

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Eleventh Session
Rome, 29 March - 9 April 1976

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION
OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Geneva, 17-19 June 1975

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee held its Twenty-First Session at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, from 17 to 19 June 1975. The Executive Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Dr. D.G. Chapman (Canada) and in the presence of the three Vice-Chairmen, Dr. E. Matthey (Switzerland), Dr. T. N'Doye (Senegal) and Dr. E. Méndez (Mexico). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present: for Africa, Ing. A. Amraoui from Tunisia; for Asia, Professor Y. Bunnag from Thailand; for Europe, Dr. D. Eckert from the Federal Republic of Germany; for North America, Dr. R.W. Weik from the United States of America; for South-West Pacific, Mr. W.C.K. Hammer from Australia. The Coordinator for Africa, Dr. R. Oteng (Ghana) and the Coordinator for Europe, Dr. H. Woidich (Austria) were also present.

2. The session was opened, on behalf of the Directors-General of WHO and FAO, with an address of welcome by Dr. A.S. Pavlov, Assistant Director-General, WHO, who indicated that WHO continued to be very interested in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and was intensifying its activities, within the limits of its resources, in those areas which have a direct bearing on matters concerning the protection of the health of the consumer.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. The Executive Committee adopted the provisional agenda with a slight re-arrangement of the order of items to be discussed. The Executive Committee noted that certain additional matters would be raised under the item "other business".

PROGRESS REPORT ON ACCEPTANCES OF RECOMMENDED CODEX STANDARDS AND ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

4. The Executive Committee had before it a tabular summary of acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards, on a standard by standard basis, as at 1 May 1975. Details of country replies on acceptances received since the Tenth Session of the Commission were set forth in document CX/EXEC 75/21/2 and ALINORM 76/6-Part I. The Executive Committee noted that since the last session of the Commission, Canada had given Acceptance with Specified Deviations to the Recommended Codex Standards for dextrose anhydrous, dextrose monohydrate, glucose syrup and dried glucose syrup (CAC/RS 7 to 10-1969). Canada had specified only one deviation, which concerned the level of lead, which Canada considered to be too high and the appropriate legislative procedures had been initiated in Canada to amend the existing Canadian standards for those products, in order to bring them into accordance with the Recommended Codex Standards. The Yemen Arab Republic had given Full Acceptance to the Recommended Codex Standards for special dietary foods with low sodium content, powdered dextrose (icing dextrose), concentrated apple juice and concentrated orange juice (CAC/RS 53/54-1971 and CAC/RS 63/64-1972).

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5. The Executive Committee was informed orally that Bahrain and Bolivia had given Target Acceptance to the most recently issued Recommended Codex Standards covering the following: canned mushrooms, canned asparagus, processed tomato concentrates, canned green peas, canned plums, canned raspberries, canned pears and canned strawberries. The Executive Committee noted, from document ALINORM 76/6-Part I, the detailed comparative study which had been made in Japan between the Recommended Codex Standards and the Japanese domestic standards. The Executive Committee also noted that the Government of New Zealand had instructed that New Zealand food laws should be reviewed with the object of implementing in New Zealand principles and detailed provisions appearing in the Recommended Codex Standards and of giving acceptances in due course.

6. As regards acceptances from countries which were members of economic groupings, the Secretariat indicated that there were to be some informal discussions with officials in the Commission of the European Economic Community on this subject. The Executive Committee was informed by the representative of the region of Europe that in the European Economic Community the question of whether notification of acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards might be made by the Commission of the EEC rather than by the member countries of the Community themselves was still under consideration. The Executive Committee agreed that there was no need to go further into this question until such time as the European Economic Community had come to a conclusion on this matter.

7. Concerning progress on acceptances of the Recommended Codex Standards, the Executive Committee recognized that member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission were at different stages of development as regards their food laws and regulations, and this, in itself, meant that countries would proceed at different paces in giving acceptances to the standards. The Executive Committee considered it important to stress that the success of the work of the Commission and the value of its standards and recommendations should not be judged solely on the basis of the number of government acceptances. Much value was attached by the regulatory agencies and the food industry to these standards, even when they were still in draft form.

8. In connection with the "drive" on acceptances, which had been given high priority by the Commission at its Tenth Session, the Executive Committee took note of the various forms which had been designed by the Secretariat to assist governments in making their declarations of acceptance.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

9. The Executive Committee noted that a further nine countries had become Members of the Commission since its Tenth Session. These were Dahomey, Guinea-Bissau, Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, Nepal, USSR, El Salvador and Western Samoa, bringing the current membership up to 114 countries.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ESTABLISHING A COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

10. The Commission, at its Tenth Session, had agreed in principle to the establishment of a Coordinating Committee for Asia, but had recognized that since this was a matter having administrative and financial implications for FAO and WHO, it would be necessary for the Directors-General of FAO and WHO to consider these implications. In accordance with Rule IX.9 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission had expressed the wish to have before it at its Eleventh Session a report from the Directors-General of FAO and WHO on the administrative and financial implications of establishing this Committee.

