

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

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JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: +39(06)5701 Telex: 625825-625853 FAO I Email: Codex@fao.org Facsimile: +39(06)5705.4593

ALINORM 99/3  
June 98

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

*23<sup>rd</sup> Session, FAO Headquarters, Rome, 28 June – 3 July 1999*

#### **REPORT OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

*FAO HEADQUARTERS, ROME, 3-5 JUNE 1998*

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION***FORTY-FIFTH SESSION, FAO HEADQUARTERS, ROME, 3-5 JUNE 1998***SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Executive Committee:

- expressed appreciation for the significant financial contributions to the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme provided by FAO, WHO and host governments (para. 4);
- requested that a description and an estimate of support for developing countries provided by FAO and WHO be provided to its next session (para. 6);
- noted that the Codex Committee on Edible Ices had been abolished (para. 10);
- abolished, subject to confirmation by the Commission, the following bodies and proposed arrangements for assigning their work to other Committees (paras. 11-15):
  - Joint ECE/Codex Group of Experts on the Standardization of Quick Frozen Foods
  - Joint ECE/Codex Group of Experts on the Standardization of Fruit Juices.
- Amended the draft Medium-Term Plan 1998-2002 to provide for a new Programme Area on *Strengthening Transparency* and included a provision for consideration of a general standard for foods prepared from biotechnology (paras. 16-20);
- called on FAO and WHO to ensure that the preparations for the convening of a consultation on food microbiological risk assessment would be transparent and include input from the Committee on Food Hygiene and from Members (para. 22);
- called for effective follow-up to be made on providing expert advice on the question of food allergies and intolerances (para. 23);
- expressed concern that careful consideration had to be given by Codex Committees when proposing new work to the Criteria set out in the Procedural Manual and asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper on a review of the criteria for new work and guidelines for the establishment of “inclusive” standards (para. 27);
- approved a number of proposals for new work (para. 26-28 and Appendix 3);
- advanced a number of proposed draft standards to Step 5 of the Codex procedure (para. 29-30 and Appendix 4);
- agreed to the withdrawal of certain MRLs for veterinary drug residues, subject to confirmation by the Commission (paras. 31-32);
- discussed in depth the matter of Judgement of Equivalence and made several recommendations (paras 35-36);
- considered the reply from the Chairman of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures on the status of Codex advisory texts (paras. 41-44);
- recommended that the draft provisional agenda for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission be submitted to the Directors-General of FAO and WHO (para. 45);
- welcomed informal meetings of Chairpersons of Codex Committees, but stressed that such meetings should remain informal and without a formal agenda (paras. 46-48);

- noted that the findings of the Study Group a joint FAO/WHO/IAEA Study Group on High Dose Food Irradiation could lead to a revision of the Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods and other texts (para. 49); and
- noted changes in documentation services (para. 50).

**REPORT OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF  
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

*FAO Headquarters, Rome, 3-5 June 1998*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held its Forty-fifth Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, from 3 to 5 June 1998. The Session was chaired by the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Professor Pakdee Pothisiri (Thailand). The list of participants at the Session is given in Appendix 1.

2. The meeting was opened on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO by Dr. H. de Haen, Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Department, FAO. He drew attention to the consequences of the outcome of the arbitration by the WTO to the dispute between the US, Canada and the EC on the use of hormones in raising cattle, emphasizing that the Commission's recommendations must remain scientifically current and correct. He also referred to the Protocol on Biosafety being negotiated under the Convention for Biological Diversity and stated that Codex should be aware of a possible overlap in the field of standards for foods derived from biotechnology.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

3. The Executive Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda<sup>1</sup> as the Agenda for its Session. It was also agreed that the following matters would be discussed under Agenda Item 8 (Other Business): A meeting of Codex Committee Chairpersons; Documentation Services; High Dose Food Irradiation.

## **FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (AGENDA ITEM 2)<sup>2</sup>**

4. The Executive Committee welcomed the report of the Secretariat on financial and budgetary matters and expressed its appreciation to the parent bodies for their efforts in maintaining high priority budget support for the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee also noted and expressed its appreciation for the significant financial contribution provided by host governments to the work of the programme by hosting Codex Committee sessions and providing essential documentation.

5. Several Members of the Executive Committee expressed concern that priority funding should be assured for the Commission's principal scientific advisory bodies, including the proposed new body which had been recommended by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene to consider the evaluation of food microbiological risks, and additional meetings of JECFA to consider matters relating to food intolerance and allergies. The Executive Committee was advised that funding for JECFA had been assured on the basis of six-monthly meetings over the next biennium and that consultations were under way between FAO and WHO as to the nature of the group to be established on the evaluation of food microbiological risks, but that funding was assured. Several Members drew attention to the need for the reports of JECFA and JMPR to be made available more expeditiously.

6. A question was raised concerning the historical basis for cost-sharing in the Codex budget. It was reported that the official cost-sharing arrangements had been in effect since the 1970's with

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<sup>1</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/1

<sup>2</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/2

FAO providing 75% of the core cost of the Codex budget and WHO 25%. FAO provided an additional contribution which raised its total share to around 80%.

