

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE:

Via delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME: Tel. 5797 Cables Foodagri

ALINORM 76/17 (Rev.)

May 1976

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
Eleventh Session, Rome, 29 March - 9 April 1976

REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA 1/  
Rome, 25-26 March 1976

## Introduction

1. The First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome on the 25th and 26th March 1976. The Committee had been established under Rule IX.1(b)(2) of the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (4th Ed.) by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its Tenth Session (ALINORM 74/44, para 33).
2. The session was attended by 15 participants from the following 8 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, France, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela. Observers were present from Netherlands and Switzerland. A list of participants is included as Appendix I.
3. The meeting was opened by Mr. G.O. Kermode, Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, who welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. He referred to the primary purpose of the First Session which was to clarify procedural matters in order to advance Codex work generally in the region.
4. Because of a resolution of the FAO Conference (Resolution 16/75) an overall review of FAO meetings in the current biennium had been undertaken, and in the case of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, the number of meetings had been reduced from 41 to 27. As a consequence, the Second meeting of the Coordinating Committee had been postponed, and the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Latin America which remained in the category of planned meetings, would be held in early 1977 and would in large measure continue the work begun at the present meeting.
5. A further purpose of the meeting was to nominate a candidate as Coordinator of the region for appointment at the next session of the Commission. Mr. Kermode pointed out that the regional coordinator was usually present as an observer at the sessions of the Executive Committee.
6. Members of the FAO Secretariat were Mr. J.M. Hutchinson, Dr. L.G. Ladomery and Mr. J.R. Lupien.

## Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

7. The Committee elected as its Chairman Dr. E.R. Méndez of the delegation of Mexico and as its Vice-Chairman Dr. V.González Marval of the delegation of Venezuela.

## Adoption of the Agenda

8. The agenda was adopted without change.

## Report on Replies Received in Response to Questionnaire (CX 3/15(Q))

9. The Coordinating Committee was informed that only four countries had replied to the above questionnaire which was distributed to members of the Region of Latin America in October 1974. Some delegations were of the opinion that the questionnaire was very detailed and could, perhaps, be simplified. The Secretariat pointed out that the questionnaire had been designed in such a way as to obtain maximum amount of information on the basis of which appropriate papers can be prepared for the Regional

1/ This version of the Report of the 1st session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America revised on the basis of the decisions of the 11th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, replaces ALINORM 76/17, March 1976.

Latin American Food Standards Conference as well as for future sessions of the Coordinating Committee. The Committee accepted the proposal of the Chairman that the Coordinator to be appointed for the Latin American Region should be requested to make such arrangements as would encourage replies to the questionnaire.

#### Organization of Work of and Priorities for the Coordinating Committee

##### Organizational Aspects

10. The Committee discussed organizational aspects relating to future activities of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and also discussed in broad terms those problem areas to which priority should be given. As regards organizational aspects, the Committee noted that, as a result of Resolution 16/75 of the 1975 FAO Conference, the second session of the Coordinating Committee would not be held in the present biennium 1976/1977. However, it noted that provisions had been made in the budget of the Commission for holding a Regional Latin American Conference on Food Standards in 1976/77. It was agreed that, for practical purposes, the Regional Conference, which was proposed to be held in 1977, could be regarded as a session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America in that the Regional Conference would discuss items of interest to the region of Latin America and which would be closely related to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

11. It was also agreed that it was essential to appoint a coordinator for Latin America. As regards the forthcoming Regional Food Standards Conference, the Committee noted with satisfaction the generous offer of the government of Mexico to host the Conference in 1977. The Secretariat informed the Committee that some budgetary provisions had been made for the servicing of the Conference and for the preparation of basic documents.

##### Priorities

12. As regards the question of priorities for the Regional Conference and future sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America, it was agreed that the present session could only make general recommendations in this respect and that it would be for the Regional Conference to discuss this question in greater detail. In this respect, the Committee agreed that it would be necessary to prepare full and detailed documentation on the basis of which the Conference could arrive at conclusions concerning future programme of work and priorities of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America. The Secretariat informed the Committee that appropriate papers would be prepared for the Conference.

13. The delegation of Brazil was of the opinion that the harmonization of food regulations within the region was of great interest to the region of Latin America and that, as far as work of the Commission on a global basis was concerned, particular attention should be paid to the problem of contaminants in food such as residues of pesticides, inorganic substances and mycotoxins as well as to the establishment of suitable Codes of Hygienic Practice and to the development of microbiological specifications for foods, in such a way as to ensure that the specific interests of the Region are duly taken into account.

