

**STATUTES OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONALS IN FAO (AP in FAO)**

**of the**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

*January 2010, Rome*

*As amended in June 2011, January 2014, January 2016 and March 2022*

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ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONALS IN FAO  
(AP in FAO)**

***ARTICLE 1 -- NAME AND DEFINITION***

- a) The organization hereby established shall be known as the Association of Professionals in FAO, hereinafter called "the Association". Its acronym shall be "AP in FAO".
- b) The Association shall be an organization of the professional staff of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- c) The Association shall have its headquarters where the headquarters of FAO is situated.

***ARTICLE 2 -- OBJECTIVES***

The Association shall defend the individual and collective interests, rights and dignity of staff in all duty stations and the highest standards of professionalism, and to this end shall:

- (a) defend and work to improve terms and conditions of employment and to ensure fair and equal treatment for all staff;
- (b) defend and work to improve all aspects of working and social conditions of staff;
- (c) defend the right of staff to maintain and improve professional competence, and promote career development;
- (d) develop and improve effective staff participation in the decision-making processes at all levels in FAO;
- (e) defend and work to improve health protection and pension rights for staff and their dependants;
- (f) safeguard security of employment;

(g) collaborate with all other staff representative bodies with similar objectives in the common interests of all staff;

(h) promote the unity of all staff of FAO and of the international civil service.

In pursuing its objectives, the Association shall be guided by the relevant principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations' Human Rights Covenants, the conventions of the International Labour Organisation and the Standards of Conduct of International Civil Servants.

### ***ARTICLE 3 -- INDEPENDENCE***

The Association shall, in all matters, manage its affairs in complete independence of the management and governing bodies of FAO and of all national or international, trade or political, unions or associations. The Association shall, however, seek and maintain affiliation with a federation of international civil servants when such an affiliation is deemed by the Assembly to be in the best interests of the Association. The decision to join or leave a federation shall be taken by a vote of the Membership at large.

### ***ARTICLE 4 -- MEMBERSHIP***

Membership of the Association shall be open to all FAO staff members in the professional and director categories, including national professional officers, at all locations and other categories of personnel as may be decided by the Assembly.

### ***ARTICLE 5 -- RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS***

(a) All members shall have equal rights to vote, to participate in Association affairs, to express views freely on all matters concerning the Association and to be represented and assisted by the Association in cases of difference, dispute or negotiation with the management of FAO.

(b) All members have the right to be elected to office within the Association, but unless the Representative Council decides otherwise the duty station of the President, General Secretary and Treasurer must be FAO headquarters. However, the Statutes and Procedures Committee may designate certain posts as being incompatible with holding elected office in the Association.

(c) All members shall have access to all non-confidential documentation regarding the activities of the Association.

(d) All members shall have a responsibility for promoting the objectives of the Association and of observing its Statutes.

## ***ARTICLE 6 – VOTING AND ELECTIONS***

(a) All proposals requiring ratification by vote shall be communicated electronically to members; voting may be conducted by electronic means.

(b) Voting shall adhere to the following principles:

- (1) only members entitled to vote shall be enabled to vote
- (2) a member can cast only one vote
- (3) the ballot may be secret

(c) The Statutes and Procedures Committee shall verify that the above mentioned principles have been adhered to and has the right to annul any vote in which these principles have not been observed.

## ***ARTICLE 7 -- SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP***

(a) Any member may resign at any time by notifying the President in writing or through an on-line submission. The resignation will take effect the first day of the month following the notification.

(b) Any member who has deliberately violated these Statutes or acted against the interests of the Association may be suspended or excluded from membership by a two-thirds majority decision of the Representative Council. Any such member shall have the right to be heard by the Representative Council before the decision is taken and the right of appeal to the Statutes and Procedures Committee of the Association and ultimately to the Assembly.

***ARTICLE 8 -- ACTIVITIES***

The Association shall pursue its objectives by such means and in such manner as to effectively protect the dignity and further the interests of its members, and in particular shall:

- (a) negotiate with representatives of the management of FAO as necessary for the furtherance of its objectives, in collaboration with other staff representative organizations when appropriate;
- (b) promote the establishment and participate in the work of such joint staff-management mechanisms as may serve the interests of the staff;
- (c) endeavour to improve methods and procedures for avoiding, relieving and settling grievances and assist and represent staff members in cases of difference, dispute or negotiation with the management or governing bodies of FAO, as appropriate;
- (d) promote especially within electoral groups, a continuing dialogue among its members and stimulate the interest of all professional staff in matters relating to the objectives and activities of the Association;
- (e) ensure the timely dissemination of information on all matters of concern to the membership;
- (f) establish and maintain internal committees necessary to deal with matters affecting the interests of members;
- (g) cooperate with other FAO staff representative bodies;
- (h) establish and maintain such relations with other organizations, in particular those defending the rights of the international civil service, as may be useful for pursuing the Association's objectives.