7. The Executive Committee noted that restrictions on the length of Codex Committee reports were creating difficulties in transparency and consistency of decision-making. Noting that the cost of documentation had been significantly reduced in recent years, it encouraged Codex Committees to ensure that reports were sufficiently detailed to allow a full understanding of the decisions reached and the reasons behind these decisions. It was also suggested that references to the basic scientific information which underpinned Codex Committees' recommendations should also be included wherever possible.

8. The Executive Committee welcomed the initiative to support the work of Codex Contact Points in developing Member countries through seminars and workshops. In response to a question, it was noted that support to developing Member countries for training and information on risk analysis was being undertaken by FAO and WHO in their Regular Programmes, the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme and under Trust Fund Projects. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to provide a description and an estimate of this support and for activities undertaken in developing Member countries on food control in general, in its next report to the Commission.

### **REVIEW OF CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES (AGENDA ITEM 3)<sup>3</sup>**

9. The Executive Committee took note of the recommendation of FAO Conference expressed in Resolution 13/97 concerning the Review of FAO Statutory Bodies. It also recalled the consideration given to the matter by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission, in particular the need to define carefully the conditions and working procedures which would govern the establishment of *ad hoc* intergovernmental task forces which might be called upon to undertake work in place of Codex Committees. The Executive Committee was of the opinion that it would be prudent to await the outcome of discussions to be held on this matter by the Committee on General Principles before making any decisions in relation to the establishment of such task forces.

10. Nevertheless, in reviewing the list of Codex Committees included in Annex D of the Conference Resolution<sup>4</sup> the Executive Committee noted that some of these Committees were currently undertaking useful work in the priority area of revision and simplification of older Codex Standards (Cocoa Products and Chocolate, Processed Fruits and Vegetables, Sugars) and that the Committee on Edible Ices had been abolished by the Commission at its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session. The Executive Committee noted that the work assigned to some of the remaining Committees might possibly be combined.

11. Noting that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe had abolished the work programme for the Joint Codex/UNECE Groups of Experts listed in Annex C of the Conference Resolution, the Executive Committee agreed to abolish the following subsidiary bodies subject to confirmation by the Commission in accordance with Rule III.2:

- Joint ECE/Codex Group of Experts on the Standardization of Quick Frozen Foods
- Joint ECE/Codex Group of Experts on the Standardization of Fruit Juices.

12. Also subject to confirmation by the Commission, it assigned the work of revision of the Codex Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables to the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables and any revision of the Codex Recommended International Code of Practice

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<sup>3</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/3

<sup>4</sup> Codex Committees on Cocoa Products and Chocolate; Sugars; Processed Fruits and Vegetables; Meat Hygiene; Processed Meats and Poultry Products; Edible Ices; Soups and Broths; Cereals, Pulses and Legumes; and Vegetable Proteins.

for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods<sup>5</sup> to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. It was noted that standards for certain other quick frozen food commodities, e.g., fish, had been established by other Codex Committees under their respective Terms of Reference.

13. In regard to the Codex Standards for Fruit Juices, the Executive Committee agreed that these standards required revision and up-dating and that there was a case for establishing a new Codex Committee under host government arrangements or an intergovernmental task force to undertake this work. However, in view of the concerns mentioned above, it referred this matter to the Commission for decision.

14. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to collect information on the production, trade, consumption and national regulations in regard to fruit juices for the Commission's consideration. It also recommended that the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, in order to manage its heavy workload, apply the criteria successfully used by the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products for the screening of standards for individual cheese varieties in order to determine priorities in regard to the revision of the Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables. The same technique should be used in relation to the revision of Codex Standards for Fruit and Vegetable Juices.

15. Finally, the Executive Committee requested the host government Secretariats of those Codex Committees mentioned in Annex D of Conference Resolution 13/97 to inform the Commission of their intentions in regard to future work, so that the Commission could take an informed decision on the matters referred to above.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 1998-2002 (AGENDA ITEM 4)<sup>6</sup>**

16. The 22nd Session of the Commission considered an outline of proposals for the Medium-Term Plan for 1998-2002 and endorsed the general directions indicated in it. It requested the Secretariat to transmit the outline of the plan to Member Governments for comment<sup>7</sup> and requested Executive Committee to finalize the Plan at the present Session and to submit it for approval by the Commission at its 23rd Session in 1999.<sup>8</sup>

17. The Executive Committee agreed to reinstate in the Medium-Term Outline a Programme area dealing with *Strengthening Transparency* to take into account the need for improved participation of non-governmental organizations as observers in the Codex decision-making process and the need to take the views of these organizations into account when defining areas of work. The Executive Committee stressed that the Commission could only establish procedures for these purposes in relation to itself, the Executive Committee and other subsidiary bodies established by the Commission, but not for independent expert panels and committees convened outside the framework of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

18. In the programme area *Food Production and Processing Systems*, the Executive Committee was of the opinion that a clear statement by the Commission on the policy approach which assured the safety and nutritional aspects of food prepared from biotechnology was needed as a matter of

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<sup>5</sup> CAC/RCP 8-1976

<sup>6</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/4 (including comments of Cuba; Japan; Morocco; United States; Consumers International); CX/EXEC 98/45/4 – Add.1 (Comments of Canada; International Federation of Fruit Juice Producers); and CX/EXEC 98/45/4 – Add.2 Conference Room Document (Detailed Programme of Work).

