

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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ORGANIZATION



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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

**Twenty-sixth Session
Rome, Italy, 30 June - 5 July 2003**

**REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

*Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
9-13 December 2002*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions of the Thirteenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean are as follows:

Matters for consideration by the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

The Committee:

- Agreed to nominate **Argentina** for appointment as Regional Coordinator by the 26th Session of the Commission (para. 118).

Other matters of interest to the Commission:

The Committee:

- Welcomed the idea of the establishment of a *FAO/WHO Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries in Codex Standard-Setting Procedures* and noted that primary objective of such fund was to enhance the participation of developing countries in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies whereas capacity building activities should not be covered by the Trust Fund but carried out in parallel by FAO and WHO on their own funds (paras. 9-14).
- Recognized that an early risk assessment of the *lactoperoxidase system for the preservation of raw milk* should be undertaken by JECFA to ensure an updated scientific basis to evaluate its safety while noting that in tropical countries this system was used in accordance with the Codex Guidelines for the Preservation of Raw Milk by the Lactoperoxidase System (paras. 15-16).
- Stated its satisfaction with the report of the *Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards* and noted that the proposals in the Evaluation need to be viewed holistically as they represented a substantial shift in the way of current Codex work (paras. 19-23).
- Noted *Other Matters of Interest from FAO and WHO* with particular regard to the steps to be undertaken to strengthen scientific advice to Codex and governments and the establishment of JEMRA at the same level as JECFA and JMPR (paras. 24-28).
- Expressed its opinion on several activities included in the *Draft Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007* on Objectives related to Promoting Sound Regulatory Framework (paras. 33-36), Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis, (paras. 37-42), Promoting Linkages with Codex and Other Multilateral Regulatory Instruments and Conventions (paras. 43-46), Enhance Capacity to Respond Effectively and Expediently to New Issues, Concerns and Developments in the Food Sector (para. 47), Promoting Maximum Membership and Participation (paras. 48-50) and Promoting Maximum Application of Codex Standards (paras. 51-52).
- Expressed its views concerning the *"Traceability/Product Tracing"* as a risk management option and for other purposes and noted that it would be premature to consider the development of general guidelines or other texts for the application of traceability/product tracing for food safety risk management until there was a better understanding of the issues involved, especially terminology, whereas specific recommendations for risk management purposes might continue on a case-by-case basis in the appropriate Codex Committees (paras. 53-63).
- Noted the activities on capacity building reported under *FAO and WHO Capacity Building activities for Food Standards and Regulations* (paras. 64-75).
- Agreed to continue to work on *Food Safety in Tourist Zones* and requested the delegations of Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic with the assistance of INPPAZ to prepare a new proposal for consideration at its next session (paras. 76-82).
- Took note of the progress made on *food control and food safety issues including Codex standards* in the Region (paras. 83-96).
- Exchanged information on *consumer participation in Codex work* in the Region (paras. 97-111).
- Unanimously adopted the *Strategic Plan for the CCLAC* (paras. 112-117).
- Agreed to prepare a background document on Brazilian nuts (*Bertholletia excelsa* Humb. et Bonpl.) for discussion at the relevant Codex Committees and report to the next session of the CCLAC on the outcome (para. 119).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The thirteenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santo Domingo, from 9 to 13 December 2002, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Dominican Republic, under the Chairmanship of Dr Joaquín Rodríguez, Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Session was attended by delegates from 19 member countries, 1 observer country and 7 international organizations. A list of participants is provided in Appendix I of this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Coordinator of the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean Dr Joaquín Rodríguez welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening the relations and communication within the countries of the Region in the field of food safety and quality. In this connection, he pointed out that international standards were a means of protecting consumer health, ensuring fair and non-discriminatory practices in food trade in order to avoid unjustified restriction to the trade of the region and the word.

3. The President of the Commission of Codex Alimentarius, Dr Tom Billy welcomed the very high quality of work and dynamism of the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean under the leadership of its Chairperson. He pointed out that, following 40 years' of Codex work, the parent organizations (FAO and WHO) had taken the initiative to evaluate the Commission's work, and its methods of work, and to look at opportunities for improvement. The task had been recently completed, with 42 recommendations to be considered at the extraordinary meeting Session of the Commission scheduled for February 2003. He also drew attention on the creation of the Trust Fund to support developing countries participation in Codex Standard-Setting Procedures.

4. The Representative of WHO/PAHO, Dr Socorro Gross pointed out the importance of joint FAO-WHO programs to reduce food born diseases prevalence, having as the ultimate objective the improvement of the welfare and well-being of the population in the region. She also underlined the great importance of food safety for the economy of these countries, recalling that food-born epidemics have strong negative effects on food exports and tourist industry of the region. She stressed the importance of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to elaborate international food standards and the responsibility of all the stakeholders to be involved actively and to participate to the elaboration of these standards.

