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ALINORM 65/9  
October 1965

JOINT FAO/WHO PROGRAM ON FOOD STANDARDS  
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
Third Session, Rome, 19-29 October 1965

FIRST MEETING OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
Paris, 4-8 October 1965  
REPORT

1. The Codex Committee on General Principles held its First Meeting 4th to 8th October 1965 in Paris under the Chairmanship of Mr. Souverain. 54 delegates and observers were present representing 17 countries and 6 International Organizations. The meeting was convened by the Government of France and opened by Professor M. Cépède. Mr. C. Toubeau acted as Secretary to the Meeting.

2. The Committee's terms of reference

At the Second Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission the following terms of reference were established for the Codex Committee on General Principles. The Committee should examine and make recommendations to the Commission on:

- (a) the general principles of the Codex Alimentarius including the purpose and scope of the Codex;
- (b) the nature and type of standards to be included;
- (c) the definitions and terminology to be employed in the Codex Alimentarius, and
- (d) other matters contained in paragraphs 49-51 and 52 of the Report of the Second Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

3. Plan of work

The following plan of work was adopted on a proposal of the delegation of the United Kingdom:

- I. General principles of the Codex Alimentarius
  - (1) Purpose of the Codex Alimentarius
  - (2) Scope of the Codex Alimentarius
  - (3) Nature of Codex Standards
  - (4) Relations with other International Organizations
- II. General principles of Food Legislation
  - (1) Definition
  - (2) Other matters
- III. Legal Scope of the Codex Alimentarius

4. General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Codex Alimentarius Commission the texts of the purpose and scope of the Codex, the nature of Codex standards and the methods of acceptance, which are attached as Appendix I to this document.

The Committee concluded that a single type of standard would be suitable for the future work of the Commission and agreed that this single Codex standard should replace "trading" and "minimum platform" standards. The Committee recognized that Codex standards might be elaborated and accepted, according to circumstances, on a world-wide, regional or group-of-country basis.

5. Relations with international organizations

The Committee discussed the relations which should exist among the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other international organizations. In order to achieve the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius it was considered necessary for the Codex Alimentarius Commission to initiate, simplify and coordinate work on international food standards by mutual cooperation with other bodies working in this field without any design to interfere within the proper jurisdiction of such bodies.

6. Methods of Analysis and Sampling

The German delegation informed the meeting that the Committee on Methods of Analysis considered sampling to come within its terms of reference. This was approved of by all delegates and it was decided to recommend to the Commission the widening of the terms of reference as necessary and to rename the committee "Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling".

7. Definitions of Terms in the Codex Alimentarius

It was agreed that governments should be asked to comment on the words that should be defined for the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius and what these definitions should be. A small working group would study these government comments and the summary of replies to a questionnaire on this subject and would submit its report to the second meeting of the Committee if the Commission were to recommend such a further meeting.

8. Definition of Food Legislation Terms

The above mentioned meeting of the Codex Committee could also take into account the full summary of replies to the questionnaire on national food legislation which was being prepared by the Legislation Research Branch of FAO with the aim of considering what general principles of food legislation should be inserted in the Codex Alimentarius.

9. International co-operation in food inspection

It was agreed that further consideration should be given to the question of cooperation between governments on the proper implementation of the Codex and that government comments should be invited on this subject.

APPENDIX I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

Purpose of the Codex Alimentarius

1. The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted food standards presented in a uniform manner. These food standards aim at protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. Their publication is intended to guide and promote the elaboration and establishment of definitions and requirements for foods, to assist in their harmonization and in so doing to facilitate international trade.

Scope of the Codex Alimentarius

2. The Codex Alimentarius is to include standards for all the principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, for distribution to the consumer. Materials for further processing into foods should be included to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius as defined. The Codex Alimentarius is to include provisions in respect of food hygiene, food additives, pesticide residues, contaminants, labelling and presentation, methods of analysis and sampling.

Nature of Codex Standards

3. Codex Standards contain requirements for food aimed at ensuring for the consumer a sound, wholesome food product free from adulteration, correctly labelled and presented. In particular a Codex Standard for a given food product lays down the special requirements for that product, it being understood that the general provisions contained in the Codex Alimentarius shall apply except to the extent otherwise expressly provided for in a specific standard.

A Codex Standard should, therefore, for any food or foods:

- (1) incorporate by reference the applicable hygiene, labelling, methods of analysis and other general provisions adopted by the Commission, and
- (2) specify in whole or in part the following criteria, as appropriate:

- (a) Product designation, definition and composition.- These should describe and define the food (including its scientific name when necessary) and cover compositional requirements which may include quality criteria.
- (b) Hygiene requirements.- These should include such factors as specific sanitary and other protective measures and safeguards to assure a sound, wholesome, and marketable product.
- (c) Weight and measure requirements, such as fill of container, weight, measure or count of units based on an appropriate method or criterium.

- (d) Labelling requirements.- These should include specific requirements for labelling and presentation.
- (e) Sampling, testing and analytical methods.- These should cover specific sampling, testing and analytical procedures.

Acceptance of Codex Standards

4. A Codex Standard so defined may be accepted by a country - in respect of trade and distribution of the food within its territory - in its entirety, or accepted with a declaration of more stringent requirements, or accepted as a target which will be put into effect after a stated number of years. Acceptance in its entirety or target acceptance would imply an undertaking by the importing country not to hinder within its territorial jurisdiction the distribution of food which conforms to the standard by any legal provisions relating to the health of the consumer or to other food standard matters.