<sup>7</sup> Codex Circular Letter CL 1997/14-EXEC (July 1997).

<sup>8</sup> ALINORM 97/6 and ALINORM 97/37, paras. 117-120.

priority. It therefore agreed in amending this programme area to include provision for consideration of a general standard for foods prepared from biotechnology.

19. The Executive Committee made several adjustments in the wording of the Outline of the Medium-Term Plan to ensure that it was consistent with the *Four Statements of Principle Concerning the Role of Science in Codex Decision-making and the Extent to which Other Factors be taken into Account* adopted by the Commission in 1995.

#### **STATUS OF THE REVISED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 1998-2002**

20. The Executive Committee agreed to submit the Revised Medium-Term Plan 1998-2002 as presented in Appendix 2 to this report to the Commission for adoption.

#### **MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S PROGRAMME OF WORK (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

##### **(A) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE 22ND SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION<sup>9</sup>**

21. In addition to the report provided by the Secretariat, the Executive Committee received reports from the Regional Coordinators for Europe and for Asia (presented by the Chairperson of the Commission) on the outcome of the Regional Coordinating Committees held for those regions. Among other matters, the Regional Coordinating Committee for Europe had stressed the importance of work on health and nutrition claims, and the application of new methods of analysis for foods for special dietary uses. The Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia had called attention to the need to provide for improved consensus on Codex decisions; the need to base the adoption of standards on scientific principles; and the priority to be placed on systems for mutual recognition of certification and inspection procedures.

22. In relation to implementation of the Commission's decisions, the Executive Committee placed particular emphasis on the need for prompt action to establish a scientific advisory body on the microbiological aspects of food safety, particularly on microbiological risk assessments (ALINORM 97/37, para. 139). It noted that discussions were under way between FAO and WHO on how such a body could be established on a permanent basis. It also noted the proposal that an *ad hoc* expert consultation would be convened to consider the work programme and propose terms of reference for such a body. The Executive Committee called on FAO and WHO to ensure that the preparations for the convening of such a consultation would be transparent and would include input from the Committee on Food Hygiene and from Member governments for a clearer definition of the terms of reference of the consultation. It also called for greater transparency in the process for the identification and selection of experts which would participate in such a meeting.

23. The Executive Committee also called for effective follow-up to be made on providing expert advice on the question of food allergies and intolerances in order to allow the establishment of a list of foods which would always be the subject of appropriate labelling provisions.

24. In answer to a question, the Executive Committee was informed that support for developing Member nations to participate in meetings of Regional Coordinating Committees with the assistance of external funding was now well-established and would continue as long as such funds continued to be made available. The question of providing funding for participants at world-wide Codex Committees was more complex because of the practical problem of ensuring fairness and at this stage no such funding had been provided through the Secretariat.

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<sup>9</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/5

25. In the matter of follow-up to the Commission's decision concerning the judgement of equivalence of food control systems in different countries (ALINORM 97/37, para. 164(v)), the Executive Committee noted that guidance in this area was a shared responsibility of several Codex Committees including especially the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certifications Systems as well as the Committee on General Principles (see paras. 35-36 below).

**(B) CONSIDERATION OF NEW WORK PROPOSALS<sup>10</sup>**

26. The Executive Committee approved the proposals for new work, work subject to the accelerated procedure, and the discontinuation of work as presented in Appendix 3 to this report. The comments of the Executive Committee on specific proposals are also included in Appendix 3.

27. In general, the Executive Committee expressed concern that careful consideration had to be given by Codex Committees when proposing new work to the Criteria set out in the Procedural Manual. Codex Committees should also follow the instructions of the guidance established by the Commission by giving preference to standards which were inclusive of all products traded within commodity groups rather than highly specific standards, in order to avoid problems of achieving consensus at the time of adopting these standards. The Secretariat was asked to prepare a paper on (a) a review of the criteria for new work and (b) guidelines for the establishment of "inclusive" standards, for consideration at the next session of the Executive Committee on this matter.

28. The Executive Committee invited the Committee on Food Hygiene to consider whether Proposed Draft Annex to the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene, dealing with Cleaning and Disinfection proposed as new work could not be considered as being covered by the General Principles of Food Hygiene and the Guidelines on HACCP. The Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Primary Production, Harvesting and Packaging of Fresh Produce and the Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Pre-cut Fruits and Vegetables were referred to the Committee on Food Hygiene to decide whether future work was needed.

**(C) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS AT STEP 5<sup>11</sup>**

29. The Executive Committee adopted the proposed Draft Standards and Related Texts listed in Appendix 4 and advanced them to Step 6. In doing so, it requested the respective Codex Committees to take into account the technical comments which had been made on the proposed draft standards by Member governments and interested international organizations.

30. The Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean raised the question of the status and format of the Proposed Draft Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The Secretariat noted that the Terms of Reference of this Committee stated that the format to be applied to these standards was to be in line with the format adopted by the Working Party on the Standardization of Perishable Produce of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe<sup>12</sup>. The Coordinator for Europe noted that a number of technical matters in relations to these standards required finalisation, especially the nomenclature used for the commodities, particularly in Spanish.