14. The delegation of Argentina stressed the need to develop world-wide rather than regional standards and to define those problems on which the Coordinating Committee should focus its attention. The delegation of Argentina was further of the opinion that the Secretariat should prepare a paper giving a summary of the work done to-date by the Commission and by other bodies such as the EEC and other organizations.

15. The delegation of Cuba considered that, because of the advanced stage of many Codex Commodity Standards, the Regional Coordinating Committee should give its attention to the standardization of work procedures which will allow products to meet the quality level required by Codex Standards and to the food control services so that they function with the necessary efficiency and uniformity. The delegation stressed the need for regional standards of methods of analysis and sampling and of processes associated with international product standards elaborated by Codex which are of importance to regional trade.

16. In response to the enquiries of the delegation of Argentina, the Secretariat explained the planned documentation for the Latin American Food Standards Conference, the proposed agenda of which was included in CX/LA 76/2. The experience gained from and work done for the Food Standards Conferences for Africa (October 1973) and Asia (December 1975) were outlined. The Committee was informed that a paper on proposed agenda item 2 "Outline of the Work and Procedures of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies, including their Importance and Implications for the Developing Countries" would include a full description of the history and the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, including an up-to-date list of various standards and their status in the adoption procedure. This paper would lead to the identification of those areas where Latin American Coordinating Committee action could supplement work done on an international level by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

17. The Secretariat pointed out that surveys carried out to date through FAO food control activities showed a number of problems to which the Latin American Coordinating Committee could address itself. The diversity of food laws and regulations existing on a regional basis, with split responsibilities for jurisdiction between different Ministries in various countries, was mentioned. The Committee was informed of the endorsement by the Coordinating Committee for Africa (September 1975) and the Food Standards Conference for Asia (December 1975) of a model food law prepared by the Secretariat intended for member countries to compare with their existing food laws. This would improve the harmonization of food laws on a regional or world-wide level. Consideration of a similar model food law had been proposed for the Latin American Food Standards Conference.

18. The Secretariat also mentioned a number of points on which action could be taken by the Coordinating Committee in assisting member countries to review and strengthen food control infrastructure. These included emphasis on training needs, preparing of a format for ensuring regulations on a country to country basis which were as uniform as possible, and consideration of regional standards and other regulations vis-à-vis international standards already prepared by various Codex committees and adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

19. The Committee recognized that some problems which were to be examined by the Coordinating Committee and the Conference were particular to regional trade in food, while other problems related to foods destined for export to countries outside the region. It was also recognized that it was not possible at the present session to take final action on priorities for consideration by the Coordinating Committee and that this matter would have to be considered in greater detail by the Regional Food Standards Conference to be held in Mexico. The Committee agreed that the following points might be given priority after consideration by the Regional Conference:

1. Harmonization of Food Legislation

- (a) Examination of Codex work on a world-wide basis in the light of the particular conditions prevailing in the region of Latin America;
- (b) the consideration of standards and other regulations for foods of particular interest to the region of Latin America, including the establishment, where appropriate, of regional standards.

2. Promoting adequacy and uniformity of Food Inspection Services

3. Promoting adequacy and uniformity of Food Legislation, including the consideration of a model food law; and

4. Specific consideration of questions of contaminants (pesticide residues, mycotoxins and other chemical residues in food) as well as the use of food additives; the establishment of Codes of Hygienic Practice and Microbiological Specifications for foods.

Provisional Agenda for the Regional Food Standards Conference for Latin America

20. The Committee had before it document CX/LA 76/2 prepared by the Secretariat which contained a suggested provisional agenda for the Conference. Several delegations pointed out the growing importance to the countries in the region of cooperation with the **Latin American Economic System (SELA)** and with the **Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA)**. The Committee was of the opinion that, in the preparation for the Food Standards Regional Conference adequate care should be taken to take into account existing technical work at the regional level. The Committee also agreed to a proposal to add an item to the agenda which would cover the

relationship of the member countries to **SELA** and LAFTA.

21. After detailed discussion of the agenda, the Committee agreed to some further minor amendments. The revised agenda is contained in Appendix II.

#### The Role of Coordinators

22. The Committee was informed of the conclusions of the 21st session of the Executive Committee (para 45, ALINORM 76/3) concerning the rôle of coordinators. The Executive Committee had agreed that there was no need to amend the Rules of the Commission in this respect, but had agreed that the function of the Coordinator would essentially be as follows:

"(i) To preside over sessions of the Coordinating Committee; (ii) to guide the deliberations of the Committee; (iii) to formulate policy and action proposals for consideration by the Committee; (iv) to be the spokesman for the Committee and to report to the Commission; (v) to maintain a close liaison with the Codex Secretariat and, as appropriate, with FAO and WHO Regional Offices in Latin America".

