

# Rules of Procedure for the IFOAM General Assembly

## § 1 Call to Order

A session of the General Assembly is opened by the IFOAM President or in case he/she is unable to attend the session, by a vice President or failing that by a person selected by the World Board. The President establishes that the quorum, as defined in the statutes, is met.

## § 2 Chairing and Speaking

**2.1** The President introduces two Chairpersons nominated by the World Board. They are approved by the General Assembly by a simple majority of votes cast. The two rotate as the Chair of the General Assembly.

**2.2** The Chair determines the schedule of the proceedings, decides who is entitled to the floor, and applies these Rules of Procedure. 'Roberts Rules of Order' is used by the Chair, at his/her discretion, in cases not covered by these Rules of Procedure.

**2.3** Any IFOAM member or IFOAM associate must be given the floor, unless the speakers list has been closed by a previously announced decision of the Chair or by point of order.

**2.4** The floor may be given to representatives from IFOAM or others as invited by the World Board or the Chair.

**2.5** A person must obtain the floor before addressing the General Assembly. Any person who wishes to obtain the floor, must present his/her voting card or speaker authorization card to the Chair, stating his/her name and the member / associate or the body as mentioned under 2.4 he/she represents.

## § 3 Courtesy, Relevance, and Discipline

Speakers must address the Chair. Whenever the Chair speaks, any person speaking or offering to speak must desist and the Chair is heard without interruption. Speakers must confine their remarks strictly to the matter under discussion or to a point of order (see §9). The Chair may call a speaker to order for irrelevance, repetition,

unbecoming language, accusations, or any breach of order, and may direct those breaching order to cease speaking, or to be removed from the meeting. The ruling of the Chair on points of order shall be final, and shall not be open to discussion.

## § 4 Officers

The World Board appoints minute keepers, referees, parliamentarians and ballot counters. The referees may also serve as ballot counters. The ballot counters do their work under the supervision of the parliamentarians. The parliamentarians also advise the Chair, at the Chair's request, on the application of these Rules of Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order.

## § 5 Minutes

The minutes shall record all decisions taken. The refereed minutes are published in the Internal Letter (IFOAM in Action).

## § 6 Motions

### 6.1 General conduct

IFOAM members and the World Board may submit motions to the General Assembly. Motions are submitted to the General Assembly according to the rules of the Statutes. Motions from the floor may only amend original motions that have met the requirements of the Statutes. Motions are discussed, amended and voted in the order and time that the Chair determines. The Chair exercises its discretion with due regard to fairness and equity. The Chair may allow the first speech on the motion to be made by the IFOAM member or World Board representative who submitted the original motion. The Chair may also allow questions and answers for clarification prior to discussion and amendments. The Chair may further allow the submitter of a motion to respond directly to questions and amendments.

### 6.2 Amending motions

**a.** Every amending motion must be relevant to the original motion being discussed, and must not be a direct negative of the original motion. The Chair has authority to admit or not to admit an amending motion.

**b.** Amendments are made in writing and handed to the Chair.

**c.** Amendments are read out or visually displayed by the Chair before the member moving the amendment speaks on it, and no amendment is discussed or put to the meeting until it has been seconded.

**d.** When an amendment is proposed, discussion ceases on the original motion and concentrates on the amendment.

**e.** An amendment may be withdrawn by the member moving it, with the approval of the member seconding it.

**f.** If an amendment passes, the original motion as amended becomes the new main motion upon which further discussion and amendment may occur. If an amendment fails, the discussion continues on the original motion.

**g.** An amendment to an amendment is admissible at the discretion of the Chair. If the Chair admits it, the procedure in 6.2 b-f applies. However, if the Chair believes that the meeting will thereby become confused, he/she may rule that the first amendment be decided first and that the amendment to it be discussed separately afterwards.

### 6.3 Friendly Amendments

**Note:** Friendly amendments describe a short amendment offered by someone who is in sympathy with the purposes of the main motion, in the belief that the amendment will either improve the statement or the intent of the main motion, to the satisfaction of the maker of the motion.

**a.** Friendly amendments must be declared as such by the maker of the friendly amendment motion.

**b.** Friendly amendments follow the procedures in 6.2 a-c, except that a second is not required.

**c.** Friendly amendments are accepted or not accepted by the maker of the main motion to which the friendly amendment is addressed.

**d.** If accepted, the motion is amended without further discussion or vote, and discussion continues on the amended main motion.

**e.** If not accepted, the maker of the friendly amendment may declare the amendment as a "general amendment." In this case, all points of Section 6.2 apply.