***ARTICLE 9 -- ORGANIZATION***

The organs of the Association shall be the Assembly, the Representative Council, the Executive Secretariat and the Statutes and Procedures Committee.

**ARTICLE 10 -- ASSEMBLY**

- (a) The entire membership of the Association shall constitute the Assembly, which shall be the highest body of the Association.
- (b) The Assembly shall have final responsibility for approval of the policies and activities of the Association.
- (c) The Assembly shall elect the Statutes and Procedures Committee.
- (d) The Assembly shall act as the final appeals body of the Association in cases of suspension or termination of membership.
- (e) The Assembly shall discuss and decide on an annual policy and programme statement and a budget and financial report submitted by the Executive Secretariat with the approval of the Representative Council. It shall determine the number and functions of the Standing Committees of the Association. It shall approve the annual dues.
- (f) The Assembly shall be conducted at least once each calendar year, at the call of the Representative Council. It shall be held over a period of time and shall include a physical meeting in FAO headquarters.
- (g) An extraordinary session of the Assembly may be convened at any time by the Representative Council. Any member may request that the Representative Council convene an extraordinary session. An extraordinary session of the Assembly shall also be convened by the Representative Council within fifteen days of a call for a meeting signed or supported through the use of electronic media by one quarter of the membership. Extraordinary sessions may be convened by the Executive Secretariat and shorter time limits shall apply.
- (h) The Assembly shall adopt and may amend its own statutes and rules of procedure on the basis of recommendations of the Statutes and Procedures Committee.
- (i) All decisions of the Assembly shall be made by voting.
- (j) One quarter of the Association membership casting a vote shall be required for any decision to be valid.
- (k) All decisions of the Assembly shall become effective immediately following the count of the votes, unless otherwise specified in the decision.

(l) Observers may be admitted to the physical meetings of the Assembly and may be invited to speak, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure.

(m) Written communications from members in non-HQ locations may be read out to the physical meeting of the Assembly.

## **ARTICLE 11 -- THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

(a) The Representative Council shall consist of elected representatives from electoral groups representing members in HQ and non-HQ locations.

(b) The Statutes and Procedures Committee shall define the electoral groups based on FAO's structure.

(c) Association members based at HQ shall choose their representatives from within their own electoral group.

(d) Association members based in non-HQ locations shall choose their representatives either from within their own electoral group or from among HQ members. If HQ members are elected, they shall be considered as belonging to the electoral group of their constituency.

(e) Each electoral group shall have at least two representatives in accordance with the following scale:

2 - 39 members	2 representatives
40 - 69 members	3 representatives
70 - 99 members	4 representatives
100 + members	5 representatives

(g) Each electoral group shall elect its representatives for two years, unless special by-election rules apply and as determined by the Statutes and Procedures Committee.

(h) Members may be elected for two consecutive two-year terms. They may serve again on the Representative Council after a one-year break.

(i) In case Members are elected in a by-election with no more than one year left of the term, held in connection with the regular annual election cycle for the Representative Council or later, they may still be re-elected to an additional two consecutive terms after expiry of their first term; if the by-election is held

earlier, they may be re-elected only for an additional two-year term. In case Members are elected in by-elections six months or less before the regular elections, such by-elections shall be for the remainder of the term and for a full first term without the need for a regular election.

(j) Representatives may resign or be recalled by their electoral groups at any time during their term of office. A recall decision shall be taken through a secret ballot by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the electoral group.

(k) A Representative Council quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the representative membership.

(l) The Representative Council shall normally meet once every two months and at other times as considered necessary by the Executive Secretariat or at the request of a majority of its members. Meetings shall as far as possible be held at regularly scheduled times.

(m) Except as provided in Articles 7(b) and 13 (c), decisions of the Representative Council shall be taken by a simple majority.