The Committee agreed that the immediate task of the Coordinator would be to stimulate replies to the questionnaire (CX 3/15(Q)), and also to stimulate participation of the Region of Latin America in the work of the Commission. It was also of the opinion that the matter should be further considered at the Latin American Regional Food Standards Conference so that the interests of that region were fully taken into account. Until the functions of the Coordinator for the Latin American Region were thus further specified, the description of the functions as agreed by the Executive Committee would be acceptable.

#### Nomination of the Coordinator for Latin America

23. The Committee, presided over by the Vice-Chairman Dr. V. González Marval, unanimously nominated Dr. E.R. Méndez of Mexico to serve as Coordinator from the end of the 11th session to the end of the 12th session of the Commission. The reason for recommending a term of office as above was to give greater flexibility to the work of the Coordinating Committee, especially in view of the extended period between sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

#### Other Business

##### Membership of Coordinating Committees

24. A question was raised by **the delegation of Cuba as to what were the criteria** which determined a Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's inclusion in a particular geographic location. A further question was raised as to whether a Member of the Commission could have membership in more than one Coordinating Committee. The Legal Counsel having been requested to give a legal opinion, distinguished between (a) participation in more than one Coordinating Committee and, as a wider issue, (b) membership in more than one of the geographical locations of the Commission.

25. As regards the latter, it was clear that for the purposes of election to the Executive Committee, in accordance with Rule III.1 of the Commission, a given Member could only form part of, and represent only one geographical location. This was in line with the rules and practice concerning elections to the FAO Council where geographical distribution was predetermined in the sense that a specific number of seats was reserved to each region and each Member Nation formed part of a given region and one region only.

26. With respect to the issue mentioned under (a) above, it was a practice of long standing in FAO, endorsed by the Conference, that countries whose interests cut across regional lines were invited to attend as members regional meetings in more than one region. This situation also arose in the case of non-self governing territories whose position was covered, as far as membership in Article VI-bodies is concerned, by Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution under which the Commission had been established. Pursuant to this provision, membership in Commissions is open to all

Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO or to all Member Nations or Associate Members "whose territories are situated wholly or in part in one or more regions". In the case of regional bodies it was generally left to governments eligible for participation to decide on the form of their representation; the position of WHO was substantially analogous to that of FAO, except that it was based on practice and resolutions of the World Health Assembly rather than on specific constitutional provisions.

27. The Secretariat informed the Committee that two European Member countries of the Commission not listed as members of the geographical location of Africa had attended as Members the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa.

28. The delegation of Brazil considered that the precedent set at the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa and the statement of the Legal Counsel did not satisfactorily explain the question concerning participation as Member of a country in more than one of the regional committees of the Codex Alimentarius Commission or the question of membership in more than one of the geographic locations of the Commission. It was further of the opinion that the region of Latin America was a well defined one, which had interests particular to it. **In its view, the question of participation as a full member should be decided primarily on the basis of the functions and objectives of the Committee, as a body for the definition of priorities and coordination of policies within the Region. The efficiency of the Committee would be impaired if its membership were not restricted to countries with similar interests and which actually belonged to the Region. This was not to say that participation as an observer by any interested Member Country in the work of Codex regional committees, in accordance with Rule VII.3 of the Commission, was not desirable.**

29. Several delegations were also of the opinion that the problems outlined by the delegation of Brazil, which had wide implications, should be considered at a later stage and that no conclusions could be reached at the present session.

30. The delegation of France stated that Members of the Commission having an interest in the work of the regional bodies of the Commission were able to participate in such meetings and where there was a constitutional right, they could not be denied membership in such bodies. This was also borne out by the statement of the FAO Legal Counsel.

31. In view of the statements made above the Committee decided that further consideration of the matter be deferred to the forthcoming FAO/WHO Regional Food Standards Conference for Latin America.