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<sup>10</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/6; CX/98/45/6-Add.1 (CRD)

<sup>11</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/7.

<sup>12</sup> Procedural Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 102-104.



**(D) MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES<sup>13</sup>*****Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods***

31. The Executive Committee noted that the prior recommendation of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods to withdraw the existing Codex MRLs for oxytetracycline in fat of animals had not been transmitted to the Commission, with the result that they were not supported by a JECFA recommendation. JECFA had recommended that these MRLs be withdrawn since MRLs in fat are not required for this class of drug. MRLs have been set for other, more appropriate, tissues for oxytetracycline and for other members of the tetracycline group.

32. The Executive Committee agreed to the withdrawal of the MRLs, subject to confirmation by the next session of the Commission. The Codex database of MRLs will be amended accordingly.

***Codex Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia***

33. The Executive Committee confirmed that the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables would be responsible for the further development of the *Proposed Draft Standard for Chutney*, and that the proposed draft Standard will be integrated with the existing Codex Standard for Mango Chutney.

***Codex Committee on Food Hygiene***

34. The Executive Committee noted that it had confirmed at its 41<sup>st</sup> Session (1994) new work under the heading *Consideration of the Broader Application of the Hazard Analysis/Critical Control Point System*. It was anticipated that a document could be prepared to provide guidance to governments which wished to include reference to use of the HACCP system in national regulations. The Executive Committee noted the heavy workload of the Committee on Food Hygiene and the priority which needed to be accorded to matters such as the development of guidance for the application of HACCP by small businesses, especially those in developing countries. It questioned the utility of conducting annual surveys on the development and integration of HACCP systems and requested the Committee to reconsider its work on this matter.

***Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems***

35. The Executive Committee discussed in depth the matter of *Judgement of Equivalence* in relation to the Terms of Reference of this Committee and the overall work programme of the Commission. The Executive Committee noted the advice of Legal Counsel that the Terms of Reference of the Committee seemed to be sufficiently broad to cover consideration of the issue, that it was for the Commission or the Executive Committee to determine the allocation of functions between various Committees where there were overlapping competences, and that the matter was primarily a technical one and not a legal one. The Executive Committee was of the opinion that in the area of determination of equivalence of measures, the mandate of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems only referred to food inspection and certification systems and that the matter being discussed by the Committee involved issues which were also relevant to the responsibilities of other Codex Committees especially those dealing directly with science-based risk management and the Committee on General Principles.

36. The Executive Committee was of the opinion and that that the matter was a priority for the work of the Commission (see discussion on the Medium Term Plan), and that the Committee was in the best position to deal with the subject with a view to developing concepts for equivalence in food control for import and export. This would require the Committee to develop concepts, to identify issues for consideration by the Commission and by other Codex Committees, and to suggest how a

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<sup>13</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/8.

systematic approach might be applied. However, the Executive Committee should ensure that the issue was broadened. It suggested that as soon as work proceeded beyond the initial stages, the other relevant Committees (e.g., Food Hygiene, Pesticide Residues, Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, Food Additives and Contaminants, General Principles) should initiate their own work on this matter as appropriate. In order to facilitate understanding of the issues involved, the Executive Committee invited the Secretariat to arrange for a revision of the basic paper and to circulate it to the relevant Committees for their information.

### ***Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables***

37. **Requirements for Minimum Fill:** The Executive Committee noted divergent opinions as to whether such requirements were primarily a commercial consideration or whether they were essential for consumer protection and the assurance of fair practices in the food trade. It noted that the technical requirements for processed fruits and vegetables might be different to those for fish and fishery products. It decided not to take a position on the matter, but to ask the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables to provide additional technical information.

38. **Responsibility for Standards:** The Executive allocated the following work to the responsibility of other Committees:

- Fresh Fungus “Chanterelle” to the Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- Vinegar to the Regional Coordinating Committee for Europe for revision as a European Standard only (See also Agenda Item 5(b)).

### **CODE OF PRACTICE ON GOOD ANIMAL FEEDING**

39. The Executive Committee noted that not all of the Codex Committees which had been requested to examine the draft had as yet met. In particular, the opinion of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods in the matter of the use of antibiotics in animal feeding would be of special importance. The opinion was expressed that the draft Code as written was too general and too wide to be of use in some of the areas which it intended to cover and that one solution would be to treat specific risks separately.

40. The Executive Committee supported the proposal that once all of the Committees had expressed their opinions, an analysis should be prepared for the further consideration of the Executive Committee and the Commission.

### **REPORT ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE APPLICATION OF THE WTO SPS AND TBT AGREEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 6)<sup>14</sup>**

41. The 22nd session of the Commission requested the Secretariat to write to the chair of the WTO Committee on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in order to obtain clarification on how the Committee would “differentiate standards, guidelines and other recommendations” in relation to the SPS Agreement. The response of the Chair of the SPS Committee is provided *verbatim* in the working paper.

42. The Executive Committee noted the following features in the reply:

- the SPS Committee cannot formally interpret the provisions of the SPS Agreement;
- the Agreement does not differentiate between the terms “standards”, “guidelines” or “recommendations”;

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<sup>14</sup>

CX/EXEC 98/45/9

- there is no legal obligation on WTO Members to apply any of these Codex texts;
- how a text would be applied depended on its substantive content rather than on the category of the text;
- Regional standards are not included in the definition of “international standards” used in the Agreement, but may be applied within a given Region.