## ***ARTICLE 12 -- FUNCTIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL***

The Representative Council shall serve as a forum for discussion of priority issues of concern to its members, ensure that the Executive Secretariat implements the Association's policies as determined by the Assembly and conducts the affairs of the Association in such a way as to further its objectives, and conform to the wishes of the membership at large. In particular it shall:

(a) establish committees and ad hoc working groups necessary for the conduct of Association affairs and for the protection of the interests of the membership;

(b) approve representatives of the Association to other bodies or committees following nominations by the Executive Secretariat and Standing Committees as appropriate;

(c) authorise the Executive Secretariat to appoint Association staff and consultants and to establish their level of remuneration, within the budget approved by the Assembly;

- (d) present for approval by the Assembly an annual policy and programme statement prepared by the Executive Secretariat;
- (e) review the finances of the Association and present for approval annually a budget and financial report to the Assembly;
- (f) propose to the Assembly the annual dues of members of the Association;
- (g) promote, through the day-to-day activities of its members, discussion among members of the Association and within electoral groups on all matters pertinent to the objectives of the Association;
- (h) elect the Executive Secretariat of the Association from among the representatives and Association members having previously served as members of the Representative Council, in one of the Association's Standing Committees or the Statutes and Procedures Committee;
- (i) invite members of standing committees to participate in Representative Council meetings.

### ***ARTICLE 13 -- EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT***

- (a) The Executive Secretariat shall consist of 10 members:
  - (i) President
  - (ii) General Secretary
  - (iii) Field Secretary
  - (iv) Treasurer
  - (v) General Member without Portfolio
  - (vi) Information Secretary
  - (vii) Legal Affairs Secretary
  - (viii) Vice President
  - (ix) Deputy General Secretary
  - (x) Deputy Field Secretary
- (b) The President, Deputy General Secretary, Field Secretary, Information Secretary and General Member without portfolio will be elected in even years, and the Vice-President, General Secretary, Deputy Field Secretary, Treasurer, Legal Affairs Secretary will be elected in odd years.

(c) Members of the Executive Secretariat may be elected for two consecutive two-year terms. They may serve again on the Executive Secretariat after a one-year break.

(d) In case Members are elected in a by-election with no more than one year left of the term, held in connection with the regular annual election cycle for the Representative Council or later, they may still be re-elected for an additional two consecutive terms after expiry of their first term; if the by-election is held earlier, they may be re-elected only for an additional two-year term. In case Members are elected in by-elections six months or less before the regular elections, such by-elections shall be for the remainder of the term and for a full first term without the need for a regular election.

(e) The Executive Secretariat or any member thereof may resign or be recalled from office by a decision of the Representative Council at any time during their term of office. A recall decision shall be taken by an affirmative vote, taken by secret ballot, of at least two-thirds of the members of the Representative Council. An Executive Secretariat member may be recalled as a result of poor performance or lack of performance of the duties of their office, violations of the Statutes and Rules of Procedure or actions that are not in the interest of the association.

(f) A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the of the Executive Secretariat.

(g) Decisions of the Executive Secretariat shall be taken by simple majority of those present.

#### ***ARTICLE 14 -- FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT***

The Executive Secretariat shall normally meet at least once every two weeks and be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Association and for the implementation of the decisions of the Representative Council and in particular shall:

(a) conduct discussions and negotiations with the management and the governing bodies of FAO on all matters in pursuance of the objectives of the Association and in accordance with the priorities established by the Representative Council;

(b) be responsible for the management of the Secretariat Office;

(c) service and participate in meetings of the Representative Council;

- (d) ensure the regular dissemination of information on activities of the Association and on such matters as may affect the interests of members, including the issue of an information bulletin;
- (e) encourage the active participation of the general membership of the Association by convening discussion meetings and electronic forums for debate of issues of general interest to members;
- (f) conclude agreements with FAO management on all work related matters.

***ARTICLE 15 -- FUNCTIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT***

- (a) The President shall be responsible for the internal affairs of the Association, for the preparation and conduct of all meetings of the Association and for presiding over them, and for the preparation of agendas, reports and other necessary documentation for or arising from these meetings.
- (b) The General Secretary shall be responsible for the activities of the Association in its relations with all other bodies and organisations, including FAO management, for the preparation of policy statements and, specifically, for the preparation of an annual policy and programme statement to be presented to the Assembly following approval by the Representative Council.
- (c) The Field Secretary shall be responsible for activities of the Association that address issues of specific interest to staff in all duty stations outside FAO HQ.
- (d) The Treasurer shall manage the finances of the Association and shall be responsible for the collection of dues and other Association income, disburse Association funds within the authorised budget, maintain the Association's accounts and draft the annual budget and financial report for submission to the Representative Council each year at least two weeks before the Annual Assembly.
- (e) The Information Secretary shall be responsible for the communication and promotion strategy with members, both in headquarters and decentralized offices. The Information Secretary shall facilitate communications and discussions among the membership.
- (f) The Legal Affairs Secretary shall be responsible for facilitating provision of assistance to members with queries and/or grievances on work-related issues, and following developments in the administrative justice system.
- (g) The General Member without portfolio shall be responsible for duties which shall be assigned by the Executive Secretariat on an ad hoc basis.
- (h) The President, General Secretary and Field Secretary are assisted by their respective deputies in carrying out their functions.
- (i) The Executive Secretariat may call upon other members of the Representative Council and the standing committees of the Association as well