11. The Executive Committee noted from document CX/EXEC 75/21/5 that the Secretariat, in anticipation of the establishment of a Coordinating Committee for Asia at the Eleventh Session of the Commission, had included in the budgetary proposals for 1976/77 a provision of the order of \$6 000 to enable a session of the Coordinating Committee to be held in the biennium in Rome or Geneva in conjunction with the Twelfth Session of the Commission. If it were desired to hold the session in the region, it would be necessary, for reasons of economy, to have an offer from a Member Government in the region to host and pay for the session. This principle had been followed in connection with the Coordinating Committees for Europe, Africa and Latin America.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS CONFERENCE FOR ASIA

12. The Executive Committee noted that the Government of Thailand had generously offered to host this Conference in Bangkok and that it had been envisaged that it would be held in September 1975. There had, however, been some delay arising from protocol matters and this, coupled with the need to give Governments adequate notice of the Conference and sufficient time to make arrangements to be represented, in order to ensure the greatest possible attendance, had led the Secretariat to suggest that the date of the Conference be postponed to December 1975.

13. The representative of the region of Asia, Professor Y. Bunnag, Thailand, indicated that even though their financial year was from October to September, he thought there would be no difficulty in putting the Conference back to December 1975. He urged that the Memorandum of Responsibilities setting out, on the one hand, the responsibilities of the Government of Thailand and, on the other hand, the responsibilities of FAO/WHO, in connection with the Conference, be sent to the Government of Thailand as quickly as possible. The Secretariat indicated that this would be done as the Memorandum of Responsibilities had now been cleared in FAO and WHO. The Executive Committee was further informed that most of the working documents for the Conference had now been prepared and would be issued shortly. As had been agreed at the Tenth Session of the Commission, invitations to the Conference would be sent also to the members of the region of the South-West Pacific.

14. The Executive Committee noted with appreciation the statement of the representative of the South-West Pacific region, Mr. W.C.K. Hammer, Australia, that provision had been made in estimates for the financial year July 1975 to June 1976 for assistance of the order of \$6 000 to be made available by Australia in order to meet a shortfall in the financial arrangements for the Conference. The provision was subject to parliamentary approval, but the representative of the South-West Pacific region expressed optimism that approval would be forthcoming.

PROPOSED GATT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PREVENTING TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

15. As instructed by the Commission at its Tenth Session, the Secretariat had been in further communication with the GATT Secretariat, had drawn their attention to paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Report of the Commission's Tenth Session and to the discussions of the Executive Committee on this subject at its Nineteenth and Twentieth Sessions, and had also explained the Commission's interest in the Proposed Code. In particular, the GATT Secretariat had been requested, in accordance with the wishes of the Commission, to make copies of the Proposed Code available to the Secretariat for distribution to the members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for study and comment. It had been the intention that members of the Commission should arrange to have the provisions of the Proposed Code examined against the Codex Acceptance provisions in order to determine whether there might be any resultant conflict of obligations for governments. It had also been the intention that the Executive Committee would review this subject in the light of comments from governments, with a view to being able to report to the Eleventh Session of the Commission.

16. Following an exchange of correspondence between the Secretariat and the GATT Secretariat, circular letter CL 1975/10 was sent to all Codex Contact Points and Members of the Executive Committee. This circular letter embodied the reply of the GATT Secretariat to the Commission's request that the Proposed Code be made available to members of the Commission for comment and subsequent consideration by the Executive Committee and the Commission. The circular letter also contained the views of the Secretariat, in the light of the response of the GATT Secretariat.

17. Whilst the Executive Committee agreed with the views of the Secretariat, it stressed the need for the Secretariat to maintain the closest possible liaison with the GATT Secretariat and for the work in GATT on the Proposed Code and in other areas of possible interest to the Commission to be followed very closely. The Executive Committee considered that the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission should attend these GATT meetings in an observer capacity. The Secretariat undertook to look into this and to continue, as it had done up to now, its liaison with the GATT Secretariat, so as to be able to keep the Executive Committee and the Commission informed of developments. The Executive Committee also thought that delegations attending sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies should get in touch with their counterparts in other Ministries in their countries attending the GATT meetings on this subject, so that the representatives attending the GATT meetings might be more closely acquainted with the objectives and working procedures of the Commission in the matter of international food standards.