43. The Executive Committee also noted that the above points seem to be consistent with the rulings of the Appellate Body in relation to the Panel reports concerning EC Measures Concerning Meat and Meat Products (Hormones)<sup>15</sup>. It also noted that the SPS Committee was of the view that the work of Codex should not be constrained by this question.

44. The Executive Committee agreed that:

- the reply of the SPS Committee should be brought to the attention of all Codex Committees;
- the reply by the SPS Committee seemed to conclude the correspondence on this matter;
- the work of Codex should move forward without concern arising from misunderstandings or misinterpretations as to how Codex standards and related texts might be used;
- the guidance given by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission in relation to the status of Codex advisory texts should continue to be adhered to;
- the Committee on General Principles should examine the possibility of developing a set of appropriate preambular statements explaining the intent of different types of Codex texts.

#### **DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 23<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 7)<sup>16</sup>**

45. The Executive Committee recommended that the draft Provisional Agenda prepared by the Secretariat be submitted for consideration by the Directors-General.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

##### **MEETINGS OF CODEX CHAIRPERSONS**

46. The Representative of North America reported that a useful informal meeting of Codex Chairpersons had been held during the course of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission to exchange experience in dealing with problems arising at Codex Committee Sessions, especially in relation to how consensus might be identified. The Representative proposed that similar meetings could be held in the future as opportunities arose in order to facilitate the work of the Commission.

47. The Executive Committee welcomed this initiative, but stressed that such meetings should remain informal and without a formal agenda, and that they should not be seen as establishing any new platform or forum within the Codex structure.

48. It was suggested that the next opportunity for such a meeting would most likely be at the forthcoming meeting of the Committee on General Principles.

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<sup>15</sup> WTO Document AB-1997-4, World Trade Organization, Geneva.

<sup>16</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/10

**HIGH-DOSE FOOD IRRADIATION**

49. The Representative of WHO reported that a joint FAO/WHO/IAEA Study Group had met in Vienna in September 1997 to consider the wholesomeness of food irradiated with doses above 10 kGy, the current limit in the Codex Standard. The Study Group had concluded that food irradiated to any dose appropriate to achieve the technological objective was both safe to consume and was nutritionally adequate.<sup>17</sup> It was noted that the findings of the Study Group could lead to a revision of the Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods and other texts.

**DOCUMENTATION SERVICES<sup>18</sup>**

50. The Executive Committee noted that due to changes in cost structures and reduction in staff services, it was now more effective and efficient to distribute all Codex documents to all Contact Points and interested international organizations, rather than to maintain different distribution lists depending on the nature of the document or its subject matter. This would lead to some limitations in the distribution of documents, but at the same time documents would in general become more widely available and much greater use would be made of electronic transmission of documents, either through the email subscription list Codex-L, or via the Codex site on the World Wide Web.<sup>19</sup> The Executive Committee welcomed these developments.

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<sup>17</sup> WHO, *Weekly Epidemiological Record*, Vol. 98, No. 3, 16 January 1998.

<sup>18</sup> CX/EXEC 98/45/11.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.fao.org/es/esn/codex>

**ALINORM 99/3  
Appendix 1****JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION***Forty-Fifth Session, 3-5 June 1998**FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy***List of Participants****CHAIRPERSON**

Professor Pakdee Pothisiri  
Deputy Permanent Secretary  
Office of Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Public Health  
Nonthaburi 11000  
THAILAND

**VICE-CHAIRPERSONS**

Sra. María E. Chacón  
Asesora del Gobierno  
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología, Industria y  
Comercio  
Apartado 4135-1000  
San José  
COSTA RICA

Mr. Thomas J. Billy  
Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Jefferson Dr.  
Whitten Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
USA

Mr. S. Van Hoogstraten  
Director of Public Health  
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport  
Sir Winston Churchill Laan 368  
P.O. Box 5406  
2280 MK Rijswijk  
THE NETHERLANDS

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
AFRICA

Mr. Meftah Amara  
Directeur Général de l'Agro-alimentaire  
Ministère de l'Industrie  
37 Avenue Khereddine Pacha  
Tunis  
TUNISIE

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
ASIA

Dr. Abd. Rahim Mohamad  
Principal Assist. Director  
Ministry of Health,  
Block E. Jalan Dungun  
50490 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA

Adviser to the Regional Representative for  
Asia

Dr. Wan Mahmud Othman  
Deputy Director General of Health  
Ministry of Health,  
Block E, Jalan Dungun  
50490 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA

Adviser

Mr. Akihiko Nishiyama  
Director for International Standardization  
Standards and Labelling Division, Food and  
Marketing Bureau  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and  
Fisheries,  
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950  
JAPAN

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
EUROPE

M. Jean-Pierre Doussin  
Chargé de Mission  
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances  
Telidoc 051  
59 Bld. Vincent Auriol  
75013 Paris Cedex  
FRANCE