5. The Representative of FAO in the Dominican Republic Ing. Roberto F. Arias Milla, drew attention on the importance of Codex standards and the work of the Committee in the Region in the frame of the WTO agreements, knowing that Codex standards are consistent with SPS and TBT agreement. He emphasized the need to set up effective control systems and update national legislation in consistence with Codex standards to ensure that food meets the requirements for consumption and exportation.

6. The Session was officially opened by the State Secretary of Agriculture on behalf of the President of Dominican Republic, Ing. Hipólito Mejía, in presence of the State Secretary of Health.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

7. The Coordinating Committee agreed to discuss the question of standards for the Brazil Nuts under Item 13 (Other Business) as proposed by the delegation of Bolivia, and with this modification adopted the Provisional Agenda as the agenda for the session.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 24TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND THE 49TH AND 50TH SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 2)²

8. The Coordinating Committee noted matters arising from the 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) including those matters coming from the most recent 49th and 50th Sessions of its Executive Committee. The Coordinating Committee was informed that the paper was relevant to other specific agenda items under consideration at the current meeting. In particular, the following matters were highlighted:

¹ CX/LAC 02/1

² CX/LAC 02/2 and comments from Consumers International (CRD 1).

TRUST FUND FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN CODEX STANDARD-SETTING PROCEDURES

9. The Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) gave a summary of the discussion held at the 50th Session of the Executive Committee in relation to this matter. In addition, he informed that the Terms of Reference of the FAO/WHO Consultative Group, which would give guidance to the project, had been approved by both Organizations. A WHO consultant had explored potential sources of financing for the Trust Fund. These sources included both governments and private sector. As a result, a fund raising strategy had been prepared which would be used in the establishment of the Trust Fund. He also informed that the relevant guidelines of FAO and WHO for cooperation with the private sector had been compared.

10. The Coordinating Committee welcomed the idea of the establishment of a FAO/WHO Trust Fund. However, a number of delegations stressed that the primary objective of such fund was to enhance the participation of developing countries in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies whereas capacity building activities should not be covered by the Trust Fund but carried out in parallel by FAO and WHO on their own funds. Other delegations were of the opinion that the Trust Fund should also be used in strengthening capacity building activities in relation to food standards and regulations.

11. Several delegations shared the view that, although guidance from the parent organizations for the selection of government officials in national delegations to Codex meetings was desirable, the ultimate decision as to designation of national delegates should rest with the government concerned.

12. The Observer from Consumers International pointed out that enhancement of participation in Codex work should also focus on public participation in developing national positions for Codex from developing countries and not only on participation of government officials at international Codex meetings. He therefore proposed the addition of a fourth objective to the "Goal and Objectives of the Project" namely "*help Project beneficiaries strengthen participation of non-governmental actors in the elaboration of national positions for Codex meetings*".

13. In response to the concern expressed on the prioritization of the use of the Trust Fund for strengthening participation of developing countries to Codex meetings, the Representative of WHO stated that the primary goal of the Trust Fund was to enhance participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in Codex work. In parallel, FAO and WHO would continue to strengthen their capacity building activities in the area of food safety. In this regard, he also referred to the Standard and Trade Development Facility (STDF) aimed at offering a platform for coordination of capacity building activities of the World Bank, WTO, FAO, WHO and OIE among other agencies in the area of food safety. As regard selection of participants, he stated that the ultimately choice of qualified delegates was the prerogative of governments.

14. As regards the status of the work on the development of the Trust Fund, the Representative of WHO informed that in mid December 2002 FAO and WHO would meet at FAO Headquarters in Rome to elaborate sets of criteria to operationalize the Trust Fund. These criteria related both to the fund raising aspects as well as to the selection of beneficiaries. These criteria would serve for the establishment of a Trust Fund that was independent, accountable, flexible, rapid and responsive. The outcome of this meeting would be included in a progress report on the Trust Fund for consideration by the Extraordinary Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in February 2003.

USE OF LACTOPEROXIDASE SYSTEM IN THE PRESERVATION OF RAW MILK

15. Several delegations opposed to the use of the lactoperoxidase system as this practice could be avoided by applying good agricultural, handling and manufacturing practices. In addition, they stressed that in their countries they did not use the lactoperoxidase system which was even banned by national legislation. However, it was recognized that in some countries, especially tropical ones, this system was used in accordance with Codex guidelines. It was also recognized that, in any case, an early risk assessment of the lactoperoxidase system should be undertaken by JECFA to ensure an updated scientific basis to evaluate its safety.