REPORT ON REVIEW OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME AND RELATED MATTERS

18. The Executive Committee had before it document PC 28/10 entitled "Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme - Codex Alimentarius (4.2) and Related Food Control and Other Activities (2.4.1.6)", which had been prepared by the Secretariat, at the request of the FAO Programme Committee, as a basis for an in-depth review of the Food Standards Programme by that Committee. The paper outlined the purposes of the Programme and the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The importance of both the health and economic aspects of this work was explained in the paper. The procedures of the Commission, the progress made in the elaboration of international food standards and in securing acceptances were summarized in the paper. Attention was directed in the paper to the Commission's wishes that increased emphasis be placed on securing acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards and that Codex work for the developing countries, more especially in the field of food legislation and food control, be intensified on a regional basis. Work requested of the Commission by other members of the UN family was also mentioned. The paper concluded by indicating possible new work, the staffing position, budgetary implications for 1976/77 and the long term outlook for the Programme.

19. The Executive Committee also had before it document CX/EXEC 75/21/3, which contained the relevant extract from the Report of the FAO Programme Committee (Twenty-Eighth Session, 14-27 May 1975). The Executive Committee noted from the Report of the FAO Programme Committee that the Programme Committee fully recognized the importance which Member Governments attached to the work of the Commission. The Programme Committee had also endorsed the importance of the need to assist developing countries to establish or improve their food legislation and to strengthen their food control services. The Programme Committee also had recognized the necessity of providing in the joint budget of the Programme for 1976/77 for two additional junior professional posts (P.2) and one secretarial post (G.3), to enable the Commission's programme of work to be carried out. The Programme Committee noted that, in reality, the effect of this staff increase would be to restore the staffing of the Joint Office of the Codex Secretariat to its earlier strength of 7 professional officers and 12 general service staff and to add one additional professional post. The Programme Committee had further noted that the proposed joint budget for 1976/77 had been transmitted to the Director-General of WHO by the Director-General of FAO, who had expressed the hope that the Director-General of WHO would support the budgetary proposals, in view of the particular importance which Member Governments of both Organizations attached to the Programme. The Executive Committee noted that it would have an opportunity of discussing the budgetary proposals under the item of its agenda dealing with finance of the Programme.

THE WHO FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMME

20. The Executive Committee also had before it document CX/EXEC 75/21/3 bis, which was concerned with the activities of the WHO Food Safety Programme. The Executive Committee was given an outline of the approaches used by WHO in developing basic information on food safety. Under information collection and distribution the role played by WHO was emphasized and progress in the work of the International Project in the Field of Food Irradiation and the WHO Environmental Health Criteria Programme was reported on. Reported on also was the International Conference on Ceramic Foodware Safety (Geneva, November 1974) convened by Rutgers University, with financial support from the International Lead Zinc Research Organization, and the Joint FAO/WHO Symposium on the Use of Anabolic Agents in Animal Production and its Public Health Aspects (Rome, March 1975). In regard to other approaches, the Executive Committee's attention was directed to the work of WHO in food safety evaluation, the elaboration of food standards and the preparation of guidance materials. It was recalled that many of these activities were known to the Executive Committee and were considered to be essential to the work of the Commission. In particular, reference was made to recent developments from studies of health hazards related to biological agents. The work on internationally acceptable methods for sampling and analysis and on limits for microbiological contaminants in foods had advanced, so that proposals could now be made for inclusion of detailed microbiological specifications in Codex Commodity Standards.

21. In reply to a question concerning the Conference on Ceramic Foodware Safety, it was stated that the Conference was an international one and that the report of the Conference would probably be a priced publication, but that WHO would enquire as to the availability of the report for distribution to Codex Contact Points. The Secretariat agreed to the distribution of the resolutions adopted by the Conference which were made available to the Members of the Executive Committee.

22. In response to an enquiry about the criteria document on mycotoxins, it was pointed out by the WHO Secretariat that the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) was interested in the carcinogenic aspects of these toxins and had recently carried out an epidemiological study. The Executive Committee thought that WHO should consider the possibility of distributing reports to include all toxicological considerations on these and other substances which are of public health relevance.

23. The representative of the region of Europe enquired as to the scope of the conference planned for 1977 in the European Region to review and appraise the organization and methodology of food hygiene laboratories. It was his opinion that such a conference should deal with chemical as well as biological aspects of food control. The WHO Secretariat indicated that the Conference would deal with the whole range of food contaminants which have a bearing on human health. Thus both biological and chemical agents would be considered, taking into account, in each case, their importance as health hazards for the consumer.

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME - FINANCE

24. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 75/21/4 on the above subject. So far as the current biennium (1974/75) was concerned, the Executive Committee noted that cost increases were expected to result in a shortfall estimated to be of the order of \$28,000 in 1975 and that, in accordance with the established cost sharing arrangement between the two Organizations, FAO would be requested to provide three quarters of the deficit and WHO one quarter. Assuming that this deficit would be met, it was expected that all commitments for the implementation of the Programme in 1975 would be executed.

