could take place at the afternoon plenary meeting and then the report of the General Committee and the admission of new member States could be considered (paragraph 90).

219. Recommendation 4. Since the fundamental role of the Conference is to establish guidelines on future programmes, greater selectivity in the preparation of the agenda is highly desirable in order to reduce the number of items to a minimum (paragraphs 54-57).

220. Recommendation 5. The convening of the Technical Committee as a standard practice should be discontinued (paragraphs 58-86). At the same time:-

(i) Rule XV-3 of the General Rules should be amended to read: "The Conference may at any session appoint committees for the consideration of the technical activities of the Organization, to meet prior to the next session of the Conference, at such time as may be determined by the Council" (paragraphs 60-62).

(ii) The subject-matter dealt with at the fifteenth session by the Technical Committees on Field Operations and Areas of Concentration, should henceforth be considered by the Conference proper (paragraphs 14-21; 47(a); 80-85; 124; 131; 135-136).

(iii) The attendance of technical experts in addition to generalists at the Conference should by all means be encouraged and publicized in document C.../20 (paragraphs 80-85).

(iv) Topics meant to be reviewed from a strictly technical point of view should be discussed in the Regional Conferences and in meetings specially convened for such purposes (paragraph 85).

221. Recommendation 6. The General Discussion should be renamed "Statements on General Policy" (paragraph 93). This item should start on the morning of the second day of the Conference (paragraph 47(b)), and:-

(i) While recognizing that heads of delegations in making their statements in the plenary should be free to raise any matters they judge pertinent, it should be suggested that references to national activities might be avoided. If, however, this is considered indispensable, they could be invited to submit such parts of their statements in writing or to devote to them only one quarter of their speeches. (paragraphs 95-99).

(ii) The practice of suggesting topics for such statements should be continued. The Council should propose no more than two or three carefully chosen subjects for that purpose (paragraph 96).

(iii) For statements, the usual time-limit should be reduced to fifteen minutes for each speaker, who could speak without leaving his seat. The speaker would be apprised of the expiry of the time-limit by some sort of signal, and the same procedure would be applicable to subsequent recommendations concerning time-limits for speeches (paragraphs 107-110).

(iv) In order to facilitate the preparation of statements, document C.../20 could indicate, by way of guidance, the number of pages and words in a fifteen-minute speech. Such an indication would be applicable to all other recommendations specifying the length of speeches (paragraph 110).

(v) At the end of the "Statements on General Policy", the Chairman of the Conference, with the assistance of the Vice-Chairmen, could make a statement summarizing the ideas expressed and extracting conclusions useful for the development of the future programme (paragraph 94).

(vi) The use of a Rapporteur to inform the Commissions on the discussion in the plenary meeting should be dispensed with (paragraphs 100-105).

222. Recommendation 7. Following the "Statements on General Policy", the Plenary could begin a discussion of major policy issues on the basis of no more than two or three topics chosen by the Council, and a time-limit of eight minutes might be fixed for statements. At the end of the proceedings, the Chairman of the Conference could make a statement which would sum up the ideas put forward and which, again, would be helpful for the development of the future programme (paragraphs 100-106).

223. Recommendation 8.

(i) The Conference should set up only two Commissions, of full membership, to be identified as Commission I and Commission II. The Commission usually designated as Commission III should be discontinued (paragraphs 111-120; 132).

(ii) Should the Director-General anticipate that a legal or administrative subject might lead to lengthy discussions, it could be dealt with in the plenary (paragraph 120 (v)).

224. Recommendation 9. Commission I should deal with matters relating to the priority areas and to the long-term strategy of the organization (paragraphs 121-129), and it is suggested that:

(i) The first item on its agenda should be "Areas of Concentration". If desirable, the Commission might split up into a few sub-commissions for the detailed examination of this item (paragraph 124).

(ii) Greater selectivity should be shown in the determination of priority items (paragraph 75).