#### Date and Place of Next Session

32. The Committee noted that the second session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America would be held not earlier than 1978 and that the exact time and place would be communicated at a later stage.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS  
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

ARGENTINA  
ARGENTINE

Luis M. Laurelli  
Primer Secretario  
Ambasciata de Argentina  
Piazza dell'Esquillino 2  
00185-Rome, Italy

BRAZIL  
BRESIL  
BRASIL

B. de Azevedo Brito  
Permanent Representative of  
Brazil to FAO  
Piazza Navona 14  
00186-Rome, Italy

J. Fleischman  
National Union of Industrialists  
Av. Rio Branco 142 - 26<sup>o</sup> andar  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

R. Resende  
Chemist, Confederação Nacional da  
Industria  
Avenida Nilo Peçanha 50 - Sala 2501  
20 000 Rio de Janeiro

CHILE  
CHILI

O.L. Echeverría  
Embajador de la República de Chile  
ante la FAO  
Embajada de Chile  
Via Panisperna 207  
00184-Rome, Italy

CUBA

M. Blanco  
Instituto Nacional de la Pesca  
Habana, Cuba

A. Castro Dominguez  
Ministerio de Salud Pública  
Calle 23 Esquina A.N.  
Habana, Cuba

FRANCE  
FRANCIA

G. Weill  
Secrétaire général du Comité  
Interministériel de l'Agriculture  
et de l'Alimentation  
42bis rue de Bourgogne  
75015 Paris, France

MEXICO  
MEXIQUE

Dr. E.R. Méndez  
Vice-President, Codex Alimentarius  
Commission  
P.O. Box 24-322  
Mexico D.F., Mexico

NETHERLANDS (Observer)  
PAYS-BAS (Observateur)  
PAISES BAJOS (Observador)

M.J.M. Osse  
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries  
Bezuidenhoutseweg 73  
Den Haag, Netherlands

SWITZERLAND (Observer)  
SUISSE (Observateur)  
SUIZA (Observador)

F. Jeanrichard  
Société d'Assistance technique  
pour Produits Nestlé, S.A.  
CH-1814 La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland

G. Huschke  
Mischelistr. 39  
CH-4153 Keinach, Switzerland

H.U. Pfister  
Head of Codex Section  
Federal Health Service  
Haslerstrasse 16  
CH-3008 Berne, Switzerland

URUGUAY

C. Brugnini  
Representante Alterno del  
Uruguay ante la FAO  
Embajada del Uruguay  
Via Ticino 7  
00198-Rome, Italy

A.M. Dovat  
Jefe del Departamento Técnico del  
Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay (LATU)  
Galicia 1133  
Montevideo, Uruguay

VENEZUELA

M. Cols Paez  
Jefe, División de Higiene de los  
Alimentos  
Centro Simón Bolívar  
Caracas, Venezuela

VENEZUELA (cont.)

V. Gonzales Marval  
Médico Adjunto de la Dirección  
de Salud Pública  
Ministerio de Sanidad y Asistencia  
Social  
Edificio Sur - Oficina 813  
Centro Simón Bolívar  
Caracas 101, Venezuela

R.J. Rivas Febres  
COVENIN  
Av. Boyaca  
Ed. Fundación La Salle, Piso 5  
Caracas, Venezuela

Dra. G. Villalba de Anderson  
Jefe, Sección de Productos Lácteos  
Instituto Nacional de Higiene  
Ciudad Universitaria  
Instituto Nacional de Higiene  
Caracas, Venezuela

FAO SECRETARIAT  
SECRETARIAT DE LA FAO  
SECRETARIA DE LA FAO

G.O. Kermode  
Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards  
Programme

FAO, 00100-Rome, Italy

L.G. Ladomery  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO, 00100-Rome, Italy

J.M. Hutchinson  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO, 00100-Rome, Italy

J.R. Lupien  
Nutrition Officer (Consumer Protection)  
Food Standards and Food Science Service  
Food Policy and Nutrition Division  
FAO, 00100-Rome, Italy

APPENDIX II

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE  
JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR  
LATIN AMERICA

1. Opening of the Conference and appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
2. Outline of the work and procedures of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, including their importance and implications for the developing countries.
3. Matters of interest arising from the Report of the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America.
4. Cooperation with the Latin American Economic Groups.
5. Consumer protection by food legislation (a basic food law and regulations) and a food control system (legislation, administration and enforcement).
6. A review of food legislation in the Latin American Region of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
7. Development and harmonization of food legislation in the Latin American Region of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, including the consideration of a Proposed Model Food Law for Latin America.
8. Infrastructures for National Food Control Services.
9. Information on existing and proposed projects on food control in the Latin American Region of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by FAO, WHO and other bodies.
10. Consideration of possible work priorities for the Region of Latin America.
  - (a) Consideration of foods of significance for the countries of the Latin American Region of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (production, imports, exports and food processing).
  - (b) Recommendations of the Conference concerning work on food standards, codes of practice, maximum residue limits for contaminants, and items of particular interest in the Region of Latin America.
11. Other business.
12. Adoption of the report.