16. The delegation of Cuba informed the Coordinating Committee that this system was widely used in its country and agreed that a risk assessment on the safety of the lactoperoxidase system should be carried out by JECFA as early as possible.

OTHER MATTERS

17. The delegation of Chile noted that there were matters that the Coordinating Committee might wish to discuss in greater detail, such as: the question on the annual meetings of the Commission and the proposal to arrange the same for regional coordinating committee meetings; the proposal of voting versus consensus; the *proposed draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis intended for Governments* and the application of the “precaution” in this framework; the membership of regional integration organizations in the Codex Alimentarius Commission, account being taken of the economic market groups existing in the Region, etc.

18. In regard to the matter of the membership of regional economic integration organizations in the Commission, the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission informed the Coordinating Committee that the FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters had examined the proposal presented by the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) on this issue. In this regard, the FAO Committee had indicated that the proposal was consistent with the FAO Constitution and therefore, there was no legal impediment for the Commission to adopt the proposed amendment to the Procedural Manual in this respect.

EVALUATION OF CODEX AND THE OTHER FAO AND WHO FOOD STANDARDS WORK (Agenda Item 3)³

19. The evaluation was introduced by Mr. Markie of the FAO Evaluation Service. He summarized the arrangements for the evaluation and the findings. The evaluation had been conducted by an independent evaluation team, supported by an independent expert panel. It had been managed by the offices responsible for evaluation in FAO and WHO and not by the concerned technical units or the Codex Secretariat. A highly consultative process had been followed through extensive questionnaires, visits to 24 countries and the European Commission and discussions with a large number of partners and the Executive Committee of Codex. The report had been issued on Friday 6 December in Arabic, English, French and Spanish (Chinese and Russian would follow shortly). At the meeting itself, the executive summary had been distributed in hard copy and the full report on CD ROM.

20. This was the first of the Regional Coordination Committees to meet after the report was released and there had not been time for members to study it. The Committee thus, restricted itself to an exchange of preliminary views on the findings and recommendations and took the opportunity to gain clarification on issues in the report.

21. Members supported the priorities identified by the evaluation for Codex, which clearly put health issues first (Recommendation 3). The delegation of Brazil, supported by several other delegations, expressed satisfaction on several issues relating to Codex management that were set out in the recommendations of the Evaluation. However, these delegations expressed their concern at the inclusion of the “Informational labelling relating to non-health and non-safety issues” among the areas of priority work, even as the least priority. They stressed that the evaluation had itself noted, the difficulty Codex had in making progress in the area of information labelling and that this was not always an appropriate area for international standards that would be referenced for trade. They thus, felt that Codex should exclude work in this area. The delegation of Uruguay noted that information labelling had two aspects: one that related to prevention of fraud which should be included and that related to religious and cultural aspects which should be excluded. The Observer from Consumers’ International emphasized, on the other hand, the importance his organization attached to such labelling. Mr. Markie referred members to the wider discussion of this aspect in the evaluation report, noting that Codex would clearly reach its own conclusions on priorities. However, it should be noted that information labelling included such basic data as species for primary commodities and content specification for manufactured products.

22. Members emphasized the importance of increasing developing country participation in Codex and several noted that Codex would need to ensure new measures to reinforce genuine participation of developing countries (these included more between session work; the use of facilitators to consult with members and help develop standards; and tighter management to ensure more rapid development of standards). While viewed positively, the introduction of the concept of co-chairs and co-hosting of committees between developed and developing countries would need to be implemented in a way that did not place excessive burdens on resource poor countries or make it more difficult for them to attend meetings (which could be the case when these were held in developing countries). Consumers’ International emphasized the importance of consumer participation in Codex.

³ CX/LAC 02/3; CX/LAC 02/3-Add.1; Un-numbered Conference Room Document containing the Executive Summary of the Report of the Evaluation.

23. In conclusion, the Committee warmly welcomed the evaluation report, applauding the consultative process that had been followed and the rigour of the evaluation analysis. It was noted that the proposals in the evaluation would need to be viewed holistically as they represented a substantial shift in ways of work and could not be viewed in isolation, through the optic of current practice. The evaluation had come at a critical time in determining an increasingly pivotal role for Codex and in general the recommendations were very pertinent to Codex's future. Following discussion at the Special Session of the Commission in February, early action would be needed to introduce institutional and procedural changes and incorporate actions and activities in the Codex Medium-Term Plan.

OTHERS MATTERS OF INTEREST FROM FAO AND WHO (Agenda Item 4)⁴

24. The Committee noted matters of interest coming from both Organizations. In response to a request for clarification on the next steps to be undertaken to strengthen scientific advice to Codex and governments, the Representative of WHO reminded the Committee that the 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission had asked FAO and WHO to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies and to develop recommendations on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission. This consultation had been postponed pending the outcome of the Codex Evaluation.