(iii) After dealing with any special topic which it may have been felt necessary to include in its agenda, Commission I would proceed to consider the long-term (more than 6 years) policies and programmes (paragraphs 124-129).

(iv) For this discussion, Commission I should avail itself of the summing-up statement by the Chairman of the Conference, his statement on the plenary meeting's discussion of major policy issues, and a document by the Director-General dealing with medium and long-term planning (paragraphs 124-129).

(v) This discussion should be followed by the preparation of the part of a draft resolution dedicated to the long-term policies and programmes which would serve as a guide and directive to the Director-General for the formulation of subsequent Draft Programmes of Work and Budget (paragraphs 124-129).

(vi) At the same time, the Commission should discuss the medium-term programmes on the basis of the information contained in the draft "Programme of Work and Budget" and a document on "medium- and long-term programmes". (paragraph 142).

(vii) The draft "Programme of Work and Budget" should not be discussed on a piecemeal basis but in terms of its projections for the following biennium. As regards problems of detail, Commission II should try and concentrate on matters precisely defined by the Council and referred to the Conference, where necessary, by means of draft resolutions (paragraphs 138-141).

(viii) The discussion should be followed by the part of the draft resolution on future programmes dedicated to approve the Programme of Work and Budget and to establish guidelines for medium-term programmes, including tentative estimates thereof (paragraphs 129; 142).

(ix) The time-limit for representatives' statements in Commission II should be the same as that proposed in the case of Commission I (paragraphs 171-172).

225. Recommendation 11. A certain flexibility should be borne in mind when applying the rule for closing debates (paragraphs 143-149).

226. Recommendation 12. The Secretariat should keep a daily record of attendance of representatives and observers to meetings for statistical purposes (paragraph 150). Every effort should be made to improve seating arrangements for observers (paragraph 52).

227. Recommendation 13. The practice of keeping the number of draft resolutions to a minimum should be continued (paragraphs 151-154). In particular:

(i) The two basic resolutions of the Conference should be the resolution fixing the level of the budget and a resolution on medium- and long-term planning (paragraphs 129; 142; 158).

(ii) The Resolutions Committee should be retained but the rules concerning the requirements for draft resolutions should be drafted with greater precision (paragraphs 154-157).

(iii) Consideration should be given to the fixing of time-limits for the submission by member States of draft resolutions which entail new activities, have serious budgetary implications or relate to matters not included in the Conference agenda (paragraph 155).

(iv) Every draft resolution mentioned in the reports of the Resolutions Committee should be considered in the Commissions only at the very same time the corresponding agenda item is discussed (paragraph 156).

(v) Where the Resolutions Committee finds that a draft resolution does not satisfy the conditions laid down in the terms of reference, the practice to negotiate directly with the sponsors the insertion of the text of the draft resolution in the Report of the Conference before transmitting its views to the Commission concerned could be further developed (paragraph 157).

228. Recommendation 14. Voting in the plenary should not hold up work in the Commissions (paragraph 162). Moreover:-

(i) Voting in the Commissions should be more formal, and the details should be reported in the Conference Journal (paragraphs 147; 159-160).

(ii) Ways should be studied of speeding up the process of counting votes in elections (paragraph 162).

(iii) Improvements should be made in the operation of the electrical system used for requesting the floor (paragraph 161).

229. Recommendation 15. Statements by Secretariat members introducing programmes should be dispensed with. As consideration of each item begins, they

should take the floor only in order to announce the relevant documents or to provide some indispensable clarification. Statements by Secretariat members at the end of the discussion of an item should be retained, but only in reply to the points raised. Such statements should not last longer than 15 minutes (paragraphs 163-170).

230. Recommendation 16. The practice of not convening Conference bodies of restricted membership or meetings of regional groups during regular Conference hours should be maintained, but whenever such meetings are closed, this should be duly announced (paragraph 173).