25. As regards the 1976/77 biennium, the Executive Committee noted that the proposals for the joint budget, which had been approved by the Director-General of FAO and sent to the Director-General of WHO for approval, contained a programme increase of the order of \$160,000, which when apportioned between FAO and WHO in accordance with the joint cost sharing agreement, would result in an increase of \$120,000 for FAO and \$40,000 for WHO, in the biennium. The budgetary proposals did not include mandatory and cost increases, because of the fact that under existing inflationary conditions it was difficult to forecast with any degree of accuracy what the extent of such increases would be so far in advance of 1976/77. It had been estimated, however, in FAO that such increases might be of the order of 28%.

26. The Executive Committee noted that proposals concerning WHO's contribution to the joint budget for 1976 had been put before the recent World Health Assembly and that, on the basis of proposals which had not included any programme or mandatory cost increases, the World Health Assembly had approved a WHO contribution to the joint budget of the Programme at the level obtaining in the current biennium. It was explained to the Executive Committee by the representatives of WHO that given the existing problems of inflation and currency fluctuations, the Director-General of WHO had been obliged to keep budgetary increases to the minimum, consistent with WHO being able to execute its work programme and priorities. It was within the context of these constraints that the proposed increase in the WHO contribution to the Food Standards Programme was presently under consideration by the Director-General of WHO. The representatives of WHO thought, however, that there was a likelihood that WHO would be in a position to contribute its share (one quarter) of the mandatory and cost increases. The representatives of WHO suggested, regarding the proposed programme increase, that extra-budgetary voluntary contributions might be a way of dealing with this problem.

27. It was also explained to the Executive Committee that FAO faced similar problems, but that because of the importance which governments were known to attach to the Programme, the Director-General of FAO had decided that the Programme deserved continuing support, more especially as it had a priority rating in FAO. So far as WHO was concerned, the proposed programme increase was of the order of \$20,000 per annum; so far as FAO was concerned the proposed increase would be three times this

amount. If WHO could not see its way to match, in the agreed proportion, the proposed FAO contribution, FAO might be forced to reconsider its support and the consequences for the Programme in 1976/77 would be quite serious.

28. The Joint Office was presently under-staffed in relation to the programme of work which the Commission wished to have executed in 1976/77. This had been recognized by the Commission, at its Tenth Session, when it recommended that the Joint Office be strengthened to enable it to execute the 1976/77 programme of work of the Commission. This included increased Codex work at the regional level, in the interests of the developing countries, and increased efforts to secure further acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards. As a consequence of the multiplier effect in FAO of the increase of \$20,000 per annum proposed in the WHO contribution to the Programme, it would not be possible, in the event of this increase not being forthcoming, to avoid a significant cut-back in the Programme. It would, in fact, be necessary to submit to the Commission a set of options as to where the cuts must be applied.

29. Having regard to the comparatively small amount of money involved for WHO (\$20,000 per annum) and of the possible multiplier effect concerning FAO's contribution, it was the unanimous and strong view of the members of the Executive Committee, taking also into consideration that there was a very important health component in the Programme, that it would be a serious mistake to place the advancement of the Programme at risk for the sum mentioned above, which was trivial in relation to the overall budget of WHO. All the members of the Executive Committee urged strongly, therefore, that the Director-General of WHO make the proposed increase available to the Programme. The representatives of WHO assured the Executive Committee that the Director-General of WHO was fully appreciative of the importance of the technical work of the Commission and that he would give the Executive Committee's request the most sympathetic consideration possible in the circumstances.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA

30. The Executive Committee had before it a draft provisional agenda which had been drawn up by the Secretariat for the first session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America to be held immediately preceding the Eleventh Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee expressed its agreement with the selection of subjects for early consideration by the Coordinating Committee, but recommended that the substantive technical subjects might more adequately be considered at the Second Session of the Committee. In view of the heavy programme of work likely to fall upon the Secretariat at the time of the Commission and the need for Members of the Latin America Region to consider a number of procedural matters, it would be desirable to confine the business of the first session to these matters and to hold a two-day meeting at which the longer term programme of work of the Committee might be examined and priorities established. The Executive Committee noted with appreciation that the Government of Mexico would be offering at the first session of the Committee to host the second session in Mexico. The Secretariat was requested to revise the provisional agenda for the first session accordingly. It was agreed that the first session should be held 25-26 March 1976 in Rome.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

31. The Executive Committee had before it a draft provisional agenda and timetable prepared by the Secretariat. The Executive Committee recommended a re-arrangement in the order of certain items on the agenda. It was agreed that the basic paper on the Programme of Work of FAO and WHO in Food Standardization, Control, Additives, and Contaminants referred to in paragraph 49 should be taken immediately before the report on budget and finance. It was further agreed that items concerning the work of the Codex Committees on General Principles, Food Labelling, and Food Additives, as well as the Report of the Second Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa should precede the consideration of Codex Standards at Step 8. It was agreed that the Commission should be held from 29 March 1976 to 9 April 1976 in Rome.