25. In this regard, the Representative of WHO indicated that, based on the findings of the Evaluation relating to risk assessment, FAO and WHO would first undertake a consultancy study on expert advice and risk assessment followed by the expert consultation as requested by the Commission. The consultancy study and the expert consultation would cover issues like selection of experts, presence of observers in expert meetings, the primary process of risk assessment as well as specific recommendations from Codex such as the establishment of a FAO/WHO Scientific Committee and a Joint Coordinator, the establishment of a coherent structure for assessing risks arising from the presence of chemicals as well as chemical and microbiological contaminants in foods or related to genetically modified foods. As a result, the status of all the risk assessment bodies was being reviewed.

26. The delegation of Chile commented on the process that should be followed for the formal approval of JEMRA so that it could have the same status as JMPR.

27. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that the Organization looked positively at these developments to establish JEMRA at the same level as JECFA and JMPR.

28. The Committee recalled that at its last session, it agreed that the document prepared by Brazil and INPPAZ on *Guidelines for the Obtaining of Data of Interest for Microbiological Risk Assessment in Foods* be presented to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for consideration. In this respect, the delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that the document was presented at the last Session of the CCFH. This Committee considered that the paper was relevant for all countries and not only for developing countries and agreed to forward it to FAO and WHO for consideration in the framework of an expert consultation on exposure assessment to microbiological hazards in foods. The delegation of Brazil also informed that it had requested that the document be returned for discussion in the CCFH.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 2003-2007 (Agenda Item 5)⁵

29. The Coordinating Committee was informed that the process of developing the Codex Medium-Term Plan for 2003-2007 had begun shortly after the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1999, when the current Medium-Term Plan had been adopted. In the development of the new Medium-Term Plan, the Executive Committee at its 47th Session had proposed a new, structured approach of a Strategic Vision Statement, a Strategic Framework and a detailed Medium-Term Plan based on this Framework. The Strategic Vision Statement and the Strategic Framework were adopted by the 24th Session of the Commission in 2001. Subsequently, a revised Medium-Term Plan was circulated to Member governments for comment and considered by the Executive Committee at its 50th Session, June 2002. The Executive Committee then refereed the revised Medium-Term Plan to all Regional Coordinating Committees for further inputs at the regional level, with a view to submitting a final Plan for adoption by the Commission in June/July 2003. The delegation of Brazil noted that it had responded to the Circular Letter of the Executive Committee and had the opportunity to express its views as Regional Representative for the region of Latin America and the Caribbean at the last session of the CCEXEC. These views were recorded in the working document under consideration.

⁴ CX/LAC 02/4.

⁵ CX/LAC 02/5.

30. In introducing the document, the Secretariat noted that the FAO/WHO Evaluation of Codex would lead to a number of further changes to the Medium-Term Plan, in particular to incorporate new activities flowing on from the Evaluation and the modification of other activities.

31. The Coordinating Committee examined the Medium-Term Plan in detail and made the following observations:

GENERAL ISSUES

32. The Coordinating Committee stressed the need for strong coherence with the recommendations of the Codex Evaluation, depending on the Commission's consideration of these recommendations at its Special Session in February 2003.

OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTING SOUND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

33. In relation to Activities 4 (Terms of Reference of General Subject Committees) and 18 (Review of Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities), the Coordinating Committee was of the view that it would be extremely important for these activities to be coherent with the recommendations of the Evaluation.

34. In regard to Activity 22 (Tracing of food products), the Coordinating Committee expressed its concern that the proposal to establish international principles or guidelines was premature (See also Agenda Item 6) and that the first step should be to review the need for such work within Codex. Work on the establishment of guidelines should only be started on the outcome of such a review, and the Coordinating Committee recommended that the activity and the proposed output should be reworded accordingly. The delegation of Argentina questioned the use of the expression "at various links in the food chain", stating that developments in other Codex Committees had indicated that such a comprehensive approach may not be required. The Coordinating Committee noted that consideration of this matter had already been initiated in several other Codex Committees, notably the Committee on General Principles (CCGP) and the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). The Observer from Consumers International stated that traceability/product tracing should be studied as a means of ensuring fulfillment of legitimate objectives.

35. The Coordinating Committee expressed its strong concern that the wording of Activity 25 (Foods derived from biotechnology) was unclear and too wide in its scope. Some Delegations were of the opinion that there was no sound scientific basis for undertaking such work.