231. Recommendation 17. The Secretariat should make an effort to reduce the volume and the number of documents it submits to the Conference (paragraphs 174-207).
Further:

(i) Estimates in the Programme of Work and Budget for the Conference's documentation should be shown independently from those for other FAO bodies (paragraph 35 footnote 1/).

(ii) Thought should be given to the need to improve the accounting system so that documentation estimates reflect real costs, including those relating to overhead and authorship of documents (paragraph 35 footnote 1/).

(iii) Distribution patterns of documents should be re-checked in order to limit the number of copies being reproduced (paragraph 182).

(iv) It would be advisable to add a new rule to the General Rules of the Conference laying down specific time-limits for the transmission to member States of Conference documentation (paragraphs 180-184).

(v) Document C../20 concerning the arrangements for the Conference and the booklet "Information for Delegates and Observers" should contain the rules governing accreditation of delegations (paragraph 186).

(vi) All working papers and especially those containing technical studies should end with a summary of the main points (paragraph 181).

(vii) The technical information contained in the synopses for the item "Areas of Concentration" should be more specific (paragraphs 73-74).

(viii) The basic documents of the Conference should be: "The State of Food and Agriculture", the "Work of FAO", the "Review of FAO's Field Activities", the "Draft Programme of Work and Budget" and one concerning future programmes (paragraph 187).

(ix) "The State of Food and Agriculture" should be a basic document for the discussion in the plenary. An effort should be made to avoid issuing two versions (paragraphs 188-190).

(x) "The work of FAO" should be a document assessing the general activities of the organization, past and present, to be used particularly for the discussions on technical items in the Commissions. Its structure might be improved and its length reduced (paragraphs 191-192).

(xi) The "Review of FAO's Field Activities" should be the basic document for the discussion of the item on "Field Operations" in Commission II, it could perhaps be merged with "The Work of FAO" (paragraph 193).

(xii) The "Draft Programme of Work and Budget", which is examined in Commission II, could be clearer in determining the origins of new posts and of transfers, subject to whatever decisions are taken on the introduction of programme budgeting. Each programme should be headed by a table giving a breakdown of the budgetary estimates relating thereto, including the extra-budgetary funds allotted to it and comparisons with the previous biennium (paragraphs 195-198).

(xiii) The document on future projections, which should be called "Medium and Long-Term Programmes", needs basic revision along the lines suggested in the body of the report (paragraphs 199; 127-129).

232. Recommendation 18. The text of the Report of the Conference should be about 50 per cent shorter than the report on the 15th session (paragraphs 200-208). To this end:

(i) The report should not be drafted in the style of minutes. References to individual or collective positions should be avoided. It should be drafted in a concise, telegraphic style and should mention only the conclusions, consensus, recommendations and decisions arrived at in the Commissions (paragraphs 203-208) (see annex II).

(ii) In order to meet the delegates' wish to see their positions put on record, they could be reminded that such positions are transcribed literally in the verbatim records. The report should contain references, below the headings of each chapter or section, to the verbatim records transcribing the relevant discussions (paragraphs 206-208).

233. Recommendation 19. To give a clearer picture of the Conference's activities, the Journal of the Conference should:

(i) Furnish information about the previous day's work in such a way that it should consist of a summary of meetings specifically identifying the countries whose representatives spoke in the plenary and Commissions's debates and giving very concise references to the draft resolutions submitted, the decisions adopted, the results of voting (paragraphs 209-210).

(ii) Print in much clearer type the names of the various bodies whose daily agenda is being announced (paragraph 211).

(iii) Announce the consideration of items which are added in the course of the Conference, with precise references to the documents concerned (paragraph 212).

(iv) Announce, in very distinctive type, the important votes that are to be taken in the plenary meeting and in the Commissions (paragraph 160).