Advisers to the Regional Representative for  
Europe

Mr. Hubert Ferry-Wilczek  
Sous-directeur  
direction générale de l'alimentation  
Agriculture et pêche  
251 rue de Vaugirard 75015 Paris  
FRANCE

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Adviser	Mr. Edwin Hecker Codex Manager Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries, 73 Bezuidenhoutseweg 2500 EK The Hague THE NETHERLANDS
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	Mr. Fernando José Marroni de Abreu First Secretary, Alternate Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO Permanent Representation of the Federative Republic of Brazil to FAO Piazza Navona 14 Rome, ITALY
Adviser to the Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. Maria Aparecida Martinelli Coordinator of the Codex Alimentarius Committee of Brazil INMETRO/Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism SEP/511, ED Bittar III, Bloco 'B', 4o Andar, Brasilia - DF BRAZIL CEP 70750-527
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR NORTH AMERICA	Dr. Anne MacKenzie Associate Vice President, Science Evaluation Canadian Food Inspection Agency 59 Camelot Drive, Nepean, Ontario, K1A 0Y9 CANADA
Advisers to Regional Representative for North America	Mr. Ron B. Burke Director, Bureau of Food Regulatory, Inter- national and Interagency Affairs Food Directorate, Health Protection Branch Health Canada Room 200, H.P.B. Building (0702C) Tunney's Pasture Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L2 CANADA

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Adviser	Dr. F. Edward Scarbrough US Manager for Codex Food Safety and Inspection Service US Department of Agriculture Room 4861 South Building 14th Independence Ave., SW Washington DC 20250 USA
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR SOUTH WEST PACIFIC	Mr. Sundararaman Rajasekar Manager WTO/SPS Codex Coordinator and Contact Point for New Zealand MAF Policy - Ministry of Agriculture P.O. Box 2526 Wellington NEW ZEALAND
Adviser to Regional Representative for South West Pacific	Mr. Digby Gascoine Director Policy and International Division Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service Department of Primary Industries and Energy GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA
COORDINATOR FOR AFRICA	Dr. D.B. Nhari Government Analyst Ministry of Health P.O. Box CY 1122 Causeway Harare ZIMBABWE
COORDINATOR FOR EUROPE	Dr. Felipe Mittelbrunn Consejero Técnico Secretaría de la Comisión Interministerial para la Ordenación Alimentaria Subdirección General de Higiene de los Alimentos Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo Paseo del Prado 18-20 28071 Madrid SPAIN



COORDINATOR FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN

Sr. G. Ugarte  
Director Unidad Asuntos Internacionales  
Ministerio Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca  
Constituyente 1476 3o piso  
Montevideo  
URUGUAY

SECRETARIAT

Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius  
Commission

Mr. G.D. Orriss  
Chief  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Nutrition Division  
FAO, Rome

Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat  
FAO

Dr. A.W. Randell  
Senior Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Nutrition Division  
FAO, Rome

WHO

Mr. Sahara Yasuyuki  
Scientist  
Programme of Food Safety and Food Aid  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
CH-1211 Geneva 27  
SWITZERLAND

LEGAL COUNSEL

WHO

Mr. Tom Topping  
Legal Counsel  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
CH 1211 Geneva 27  
SWITZERLAND

FAO

Mr. Gerald Moore  
Legal Counsel  
FAO, Rome  
ITALY

**ALINORM 99/3  
APPENDIX 2****MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR 1998 TO 2002****GENERAL APPROACHES AND ISSUES**

1. The general approach taken in the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan for the period realistically takes into account the financial situations facing the parent organizations and the UN system-wide desire for simplification and streamlining of existing structures. The emphasis on horizontal issues laid down by the Commission in recent years provides a satisfactory basis for this streamlining. Establishing *ad hoc* task forces to replace standing committee structures, could allow the Commission to react flexibly to specific problems. Rules to ensure that such mechanisms are as inclusive, transparent and responsive as the current system will need to be established. Overall improvements in the procedures for decision-making and the acceptance of standards and related texts will be developed.
2. The world's food security needs stretching into the mid-21st Century were the focus of the World Food Summit, Rome, November 1996. The International Conference on Nutrition, 1992, stressed the importance of improved food quality and safety as a means of improving nutrition. The efficient use of sustainable agricultural resources and improvements in agricultural production efficiencies and food processing and marketing practices by all available safe technologies must be assured. In the Medium-Term, therefore, high priority should be given to science-based standards, guidelines and other recommendations aimed at removing unjustified impediments to trade in food produced, processed and marketed by such means. Nevertheless, buyers who wish to have access to foods produced or processed by alternative methods should have adequate information and assurances that such alternative conditions have indeed been applied. Labelling and certification procedures for such alternative products may need to be considered in parallel with the development of guidelines for new production and processing technologies for mainstream food products, where these are deemed necessary.
3. Among other general issues which are included, the integration of risk analysis principles into the Codex decision-making process should be completed in the period by introducing necessary changes to the Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts, the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius, and the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities. Specific guidance on the application of risk analysis principles should be provided to Codex Committees on one hand and to Member Governments on the other: the former guidance to be included in the Procedural Manual, the latter in the Codex Alimentarius itself. The challenges facing developing countries in applying risk analysis principles will need to be taken into consideration. Guidance will be developed for the identification, management, application and interpretation of legitimate factors other than science relevant to the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair practices in the food trade. Risk communication principles will be incorporated into the risk analysis framework and probably in food labelling requirements.
4. Continued priority should be given to the Commission's horizontal science-based work in the areas of food additives, contaminants, pesticide and veterinary drug residues, food hygiene, food labelling and nutrition. Consideration should be given to the development of standards in these areas for foods derived from biotechnology or traits introduced into foods by biotechnology, where this is scientifically justified. Trade-related issues between

governments of food inspection and certification and determination of equivalence and appropriate methods of analysis and sampling will also remain priority areas.