36. On Activity 27 (Guidelines on the judgment of equivalence), the Coordinating Committee questioned the reference to essential quality requirements, and expressed concern that many of the TBT-related matters in Codex that fell within the context of the Commission's mandate to "ensure fair practices in the food trade" were not sufficiently well defined to begin work in this area.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTING WIDEST AND CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES AND RISK ANALYSIS

37. In relation to Activity 9 (Codex Action Plan on Risk Analysis), the Observer from Consumers International stated that the activity should envisage the development of a risk assessment policy.

38. In relation to Activity 6 (Principles and Guidelines for pre-harvest and post-harvest measures), the Secretariat noted that the Activity was intended to cover systematic texts for good agricultural, manufacturing and handling practices, to ensure coverage from farm to table. The delegation of Argentina questioned the expression "safe production and processing technologies" in this Activity.

39. In relation to Activity 11 (MRLs for products of interest to developing countries), it was pointed out that this Activity was meant to extend the coverage of Codex MRLs to include crop and animal products grown under tropical conditions and other products of interest to developing countries.

40. The Coordinating Committee was very supportive of Activity 20 (Use of global data for dietary intake) and stressed that such data should take into account regional dietary patterns and be developed from data generated through regional or national studies. The Coordinating Committee questioned the use of the phrase "and other important nutritional parameters".

41. The Coordinating Committee also supported the use of a regional approach in the development of Activity 33 (Guidelines and recommendations for management of microbiological risks). The delegation of Uruguay questioned the use of "other available information" in developing such guidelines.

42. The delegations of Costa Rica and Uruguay expressed their strong concern that Activity 1 (Guidelines on risk communication) would duplicate the work underway in the CCGP on the Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis. In relation to the position taken by the region of Latin America and the Caribbean at the last CCEXEC, the delegation of Argentina requested clarification of the term "other interested parties". The Secretariat pointed out that the Activity was intended to provide more detailed guidance on how to apply the brief statements of principle contained in the CCGP text and that "other interested parties" referred to producers, industry, etc.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTING LINKAGES WITH CODEX AND OTHER MULTILATERAL REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

43. Some delegations expressed concern at the concept of the development of joint standards with other standards-setting bodies (Activity 12), and stated that in any case this matter was under active consideration by the CCGP. The delegation of Chile, referring to the discussions in the Executive Committee, stated that the Activity would only be retained if the CCGP did not complete its work by next year.

44. The Coordinating Committee was of the opinion that the wording of Activity 12 was too open and that the development of texts in cooperation with other bodies should be clearly be confined to bodies whose work was related to the work of Codex. This same consideration was raised under Activities 32 and 8.

45. The delegation of Chile pointed out that there needed to be adequate coordination with other international standards-setting bodies working in related fields so that there would be synergy and that voids would not occur that might be filled by other parties. Although Codex should concentrate on food safety related standards, it could work jointly with other bodies on TBT-related and biosafety issues with appropriate bodies. The delegation of Uruguay agreed with this approach, but reiterated that such work must be closely related to Codex matters.

46. The Coordinating Committee welcomed Activity 34 (Cooperation with OIE) but was of the opinion that the wording of the Activity was too broad and could introduce matters not related to Codex work, such as animal welfare.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE CAPACITY TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY TO NEW ISSUES, CONCERNS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FOOD SECTOR

47. The Coordinating Committee expressed its concern over the time limit implied in Activity 3 (Revision of the Elaboration Procedures) especially in view of the greater involvement of developing countries in the elaboration process. It also questioned the specific reference to internet conferencing which would put some countries at a disadvantage. The Coordinating Committee noted that this Activity should be reformulated to take into account the recommendations of the Evaluation.

OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTING MAXIMUM MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

48. In relation to Activity 38 (Working groups and drafting groups), the delegation of Uruguay stated that such groups, although they accelerated the work, were discriminatory against developing countries because of the cost implications. It was noted that this Activity would also have to be reviewed in light of the Evaluation's recommendations.

49. On Activity 14 (Holding meetings in developing countries), the Coordinating Committee was of the opinion that this created difficulties for countries not of the region in which the meeting was being held and therefore had the opposite effect of what was intended. The Coordinating Committee recommended that this Activity be reviewed very carefully in light of the Evaluation.

50. The delegation of Uruguay was of the opinion that Activity 29 (Participation of NGOs) was too ambitious in terms of the quantifiable outputs and in any case should not refer to participation at the national level, which was not a Codex matter. The Observer from Consumers International stated that the Activity should be reviewed in light of the Evaluation and that, in this framework, Codex should consider the possibility of granting special treatment to consumer organizations in its work considering the insufficiency of their resources.