TENTATIVE PLAN FOR FAO'S 16TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE - NOVEMBER 1971

(Numbers in brackets denote number of sessions for each major grouping of deliberations)

DATE	Plenary Sessions	Commission I	Commission II
MON am	(1) Opening ceremonies 1		
8 NOV pm	(2) " 2		
TUE am	(1) General discussion 3		
9 NOV pm	(2) " 4		
WED am	(3) " 5	(1) Areas of Concentration 1	(1) Field Operations 1
10 NOV pm	(4) " 6	(2) " " 2	(2) " " 2
THUR am	(5) " 7	(3) " " 3	(3) " " 3
11 NOV pm	(6) " 8	(4) " " 4	(4) " " 4
FRI am	(7) " 9	(5) " " 5	(5) " " 5
12 NOV pm	(8) " 10	(6) " " 6	(6) " " 6
SAT am	(9) Chairman's round-up 11	(7) " " 7	(7) " " 7
13 NOV			
SUN			
14 NOV			
MON am	(1) Major policy issues 12	(8) " " 8	(1) Constitutional and Adm. 8
15 NOV pm	(2) " " 13	(9) " " 9	(2) " " 9
TUE am	(3) " " 14	(10) " " 10	(3) " " 10
16 NOV pm	(4) " " 15	(12) " " 11	(4) " " 11
WED am	(5) Chairman's round-up 16	(1) Other business 12	(5) " " 12
17 NOV pm		(2) " " 13	(1) Programme of W. and B. 13

DATE	Plenary Sessions	Commission I	Commission II
THUR am 18 NOV pm		(3) Other business (4) "	(2) Programme of W. and B. (3) " " " "
FRI am 19 NOV pm		(1) Disc. long term programmes (2) " "	(4) " " " " (5) " " " "
SAT am 20 NOV		(3) " "	(6) " " " "
SUN 21 NOV			
MON am 22 NOV pm		(4) Disc. draft resolution (5) Adoption of resolution	(7) Discussion draft resolution (8) Adopt. " "
TUE am 23 NOV pm		(1) Report (2) Report	(1) Report (2) " "
WED am 24 NOV pm	(1) Various business (2) " "		
THUR am 25 NOV pm	(3) " " (4) " "		
FRI am 26 NOV pm	(5) " " (6) Closure of session		
SAT am 27 NOV			

Total duration of the Conference: 19 days

Number of working days: 16

SAMPLE SECTION ILLUSTRATING SUGGESTED STYLE OF
DRAFTING OF CONFERENCE SESSION REPORTS

(see Recommendation 18(i))

A

Text as it appeared in paragraphs 458 to 465 of the Report of the Fifteenth Session:--

"Forestry Department

458. The Conference approved the establishment of a Forestry Department composed of an Office of the Assistant Director-General, a Forest Resources Division, and a Forest Industries and Trade Division. The Conference agreed to the proposed organization of the department, which reflected the integrated approach to forestry production and forest industries which had been a prominent feature of FAO forestry activities since the foundation of the Organization. The Conference looked upon the establishment of a department as a due recognition of the importance of FAO activities in the field of forestry and of the positive impact that the work carried out in this field by the Organization had had and continued to have on world forestry and particularly on the development process of developing countries.

459. The Conference expressed some concern that the resources made available to the Forestry Department, mainly for personnel, travel and publications, were not in proportion to what was expected in view of the upgrading of the FAO forestry sector to departmental rank. It was felt that, should any savings accrue in the course of the 1970-71 biennium, part of them should be devoted to strengthening the department, the reinforcement of which should in any event receive a high priority for subsequent biennia.

460. The Conference pointed out that a substantial number of activities under the programme of the Forestry Department were to be carried out with extra-budgetary resources. The Conference noted the efforts made to enlist the cooperation of national agencies for development aid as a means for strengthening the activities of the department in the light of the limited resources available, and expressed its satisfaction at the extent to which the Forestry and Forest Industries Division had been able to ensure the mobilization of external resources to reinforce the developmental assistance of FAO in the field of forestry.