5. In the period 1998 to 2002 it will be proposed that the Commission will continue to reduce its work on commodity-specific standards in favour of horizontal or general standards. The modernisation of existing commodity standards, begun in 1993, and the transfer of material from commodity standards to applicable general standards should be completed in this period. The medium-term period should also see clarification of the relationship between the Commission and the World Trade Organization's Committees on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) and on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee) especially insofar as notification of the use of standards or acceptance of standards is concerned.

6. The period should also see a significant increase in the use of electronic transmission of documents and storage of archival material. Cooperation with private-sector institutions and associations which is now an integral part of UN system-wide programming can also provide the Codex Alimentarius Commission with ways to facilitate the dissemination of Codex information and support the costs of archiving existing documentation.

7. Improvements in assuring transparency, the need to improved participation of non-governmental organizations as observers in the Codex decision-making process, and the need to take the views of these organizations into account when defining areas of work have been included in the Medium-Term Plan.

**MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 1998 - 2002**

## Outline

**Programme area****Medium-Term Objectives**

General principles and rules of procedure

Rules for establishment of *ad hoc* task forces in place of standing subsidiary bodies when required. Integration of risk analysis principles into Codex procedures. Improved guidelines for participation of international non-government organizations. Improved procedures for decision-making and consideration of acceptance of standards. Consideration of special or more flexible conditions which may apply to developing countries in the acceptance and application of standards.

Application of policy principles for risk management

Guidelines on the application and interpretation in risk management of legitimate factors other than science relevant to the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair practices in the food trade. Completion of the General Standard for the Use of Food Additives; General Standard for Contaminants in Foods. Maintenance of up-dated MRLs for Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Residues and extension to coverage of products of particular interest to developing countries. Application of risk analysis principles for control of specific microbiological food-borne hazards.

Food production and processing systems

Establishment of principles for the use of safe technologies in food production, processing and handling including those for specific food sectors. Consideration of a general standard for foods derived from biotechnology or traits introduced into foods by biotechnology. Continued development of guidelines for food quality and safety management systems. Consideration of application of standards and related texts by small and medium-scale enterprises, especially in developing countries.

Equivalence, mutual recognition and quality assurance of food control systems

Guidelines on equivalence and mutual recognition of testing procedures, inspection and certification systems. Recommendations on optimising control systems by official and voluntary quality assurance schemes.

**Programme area****Medium-Term Objectives**

Nutrition and consumer information

Review of the basis for nutrition requirements and food labelling requirements in light of scientific evidence, risk analysis and legitimate factors other than science relevant to the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair practices in the food trade. Guidelines on claims and certification procedures for alternative production processes. Integration of food labelling and nutrition requirements.

Commodity standards

Finalization of revision/simplification of Codex Commodity Standards. Elaboration of specific Commodity Standards where justified.

Strengthening Transparency

Establish general recommendations to improve the transparency of Codex decision-making. Develop guidelines on the procedures for granting observer status to international non-governmental organizations in Codex Alimentarius. Procedures for the full availability to be made of results of Codex decisions to interested parties. Continuing effort to take into account the views of international non-governmental organizations while defining areas of work.

Publication

Transfer of the contents of the Codex Alimentarius to the World Wide Web.

Administration

Transfer of Codex archives to electronic form (external funding).

**ALINORM 99/3**  
**Appendix 3**

**APPROVED NEW WORK (STEP 1)**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1.	Proposed Draft Standard for Tiquisque (White and Lilac)	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Para. 87	Approved. Information to be provided on production and trade.
2.	Proposed Draft Standard for Yucca	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Para. 87	Approved.
3.	Proposed Draft Standard for Uchuva	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Para. 87	Approved. Information to be provided on production and trade.
4.	Proposed Draft Standard for Yellow Pitahaya	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Para. 87	Approved. Information to be provided on production and trade.
5.	Revision of the Codex Standard for Papaya	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Para. 87	Approved.
6.	Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Primary Production, Harvesting and Packaging of Fresh Produce	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Para. 108	Approved. Careful attention needs to be paid to the effect of the increasing workload of this Committee
7.	Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Pre-cut Fruits and Vegetables	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Para. 108	Approved. Careful attention needs to be paid to the effect of the increasing workload of this Committee
8.	Proposed Draft Annex to the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene, dealing with Cleaning and Disinfection	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Para. 108	Approved. Careful attention needs to be paid to the effect of the increasing workload of this Committee
9.	Proposed Draft Guidelines/Recommendations for Food Import Control Systems	CCFICS	ALINORM 99/30: Paras. 34-36.	Approved. Careful attention should be given to the nature of the output of this work, especially as to the status of the final text.