OBJECTIVE 6: PROMOTING MAXIMUM APPLICATION OF CODEX STANDARDS

51. The Coordinating Committee was of the opinion that all of the activities under this Objective would need to be reviewed in light of the Evaluation and brought into line with the Evaluation's recommendations. In particular, the Coordinating Committee was concerned that the activities relating to capacity building and information gathering were not truly Codex activities, but more the responsibility of FAO and WHO. The Coordinating Committee noted that the Evaluation foresaw a role for the Commission in guiding the work of FAO and WHO in Capacity Building.

52. The Coordinating Committee noted the opinion of the delegation of Uruguay that Activity 23 (Collection of consumer information) was too broad and was inconsistent with the decisions and recommendations of the 1999 Melbourne Conference on Food Standards and International Trade beyond 2000.

CONSIDERATION OF "TRACEABILITY/PRODUCT TRACING" (Agenda Item 6)⁶

53. The Secretariat introduced the working document, noting that the matter had been referred to all Coordinating Committees for regional input by the 49th (Extraordinary) Session of the Executive Committee. It had also been agreed that the results of the regional discussions should be taken into account by the Secretariat in the preparation of the working paper to be submitted to the 18th Session (2003) of the CCGP. The Secretariat noted that significant progress had been made in this matter, in particular that traceability/product tracing could be viewed as a means to accomplish food safety measures with the framework of the SPS Agreement, as or as a means to fulfill a legitimate objective within the framework of the TBT Agreement. The Secretariat pointed out that it was clear from the Executive Committee's discussion that traceability/product tracing was not in itself an objective, but a means (among others) that might achieve an objective.

TERMINOLOGY

54. The Coordinating Committee was of the opinion that the terminology surrounding traceability/product tracing was unclear and that until an adequate definition could be agreed upon for Codex purposes, there would be substantial obstacles to achieving consensus on the application of traceability/product tracing. It noted that there was an ISO definition, but that this needed to be examined carefully to see if it was adequate for Codex purposes. Moreover, there were substantial problems in understanding the meaning of the term "traceability" in different languages.

TRACEABILITY/PRODUCT TRACING AS A RISK MANAGEMENT OPTION

55. The Coordinating Committee noted the progress made by the ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology in applying product tracing as a risk management measure for two specifically defined objectives, namely product recall and post-market monitoring. It generally agreed that traceability/product tracing could be considered as a risk management option for specific objectives to be determined on a case-by-case basis, but that in many cases there would be better and more effective means of managing food safety risks. It was also pointed out that traceability/product tracing was not capable in itself of ensuring product safety.

56. However, the Coordinating Committee noted the problems for developing countries of applying traceability/product tracing even for risk management purposes, in particular the complexity and the costs involved. It was pointed out that these demands could overwhelm the food control systems of small developing countries.

57. The Observer from Consumers International suggested that cost benefit be analyzed for the application of traceability.

58. The Coordinating Committee was strongly opposed to the mandatory or regulatory use of traceability/product tracing for purposes other than food safety risk management to protect consumers' health.

⁶ CX/LAC 02/6; CRD.1 (Comments of Consumers International).

TRACEABILITY/PRODUCT TRACING FOR OTHER PURPOSES

59. The Coordinating Committee noted that part of the problem of considering traceability/product tracing for “ensuring fair practices in the food trade”, was that there was considerable lack of clarity on what this expression entailed beyond the prevention of fraudulent practices or preventing deception of the consumer.

60. The delegation of Chile indicated that although it agreed that traceability was an alternative tool for food safety risk management, it should not be left aside those aspects of traceability falling within the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. The Delegation felt that it was preferable to get involve in the normative work instead of accepting unilateral dispositions that could damage to a great extend the trade of countries in the region with other markets.

61. The delegation of Uruguay noted that traceability/product tracing was used as a voluntary measure to provide added value and premium prices in situations where particular claims were being made as to the nature of the food, such as “organic” foods. The Delegation was of the opinion that to make such tracing systems mandatory would eliminate the comparative advantage enjoyed by the producers of such foods and that they would be unable to recoup the additional costs involved in the maintenance of a product tracing system. The Delegation stated that if Codex were to consider work in this area, it should be exclusively for application on a voluntary basis and not subject to government regulation. Several Delegations supported these views.

62. The Observer from Consumers International expressed the view that traceability/product tracing had a social and environmental dimension that could not be overlooked and that it could also lead to informed decision-making by consumers and greater transparency.

CONCLUSION

63. The Coordinating Committee was of the opinion that it would be premature to consider the development of general guidelines or other texts for the application of traceability/product tracing even for food safety risk management until there was a better understanding of the issues involved, especially terminology. The development of specific recommendations for risk management purposes, in the appropriate Codex Committees, should continue on a case-by-case basis as this would lead to a better understanding of the situation.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS (Agenda Item 7)⁷

64. The representative from FAO Headquarters presented a summary of the activities in capacity building for food standards and regulation carried out by FAO and jointly by FAO and WHO at global level since the last CCLAC Session. The representative of FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean presented the report of the regional activities.