### 6.4 Postponing Motions

**a.** Any member who has obtained the floor may move that

consideration of the question be postponed to any stated period or day within the Assembly schedule. The motion is made orally and must be seconded.

**b.** Discussion on a motion to postpone is limited to the propriety of the postponement.

**c.** There may be a motion to amend the period of postponement. Such an amendment follows the rules for amending motions in 6.2. b-f.

**d.** If the postponement motion fails, discussion continues on the previous main motion or an amendment.

### 6.5 Moving to next agenda point

**a.** Any member obtaining the floor may move to stop discussion on the motion and to go to the next agenda point, unless the chairman rules otherwise.

**b.** The motion is made orally and must be seconded. If seconded, it is voted without debate or further amendment.

**c.** If the motion passes, the question under discussion is dropped.

**d.** If the motion fails, discussion continues on the main motion or an amendment.

### 6.6 Withdrawing Motions

**a.** The member submitting an original motion or a motion to amend may obtain the floor and withdraw the motion. If there is no objection, the motion is withdrawn and discussion on it ceases. The person seconding the motion must agree.

**b.** If there is an objection, then a motion for withdrawal is required. The motion for withdrawal is made orally and must be seconded. The motion is voted without debate. If this motion fails, then discussion continues on the main motion or amendment.

### 6.7 Ending debate and calling for a vote

**a.** Any member obtaining the floor may move to stop discussion on the motion and call for vote on the motion.

**b.** The motion is made orally and must be seconded. If seconded, it is voted without debate or further amendment.

**c.** If the motion passes, the vote on the motion shall be taken without further debate or amendments.

d. If the motion fails, discussion continues on the main motion or an amendment.

## § 7 Voting

Only IFOAM members, IFOAM Regional Bodies and the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organizations (INOFO) with voting cards are eligible to cast votes at the General Assembly.

Abstentions and invalid ballots are not counted as votes. A simple majority of the votes cast on a given motion is required for the adoption of that motion, except for motions on statutes, which require a two-thirds majority.

## § 8 Questions of Order

In such case where a member believes there is a breach of order, the member can object by standing and addressing the Chair by saying "Mr./Madame Chair, I raise a point of order." After acknowledgement by the Chair, the member then states the question of order. The Chair then decides the question and allows or modifies the proceedings accordingly.

## § 9 Recommendations and Suggestions

**9.1** Recommendations shall be presented to the GA in written form. All recommendations are based on a consensus process the procedures for which shall be made clear to the membership at the beginning of the GA. A recommendation must get a majority vote to be accepted. The recommendations are included in the minutes. The World Board reports to the following General Assembly what actions or considerations it has made related to the recommendations.

**9.2** In order to evaluate the General Assembly the participants are provided with an opportunity for written feedback. These suggestions may address all items relevant for a successful General Assembly. The World Board shall compile the result and shall report the results of the evaluation back to the membership.

## § 10 Election of the World Board

The World Board is elected by written vote.

In the first round each member, each IFOAM Regional Body and INOFO may vote for a maximum of 10 candidates.

Elected are the first 10 candidates who have received more than half of the votes.

If not all positions are filled in the first round a second ballot is taken for the remaining positions. The maximum number of votes for candidates cast by each voter shall equal the number of seats. Candidates who have received the most votes in this ballot are elected to fill the remaining positions.

In either round of voting, any vote that is rendered for less than 50% of the open seats is void.

## § 11 Election and Presentation of the Executive Board

Following the IFOAM statutes, the World Board chooses an Executive Board (see Statutes § 6) during the same General Assembly that has elected the World Board. Before the end of the General Assembly the World Board presents the newly elected Executive Board to the General Assembly.

## § 12 Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

**12.1** Amendments to these Rules of Procedure may be proposed by the World Board or by at least 40 members. Proposals for such amendments shall be published at least two months before the General Assembly. These amendments will be voted after the approval of the agenda and the minutes of the previous GA and before any other decision is made. If adopted, the amendments apply to the present General Assembly.

**12.2** Proposals for amendments by World Board not published in due time before the session must be approved by 2/3 majority.

**12.3** In the course of a session of the General Assembly, these Rules of Procedure may only be changed by a proposal of at least 40 members represented, followed by a two-thirds-majority of votes cast on the proposal. If adopted, the amendments apply to the General Assembly immediately after approval.

*First approved by the IFOAM General Assembly in Sao Paul, Brazil, 1992*

*Completely revised by the IFOAM General Assembly in Victoria, Canada, August 2002*

*Latest amended by the General Assembly in Adelaide, Australia, September 2005*

*§ 7 & 10, 2nd paragraph amended following the GA 2011 statutes change to grant voting rights to IFOAM Regional Bodies and INOFO.*