461. The Conference took note that the reservations made by some countries with regard to the approach and conclusions of the Indicative World Plan did not apply to the forestry sector of that study. On the contrary, the countries in question felt that the treatment of the forestry sector in the IWP was realistic and its conclusions helpful. The Conference noted with satisfaction that the methodology used for the forestry sector of IWP would be made available to member countries seeking to establish medium- and long-term indicative plans for their forestry sector.

462. The Conference pointed out that in the light of present trends in forestry science and technology, a number of forestry activities should receive special consideration when preparing the programme of work of the Forestry Department for the subsequent biennium. Activities singled out were forestry education, training and research, utilization of quick-growing species, forest trade and marketing, environmental forestry, utilization of tropical timber, and wildlife management.

463. The Conference expressed concern over the fact that some activities were not receiving, in the programme of work, the attention they deserve. Special mention was made of forestry extraction and transportation, as well as management of natural forests and forest protection against fire, pests and diseases. The Conference expressed the hope that the department would endeavour to seek ways and means of reinforcing its activities in these sectors.

464. The Conference stressed the need, within the FAO machinery, of a standing committee, wherein heads of forest services of all Member Nations could (a) conduct periodic reviews of forestry problems of an international character and appraise such problems with respect to possible effective action by FAO for their solution; and (b) to advise the Director-General on the medium- and long-term programme of work of the Organization in the field of forestry and on its implementation. Such a committee should preferably meet early in the non-Conference years. The Conference requested the Council at its Fifty-fifth Session to advise the Director-General how best to satisfy the foregoing expressed wish of the Conference. Pending the establishment of permanent machinery, the Director-General should consider convening a further Ad Hoc Committee on Forestry.

465. The Conference approved the programme of work and budget of the proposed Forestry Department, subject to the above comments."

Suggested alternative text:-

"Forestry Department

(Verbatim records: C 70/II/PK...)

458. The Conference approved the establishment of a Forestry Department and agreed with its proposed organization.

459. After voicing concern over the fact that resources made available to the Forestry Department were incommensurate with its new status, the Conference felt that:

(i) Part of any future savings in 1970 - 1971 should go to strengthening the department;

(ii) Such strengthening should receive high priority in future biennia.

460. The Conference expressed its satisfaction at the extent to which the Forestry and Forest Industries Division had been able to enlist the cooperation of national agencies for development aid and ensure the mobilization of external resources to reinforce the development assistance of FAO in the field of forestry.

461. The Conference noted with satisfaction that the treatment of the forestry sector in the Indicative World Plan was realistic and its conclusions helpful and that the methodology used for this sector would be made available to member countries seeking to establish medium- and long-term indicative plans for their forestry sector.

462. After noting with concern that such sectors as forestry extraction and transportation, as well as management of natural forests and forest protection against fire, pests and diseases were not receiving in the programme of work the attention they deserve, the Conference expressed the hope that:

(i) The department would endeavour to reinforce its activities in these sectors;

(ii) Special consideration would be given to such activities as forestry education; training and research; utilization of quick-growing species; forest trade and marketing; environmental forestry; utilization of tropical timber, and wildlife management.

463. The Conference stressed the need, within the FAO machinery, of a standing committee, wherein heads of forest services of all Member Nations could:

- (a) conduct periodic reviews of forestry problems of an international character and appraise such problems with respect to possible effective action by FAO for their solution;
- (b) advise the Director-General on the medium- and long-term programme of work of the Organization in the field of forestry and on its implementation.

Such a committee should preferably meet early in the non-Conference years.

464. The Conference requested the Council at its Fifty-fifth Session to advise the Director-General how best to satisfy the foregoing expressed wish of the Conference.

465. Pending the establishment of permanent machinery, the Director-General should consider convening a further Ad Hoc Committee on Forestry.

466. The Conference approved the programme of work and budget of the proposed Forestry Department, subject to the above comments."

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 405