65. The delegation of Uruguay congratulated and thanked FAO for the cooperation received, which has been significantly increased, highlighting the technical cooperation projects on strengthening Codex and Fusarium control, And in order to implement further this cooperation, requested FAO’s assistance in strengthening institutional capacity, in particular regulatory framework, risk assessment-management and communication interphases, awareness at the political level and infrastructure support.

66. The FAO representative pointed out that the revision of the FAO/WHO Guidelines for Food Safety Systems has been finalized and several regional workshops have been planned for its application.

67. The delegation of Dominican Republic congratulated FAO and PAHO for the work in the region, in particular the FAO regional project on strengthening Codex which has allowed training of 150 national professionals, develop the website for National Codex Committee, initiate an harmonization process of national standards with Codex, provision of equipment and stimulate political interest of the different sectors involved in these issues.

68. The delegation of Ecuador requested ongoing technical cooperation to strengthen the Codex Contact Point from among the members of CCLAC. The representative of FAO informed that this type of assistance is routinely used in the regional activities through the FAO agreement on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC).

⁷ CX/LAC 02/7.

69. The Observer from Consumer International thanked the FAO Regional Office for promoting consumer participation, and added that it is not only necessary to invite consumer organizations but finance their participation, as was done by Brazil.

70. The delegation of Paraguay thanked FAO for the prolific activities carried out, in particular for the technical cooperation project for strengthening Codex in the country and exhorted FAO to continue capacity building for food standards and regulations.

71. The delegation of Brazil thanked FAO and PAHO for the technical cooperation received and highlighted the FAO project on strengthening Codex. This project had a positive result as for the setting up of a specific legislation by the Ministry of Agriculture and the establishment of a national training programme on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System (HACCP).

72. The delegation of Chile thanked the cooperation received and stressed the need to improve internal coordination within countries and to implement distance learning in the region. In light of the Codex normative process within the risk analysis framework, it suggested training in risk management for those that in future would be participating in Codex committee meetings as risk managers.

73. The representative of INPPAZ/PAHO informed that a Masters program on management of food safety will commence on 2003, jointly with the Universities of São Paulo and Costa Rica.

74. The President of CCLAC requested information on FAO's activities in the English-speaking Caribbean countries. The FAO representative informed of the technical cooperation projects on food safety for Antigua, Barbados, Guyana and Surinam, as well as the initiative to create a single food control agency for Jamaica. Three sub regional workshops have recently been held on HACCP, street foods and risk analysis.

75. In addition, the representative of INPPAZ/PAHO provided information, not contained in document CX/LAC 02/7, related to the project on institutional updating of food safety systems. Within this framework, several workshops were held on implementation of local systems for surveillance of food borne diseases, total diet studies and the application of HACCP. He also reported on the consolidation of the Regional System for Epidemiological Surveillance of Food borne Diseases SIRVETA, and on the establishment of data systems for updating food standards. Information was provided on the project for education and social communication, which includes the INFOPANALIMENTOS newsletter, with 1200 users on its weekly distribution list, and on the development of guidelines for programs on social communication on food safety. The Second Session of the Interamerican Commission on Food Safety (COPAIA), held on February 2002, was also highlighted.

FOOD SAFETY IN TOURIST ZONES (Agenda Item 8)⁸

76. The working document was presented by the delegation of Costa Rica on the basis of discussions that took place at the 12th Session of the Coordinating Committee. The Delegation referred to the importance of tourism for the Region, especially for the smaller countries. It noted that Codex had sufficient guidelines covering most of the issues that needed to be addressed, and that therefore the proposed Guidelines was mainly a compilation of existing texts that were of particular significance to the sector. It was noted, however, that there remained problems with the definition of the expression "tourist zone".

77. The delegation of Brazil indicated that it considered important that the guidelines contained the following: importance of diagnosis of the epidemiological situation in tourist zones concerning diseases affecting travellers to elaborate risk profiles; the need to develop risk analysis of food agents and vehicles responsible for such diseases; the establishment of hazard control strategies along the production chain to indicate, where appropriate, the application of hygiene practice or the HACCP system and training of food handlers (final preparation) with an indication of the content of the training programme. The Delegation considered that the guidelines should referred to the existing relevant Codex documents.

78. The Delegations of Barbados and Dominica stated that the concept of "tourist zone" was a difficult one for small island countries, where the entire territory was a tourist zone.