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

32. The Executive Committee agreed with the proposal of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling that its next session should be held immediately preceding the Eleventh Session of the Commission. The Committee would need to consider the labelling provisions of a number of commodity standards to be submitted at Step 8 to the Commission, requiring the Committee's endorsement. The subject of date-marking was also to be considered further. The Executive Committee recommended that the Committee should meet 25-26

March 1976 in Rome, subject to the usual financial arrangements being made with the Canadian authorities.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ELABORATION OF A CODEX STANDARD FOR FRUCTOSE

33. As requested by the Tenth Session of the Commission the U.K. Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Sugars had prepared a progress report on the elaboration of a Codex Standard for Fructose. The U.K. Secretariat had proposed, in view of the nature of government comments received on the draft standard, that the procedure which had been followed in the case of the standard for powdered dextrose be repeated for fructose. The Executive Committee agreed that the draft standard should be placed before the Eleventh Session of the Commission at steps 4 and 5 together with the paper which had been prepared by the U.K. Secretariat (CX/EXEC 75/21/11).

REPORT OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE JOINT ECE/CODEX GROUP OF EXPERTS ON STANDARDIZATION OF FRUIT JUICES

34. The Executive Committee considered the request of the Group of Experts on Fruit Juices for guidance on how to deal with the several amendments which the Group of Experts was proposing to various Step 9 standards for fruit juices and nectars. The Executive Committee did not enter into any discussion on the amendments themselves, since it was on a matter of the procedure to be followed that its guidance had been sought. The Executive Committee agreed that all of the proposed amendments, both editorial and substantive, should be put before the Eleventh Session of the Commission.

35. As regards proposed amendments which were substantive, the Executive Committee noted that the same amendments had been included in a number of standards which the Group of Experts had submitted to the Eleventh Session of the Commission at Step 8. In these circumstances, the Executive Committee thought that the Commission, after having considered the standards concerned at Step 8, should determine whether the proposed amendments would need to go through the amendment procedure.

36. The Executive Committee in considering the matter of amendments to Step 9 standards considered that greater flexibility needed to be introduced into the amendment procedure to deal with amendments which might be considered as consequential amendments arising from the elaboration and adoption of standards for similar products at succeeding sessions. The Secretariat was requested to examine this matter with the Legal Advisers of FAO and WHO and propose suitable modifications in the amendment procedure for consideration by the next session of the Codex Committee on General Principles.

REPORTS OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE JOINT ECE/CODEX GROUP OF EXPERTS ON QUICK-FROZEN FOODS AND THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

37. The Executive Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Group of Experts on Quick-Frozen Foods, as endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, that the Step 9 standards for Quick-Frozen Peas and Quick Frozen Strawberries should, in the circumstances, be amended by the deletion, in the hygiene section of these standards, of the reference to the Code of Hygienic Practice for Quick-Frozen Fruits, Vegetables and their Juices and the substitution therefor of a reference to the General Principles of Food Hygiene.

THE ROLE OF CODEX COORDINATORS

38. At the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Conference for Africa and at the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa, there had been considerable discussion on what should be the role of the Coordinator for Africa. Subsequently there was a preliminary exchange of views on this subject at the Twentieth Session of the Executive Committee, which took the view that this was a matter which was not solely the concern of Africa, but should also be considered in the context of other regions. The Executive Committee had recognized that the arrangements which had been followed regarding the region of Europe might not necessarily be appropriate for Africa or other regions. The Executive Committee had, therefore, recommended that this subject should be discussed at its Twenty-First Session, in the light of a paper to be prepared by the Secretariat, which would deal with the role of Coordinators in general. This recommendation had been endorsed by the Commission at its Tenth Session.

39. The Executive Committee had before it, at its present session, document CX/EXEC 75/21/6 on the role of Codex Coordinators. The document outlined the role and functions of Coordinators historically and under the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In the case of the Coordinator for Europe, such expenses as there were, over the years, on travel of the Coordinator and secretarial assistance at times, had been borne by the authorities in the country of the Coordinator: no expenses had fallen on FAO/WHO. It was also pointed out in the document that, as in the case of other officers of the Commission, there were no emoluments or honoraria attaching to the position of Coordinator. It had never been envisaged that the expenses of Coordinators should be much more than marginal to the costs incurred by the authorities in the country of the Coordinator in hosting sessions of the Coordinating Committee away from the Headquarters of FAO or WHO.

40. Several members of the Coordinating Committee for Africa had envisaged a role for the Coordinator involving travel throughout the Continent and the maintenance of an office with secretarial assistance. Such a role would be "operational" in character and would involve substantial expense, which was not provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The work of the Commission was to develop recommendations which Member Governments were asked to accept and implement. The Commission's work was, therefore, recommendatory or advisory. It was not "operational" in the sense in which this term was normally understood: it did not operate technical assistance programmes, for example. Consequently, the work of the officers of the Commission was not "operational" either: if it were, provision would have been made in the Rules of Procedure of the Commission concerning the funding of such work. The paper further indicated that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission did not permit financial support to Coordinators along the lines contemplated by some of the Members of the Coordinating Committee for Africa. The paper concluded by suggesting that it would seem that the objectives sought to be attained by giving an operational function to Coordinators could also be achieved by making use of existing FAO, WHO, and UNEP facilities in Africa. There were FAO country representatives/senior agricultural and WHO resident representatives in almost every country in Africa, not to speak of UNDP representatives. There was an FAO Regional Office in Accra and in Cairo and a WHO Regional Office in Brazzaville and Alexandria.