as regular members of the Association for such assistance as is necessary for the performance of its functions.

(j) A by-election will be held to replace a member whose office becomes vacant.

(k) In the absence of any member of the Executive Secretariat, other members will temporary take over their duties. In case a post becomes vacant and by-elections did not result in filling the post, the Representative Council shall assign those duties to other members of the Executive Secretariat as appropriate. In particular, if either or both the President or the Treasurer posts are unfilled, the Representative Council will assign financial responsibility to other members until the posts are filled.

## ***ARTICLE 16 -- STATUTES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE***

(a) The Statutes and Procedures Committee shall consist of seven members elected by the Assembly for a term of two years; four members being elected in the first year of a biennial cycle and three in the next. Members having served for two consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election for the term following their second term. Members of the Representative Council may not serve on the Statutes and Procedures Committee.

(b) The Committee shall elect a Chairperson from among its members. A quorum shall consist of four members.

(c) Decisions of the Statutes and Procedures Committee shall be by a simple majority.

## ***ARTICLE 17 -- FUNCTIONS OF THE STATUTES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE***

(a) The Statutes and Procedures Committee shall be responsible for the interpretation and application of the present Statutes and the Rules of Procedure of the Association, for resolving differences between organs of the Association, and between the Association and its members; its decisions on such matters shall be final except on questions of membership as referred to in Article 7(b).

(b) It may in exceptional circumstances allow deviation from the strict application of the Statutes or Rules of Procedure. Such decision shall be communicated in writing to the membership with the reasons for the exception.

- (c) It shall function as a Committee of Appeal in cases of suspension or termination of membership or recall of an officer.
- (d) It shall conduct elections to the Representative Council and Executive Secretariat.
- (e) It may draft or receive proposals properly submitted for amendment to any of the Rules of Procedure and shall submit them to the Assembly, with its recommendations.

### ***ARTICLE 18 -- MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE***

- (a) A motion of no-confidence against the Representative Council or the Executive Secretariat, or both, may be adopted by an extraordinary session of the Assembly. The convening of an extraordinary session for this purpose may be proposed at any meeting of the Assembly. On such a proposal being adopted, the Assembly shall be adjourned and reconvened in extraordinary session within fifteen days.
- (b) At an extraordinary session of the Assembly convened for deciding on a motion of no-confidence, that motion shall be discussed as the first item on the agenda. If the motion is adopted, the Representative Council shall resign.
- (c) If a motion of no-confidence is adopted more than three months prior to the anticipated date of the next regular elections the Statutes and Procedures Committee shall hold new elections within thirty calendar days.
- (d) In the interim period between the adoption of a motion on no-confidence and the election of a new Representative Council, the Executive Secretariat shall remain in office only to discharge current matters.

### ***ARTICLE 19 -- AMENDMENT OF STATUTES***

- (a) Proposals for the amendment of these Statutes shall be submitted in writing to the Statutes and Procedures Committee. Proposals may be submitted either by the Executive Secretariat, Representative Council or by a petition signed by one-fifth of the membership of the Association. The Statutes and Procedures Committee shall then submit the proposed amendment to a regular or extraordinary session of the Assembly. The Statutes and Procedures Committee may also draft its own amendments for submission to the Assembly.

(b) Proposals for amendments shall be posted at least 10 days prior to the Assembly, with opportunities for comments on individual proposals and for suggesting amendments to the proposed amendments. In the meeting of the Assembly, further revisions to proposed amendments may be made from the floor with the concurrence of the designated representative of the Statutes and Procedures Committee. The meeting of the Assembly is empowered to consolidate proposals and accept or reject amendments to amendments. During the Assembly, members can accept or reject the proposed amendments, as amended.

(c) To be adopted, amendments must be approved by at least two-thirds of the members casting a vote.