ITEM	PROPOSAL	COMMITTEE	REFERENCE	STATUS
10.	Proposed Draft Guidelines and Criteria for a Generic Official Certificate Format and Rules Relating to the Production and Issuance of Certificates	CCFICS	ALINORM 99/30: Paras. 37-40.	Approved.
11.	Core Functions of Codex Contact Points	CCGP	ALINORM 99/15, Para. 27	Approved.
12.	Provisions of Fortification of Iodine, Iron and Vitamin A in the Guidelines on Nutrition Claims	CCNFSDU [CCFL]	ALINORM 99/15, Para. 74	Approved.
13.	Proposed Draft Standard for Canned Stone Fruits	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 44, 52 & 76 and Appendix IV	Approved. To replace the existing Codex Standards for Canned Apricots, Canned Peaches and Canned Plums and cover canned stone fruits of genus <i>Prunus</i> .
14.	Proposed Draft Standard for Canned Citrus Fruits	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 50 & 76	Approved. To replace the existing Codex Standards for Canned Grapefruit and Canned Mandarin Oranges.
15.	Proposed Draft Standard for Canned Berry Fruits	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 50 & 76	Approved. To replace the existing Codex Standards for Canned Raspberries and Canned Strawberries.
16.	Proposed Draft Standard for Canned Vegetables	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 63 & 76	Approved. To replace the existing Codex Standards for Canned Asparagus, Canned Carrots, Canned Green Beans and Wax Beans, Canned Green Peas, Canned Palmito, Canned Matured Processed Peas, and Canned Sweet Corn.
17.	Proposed Draft Standard for Jam, Jellies and Marmalades	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 66 & 76	Approved. To replace the existing Codex Standards for Jam (Fruit Preserves) and Jellies and for Citrus Marmalade.

ITEM	PROPOSAL	COMMITTEE	REFERENCE	STATUS
18.	Proposed Draft Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 33-35 & 76, Appendix V	Approved. Consideration to be given to incorporating the final text in the appropriate standards.
19.	Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Vegetables	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 63 & 76	Approved. Consideration to be given to incorporating the final text in the appropriate standards.
20.	Proposed Draft Standard for Soy Sauce	CCPFV	ALINORM 99/27, Paras. 55 & 76	Approved.
21.	Proposed Amendments to the Revised Standard for Food Grade Salt	CCFAC	ALINORM 99/12; Paras. 113 & Appendix XIII	Approved. Proposed amendment refers to packaging requirements to preserve the stability of iodised salt.

#### PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK UNDER THE ACCELERATED PROCEDURE

ITEM	PROPOSAL	COMMITTEE	REFERENCE	STATUS
1.	Proposed Draft Amendment to the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Para. 10 and Appendix II	Approved.
2.	Proposed Draft Amendments to the International Numbering System (INS) for Food Additives Amendments relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argon (INS 938)</li> <li>• Helium (INS 939)</li> <li>• Oxygen (INS 948)</li> </ul>	CCFAC	ALINORM 99/12: Para 55 & Appendix II	Approved.



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**PROPOSALS FOR THE DISCONTINUATION OF WORK**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1.	Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Manufacture of Uncured/Unripened and Ripened Soft Cheese	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Para. 67	Discontinued.

**PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS AT STEP 5**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1.	Proposed Draft Revised Standard for Pineapples	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Appendix VIII	Advanced to Step 6.
2.	Proposed Draft Standard for Grapefruits	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Appendix IX	Advanced to Step 6.
3.	Proposed Draft Standard for Longans	CCFFV	ALINORM 99/35: Appendix X	Advanced to Step 6.
4.	Proposed Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Assessment	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Appendix IV	Advanced to Step 6.
5.	Proposed Draft Standard for Pickles	CCASIA	ALINORM 99/15: Appendix III	Advanced to Step 6.
6.	Proposed Draft Standard for Kimchi	CCASIA	ALINORM 99/15: Appendix IV	Advanced to Step 6.
7.	Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Packaged (Bottled) Drinking Waters (Other than Natural Mineral Waters)	CCFH	ALINORM 99/13: Appendix V	Advanced to Step 6.
8.	Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements regarding Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems	CCFICS	ALINORM 99/30: Appendix II	Advanced to Step 6.
9.	General Standard for Food Additives: Proposed Draft Schedules (Tables) for Colours, Colour Retention Agents, Bulking Agents and Emulsifiers	CCFAC	ALINORM 99/12: Appendix IV	Advanced to Step 6.
10.	General Standard for Food Additives: Proposed Draft Schedules (Tables) for Acidity Regulators, Anticaking Agents, Antifoaming agents, Flavour Enhancers, Flour Treatment Agents, Foaming Agents, Firming Agents, Glazing Agents, Humectants, Propellants and Raising Agents	CCFAC	ALINORM 99/12: Appendix V	Advanced to Step 6.

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| 11. | Proposed Draft Revised Standard for Canned Applesauce | CCPFV | ALINORM 99/27: Appendix II  | Advanced to Step 6. |
| 12. | Proposed Draft Revised Standard for Canned Pears      | CCPFV | ALINORM 99/27: Appendix III | Advanced to Step 6. |