41. The Coordinator for Africa recalled, as had been fully acknowledged in the Secretariat paper, that the problems of Africa were quite different from the problem of Europe in the food legislation and food control fields. When the question of financial assistance to enable the Coordinator to have an operational role had been suggested by several members of the Coordinating Committee for Africa, they had been thinking mainly of the item in the programme of work of the Coordinating Committee dealing with ways and means of improving food control infrastructure (food control services, laboratory facilities, training of personnel, etc.). There were some countries in Africa where hardly any food control facilities existed and the members of the Coordinating Committee felt that governments in the region would be motivated more effectively to devote more time and efforts to the problems in this field if the Coordinator for the region were to carry out visits to the various countries of the region to discuss these problems with the authorities concerned. The Coordinator also thought it would be desirable to envisage sub-regional groupings in connection with the work of the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinator noted that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission did not permit the provision of financial assistance along the lines contemplated by the Members of the Coordinating Committee and expressed the hope that some satisfactory alternative solution would be found.

42. The representative of the region of Africa, Ing. A. Amraoui (Tunisia) strongly supported the views expressed by the Coordinator. He stressed that a great deal needed to be done in Africa in the field of food legislation and food control and more especially as regards technical education and training. He considered it essential that means should be found of impressing upon governments the importance of resolving these problems. In this connection however, it would be necessary to identify these needs precisely. He thought that it might be possible to obtain assistance from international bodies such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (ASMO) which might be prepared to release an official to assist the Coordinator. An alternative might be for the governments of African countries to set up a common fund for this purpose. He thought it would be useful if the Secretariat could prepare a paper listing all relevant projects, on-going or planned for the future.

43. Dr. T. N'Doye also strongly supported the views expressed by the Coordinator and the representative of the region of Africa. He stated that the problems to be tackled were very serious and he thought that if funds could not be made available within the framework of the Food Standards Programme, it might be possible to obtain funds from extra-budgetary sources, as for example from the United Nations Environment Programme. He thought it essential that progress in these fields in Africa be promoted from within the region. He did not think that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission should be changed but he supported the need for a paper on the entire subject by the Secretariat. The Executive Committee fully supported the suggestion of enlisting the support of international organizations likely to be interested within the region of Africa and requested the Secretariat to make contact with them.

44. The Secretariat informed the members of the Executive Committee of the wide ranging activities in the field of food control and related matters which were presently underway with financial and other assistance provided by multi-lateral and bi-lateral donor agencies and countries. The Secretariat was making efforts to secure increased assistance in this area and considerable progress had already been made. An outline of ongoing and planned projects financed from extra budgetary sources was given by the Secretariat to the members of the Executive Committee. The members of the Executive Committee considered that details of these activities should be made more widely known and therefore instructed the Secretariat to prepare a paper setting out these activities.

45. The members of the Executive Committee were fully appreciative of the points made by the members of the Committee from the region of Africa. All the members of the Executive Committee agreed that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission should not be changed. The members of the Executive Committee agreed that the functions of the Coordinator would be essentially those set forth in document CX/EXEC 75/21/6, i.e. (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 Africa. They considered that the activities of both Organizations in the field of food control and details of activities underway with extra budgetary financial assistance should be included in an overall paper referred to in paragraph 49 of the report. It was agreed that the paper should also refer to international organizations in Africa and possibly in other regions which might be able to provide assistance in dealing with the problems mentioned above.

46. The Coordinator for Africa was of the opinion that given the short period of time elapsing between the Second Session of the Coordinating Committee in Accra in September 1975 and the Eleventh Session of the Commission in March - April 1976 and in view of the need to provide adequate time to countries in Africa to consider the results of the session, it would not be necessary to hold a session of the Coordinating Committee in conjunction with the Eleventh Session of the Commission.

FAO/WHO ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

47. The Executive Committee had before it a progress report (CX/EXEC 75/21/7) on developments concerning the implementation of Recommendations Nos. 78 and 82 of the UN Conference on the Human Environment. FAO and WHO, with financial assistance from UNEP, had completed Phase I of both Recommendations. Reports of the various expert consultations held in connection with these Recommendations had and would, in the near future, be sent to Codex Contact Points. Concerning Phase II of the project to implement Recommendation 78, the project proposal submitted by WHO to UNEP for initiation of the FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme was still awaiting approval of UNEP. Phase II of the project concerning Recommendation 82 to strengthen the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission had been approved by UNEP in respect of the expert consultations on food microbiology, food control, pesticides and reference methods of analysis and sampling for contaminants in food. The remaining parts of the project proposal concerning assistance to Regional Coordinating Committees was still under consideration by UNEP.

48. The Executive Committee noted that three other major projects prepared by FAO had been approved by UNEP. These projects would call for the participation of WHO on the health aspects and consultations were taking place between FAO and WHO on the

implementation of the projects. The projects concerned dealt with mycotoxins, food contaminant monitoring and control in East Africa and a training programme in the control of food contaminants. The timetable proposed for the three projects was thirty months commencing July 1975. FAO still had under consideration the work load implications for the Codex Secretariat and the staff of the Food Control and Consumer Protection Group and would not be in a position to sign contracts with UNEP until the position regarding the Codex Budget had been clarified with WHO and the position regarding the FAO regular budget for 1976/77 had likewise been clarified to the FAO Council and Conference.

49. The Executive Committee expressed concern about the additional ancillary and complementary work to that of the Commission falling upon the Secretariat. The Executive Committee emphasized that FAO and WHO should continue to give first priority to the programme of work of the Commission and only undertake the additional ancillary and complementary activities in the environment field provided adequate staffing and financial resources were forthcoming. In view of the expanding activities of the Commission, both world-wide and regional, the expanding work on food control, food additives and contaminants falling to the responsibility of the Secretariat, the Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive basic paper covering all the activities of FAO and WHO related to those of the Commission and also of the activities of the Commission itself for its next session. This document would need to be reviewed in light of the approved Codex budget for 1976/77 and should also be placed before the Eleventh Session of the Commission. The Executive Committee noted with appreciation the excellent paper which had been prepared by a consultant, Mr. L.M. Beacham (USA) on the scope and magnitude of work for the setting of international standards for contaminants and pollutants in foods. The Executive Committee noted that the proposals in this paper would be taken into account in the overall Secretariat paper referred to above to be considered by the Executive Committee at its next session. (See also paras 31, 45 and 50). The Executive Committee stressed that it was important that the Codex Alimentarius Commission should continue to be the responsible body for maintaining oversight on all ancillary and complementary Programme activities in the field of food standards, food control and food safety.

50. With respect to assistance to Member States concerning food control, the WHO representative pointed out that it was an area that both FAO and WHO were actively engaged in. There was agreement between the two Organizations to cooperate fully in this connection and a coordinator had been designated by each Organization to facilitate this task. He also pointed out that the WHO Food Safety Programme, as described in the document CX/EXEC 75/31/3 bis, had three major approaches. These involved the development at a global level of different types of "food safety information" for the use of national food control services. The other two approaches related to the assessment of specific regional and national needs and the assistance to Member States in the form of services, supplies, training, etc. at the request of Member States as country projects. The activities utilizing the last approach might be considered as relating to food control/hygiene/sanitation and were carried out by the six Regional Offices of WHO and WHO's field staff. A list of such activities had been prepared with the assistance of the Regional Offices. It was intended that these would be discussed shortly with the FAO Secretariat with a view to maximizing the benefits to the Member States from the limited resources of the two Organizations. The list would also be incorporated in the basic paper to be presented to the 22nd Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat, referred to in paragraph 49 of the report.

51. The WHO representative described the activities completed under Phase I of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme (JFCMP) and those planned for Phase II. The Programme was supported to a major extent by UNEP. It was indicated that the reports of visits to 13 countries together with working papers on methodology for chemical analysis and sampling plans had been reviewed at a meeting (October 1974, Rome), convened to identify the contaminants to be monitored and recommendations on sampling plans and methodology for the Programme. Selected chemical contaminants, methods for determination and suggested sampling considerations were recommended by the meeting. A second meeting on development of systems for processing, appraisal and storage of data for the JFCMP (March 1975, Geneva) recommended that a feasibility study to last for two years be initiated for DDT and DDT and metabolites and lead in milk and milk products, cereals and canned foods (lead only).

52. Under Phase II of the JFCMP, which was to be initiated pending the receipt of funds from UNEP, visits to some 8 to 10 developing countries to discuss ways and means to initiate or strengthen their food contamination monitoring activities, so as to involve them in the Programme at an early stage were envisaged, as well as the preparation of guides for establishing food contamination monitoring systems and for food consumption surveys. In addition, arrangements would be sought with those countries previously visited to submit data to the Programme.

53. In the planning of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme, due consideration had been given to the important role of biological contaminants as causative agents of food-borne disease. Although, in national programmes, monitoring of these contaminants normally represented an essential part of the work, the usefulness of monitoring biological agents within the JFCMP was, however, questionable. Considering that the level of biological contaminants in foods was closely related to the conditions of handling before and also after the sampling, the interpretation of the results might be difficult. The October 1974 meeting decided to restrict the scope of the Programme, at least in the initial phase, to include only Salmonellae and three parasitic species. The report gave the rationale why other biological contaminants, at least at this stage, were considered not suitable. At the meeting of experts in March this year, which discussed data handling, it was suggested that the JFCMP in its initial phase should concern itself only with assisting in the development of efficient systems for monitoring these contaminants on a national level and not to collect data as such. Further, it was suggested that the countries would provide the programme with summaries of results obtained in their ongoing monitoring activities. It was envisaged that, at a later stage, data collection of selected biological contaminants would be included in the Programme.

OTHER BUSINESS

SPECIFICATIONS OF IDENTITY AND PURITY FOR FOOD ADDITIVES

54. The Executive Committee noted that in accordance with the procedures agreed upon at the Commission's Tenth Session, the Codex Committee on Food Additives had at its Tenth Session considered specifications for anti-oxidants, developed by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. In spite of comments having been considered by the Expert Committee from governments and industry for over a two year period, the delegation of a Member of the Commission had proposed minor amendments to the Codex Committee on Food Additives and had persuaded the Committee to defer advancement of the specifications. It had been recommended that the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Expert Committee and the Codex Committee revise the specifications to incorporate the proposed amendments. These had been examined by the Secretariat and it was considered that if this practice were to be followed then the toxicological evaluation of the additives might require reconsideration. The cost and value of embarking on such an exercise in the light of the current financial situation was a matter of concern to the two Organizations and it was considered by them that the government should be advised that the amendments could not be accommodated. The Executive Committee agree that the Secretariat should approach the government concerned and explain the difficulties and why it would not be possible to accede to its request.

POST-MORTEM JUDGEMENT OF MEAT

55. In response to an enquiry made by the representative of the South-West Pacific Region concerning the present status of the work on a Code on Post-Mortem Judgement of Slaughter Animals, the Executive Committee was informed that a chapter on this subject had been included in the recent FAO publication "Manual on standards of veterinary services, Meat Hygiene and meat inspection, Post-mortem Judgement of Slaughter Animals and Establishment of Specific Disease-free Zones" (Rome, 1974). The text was based on an analysis of replies to a questionnaire which had been presented to the Third Session of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene in London 1974. As a follow-up to recommendations of this session, the technical divisions concerned of FAO and WHO were planning to convene a meeting of experts to consider the approach to the subject as well as the elaboration of a draft code.

CEREALS

56. The Executive Committee enquired about progress made to-date concerning the preparation of the basic document on cereals and tubers to be considered by the Eleventh Session of the Commission. A questionnaire had been sent to Codex Contact Points and numerous replies had been received. The paper would be available to Members of the Commission by early December. The Executive Committee noted with appreciation that should the Commission decide to proceed with the elaboration of standards for cereals and to establish a Codex Committee for this purpose, the Government of Mexico would be willing to host and chair the Committee.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

57. The Executive Committee noted that the Coordinator for Europe with the Chairman of the Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters proposed to convene a small informal meeting to reexamine the controversial aspects of the draft standard for natural mineral waters with a view to presenting a revised text to the Coordinating Committee for Europe.

COMMUNICATIONS

58. Vice-Chairman Dr. Méndez expressed the view that it would be desirable for there to be greater contact by correspondence among the Member of the Executive Committee and the Commission's Secretariat. Major documents and Circular Letters were sent to the Members of the Executive Committee in their individual capacity as well as to their National Codex Contact Points. The Secretariat was requested to keep Members of the Executive Committee informed as far as possible on major policy matters within FAO and WHO having significance for the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

WORKING PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES

59. The Executive Committee noted that at the recent session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling there had been discussion on the question of whether certain texts before the Committee, which were described as guidelines, should be advanced through the Steps procedure or not. The Executive Committee was informed that these texts were for the guidance of Codex Commodity Committees. The Executive Committee took no position on the matter, as it noted that this question would come up for discussion at the next session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling which would be held shortly before the Eleventh Session of the Commission.

DATE, PLACE AND BUSINESS OF NEXT SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

60. The Executive Committee agreed to hold its Twenty-Second Session 23-24 March 1976, in Rome. The principal items to be considered at the next session would be the review of the overall workload and programme priorities to be followed by the Secretariat in relation to the Regular Budget approved for 1976/77 and extra budgetary sources of funds. The basic paper referred to in paragraphs 31, 45, 49 and 50 would constitute the working document for this purpose. In addition, the Executive Committee would examine what should be the role of national secretariats of Codex Committees hosted by Member Governments. The Secretariat was requested to develop draft guidelines on this for consideration by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee noted the request of the Twelfth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene that its terms of reference be clarified in respect of Codes of Hygienic Practice and Microbiological Methodology. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a draft revision of the terms of reference to cover these aspects of the Committee's work for consideration by the Executive Committee.

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