⁸ CX/LAC 02/8.

79. Several delegations raised the basic question of why special consideration should be given to tourist zones, as access to safe food was a right for all persons and not only for tourists and stated that national food safety measures should not distinguish between the two. The delegation of Chile, supported by ALA, indicated that it did not support the initiative of developing food safety standards for tourist zones. The Delegation stated that food safety should be assured to all people regardless of whether they were nationals or foreigners. In order to inform or disregard food product characteristics, it was suggested to develop a framework for the utilization of quality stamps. The delegation of Brazil stated that immunity and resistance of tourists was not the same as people that live in the country.

80. It was pointed out that the issue at hand was the concentration of tourists in specific sites and that this created a special burden on the food control systems in ensuring the application of good hygienic practices by street food vendors, local restaurants, etc. In general, the commercial hotel chains had their own codes of practice and preventative measures.

81. Questions were raised about the status of similar work being undertaken by the World Tourism Organization, and the Coordinating Committee was informed that a meeting of the issue had been held in Madrid in December 2001 and attended by the Codex Secretariat and by WHO. At this meeting, the development of guidelines under that organization were considered, but abandoned, due to the availability of sufficient Codex texts that could be used by the tourist sector to improve food safety.

82. The Coordinating Committee noted the request by the Regional Interministerial Summit for Health and Agriculture (RIMSA) to make progress on this matter, and requested the Delegations of Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic, with the assistance of INPPAZ, to prepare a new proposal for consideration at the Coordinating Committee's next session.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS ON FOOD CONTROL AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES INCLUDING CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 9)⁹

83. The Committee noted that this was a standing item on the Agenda of regional coordinating committees in which countries of the Region were invited to provide the Committee with new or additional information on their national food control systems, food legislation and cooperation activities. The following countries gave an oral account to the Committee in this regard:

ARGENTINA

84. There is a new juridical framework for the National Food Control System based on Decree No 815/99. The current frame governs the food export/import control harmonizing the responsibilities of the concerned organisms namely the National Service for Safety and Quality of Food and Agriculture (SENASA) and the National Food Institute (INAL). The first belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture and the second to the Ministry of Health. Both areas rule the approval of standards and the updating of the Argentinean Food Code in the framework of a National Food Commission (CONAL). Consumers have two permanent seats in the Advisory Council of the Commission.

BOLIVIA

85. The Food Control System has been restructured based on the FAO Project for the Andean countries on Harmonization of the Animal and Plant Health and Food Safety. As a result, the Service on Animal and Plant Health and Food Safety has been created. This Service carries out the control from the primary production until the industry and food export/import control. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the surveillance and the municipal authorities for the control of the commercialization and selling of foods. A laboratory network has been set up which works with the control authorities.

BRAZIL

86. The delegation of Brazil gave a brief summary of its activities in this area and referred the Committee to document CX/LAC 02/9 for further information.

⁹ CL 2002/42-LAC and comments received from Brazil, Colombia and Panama (CX/LAC 02/9); Argentina (CRD 2) and Cuba (CRD 3).

CHILE

87. The National Codex Committee and its 14 technical committees, have recently gone under an external evaluation carried out by the University of Chile to look for ways of improving the functioning of the National Committee especially as regards improvement of image and communication of the work of the National Committee, improvement of participation at national and international level, development of a strategic plan and the establishment of a permanent supporting group of national expert on Codex matters.

88. The delegation of Chile brought the attention of the Committee to the need to coordinate closely with the institutions involved in standardization activities at national level and with the representative offices (i.e. embassies, consulates, etc.) in those countries hosting international meetings/organizations in the field of standardization.

COSTA RICA

89. The country has a Codex Contact Point located in the Ministry of Economy and its functions are in accordance with the core functions of the Codex Contact Points set up in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Costa Rica also has a National Codex Committee created by Law No 8279 and a Technical Secretary attached to the Ministry of Economy. The structure of the National Committee and the functions of the Secretary have been established through a Decree. Costa Rica prepares its national positions to participate in/or send to Codex committee meetings through consultations with the public and private sector, academia and consumers, the latter being a member of the National Codex Committee.

CUBA

90. The official bodies in charge of food quality and safety are the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fishery Industry, Ministry of Food Industry, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Ministry of Sugar. The National Codex Committee has been restructured recently and it is the national organism responsible for completing the work of the Codex Contact Point. The principal function of the National Committee is giving advice to the Government on matters related to food standards or resulting from the work of the Commission. The National Committee has been created by resolution of the National Standardization Office and it works according to its own regulation. The members of the National Committee are the food industry, consumers, traders and all interested organizations as well as the relevant ministries and the chairpersons of the technical standardization committees as well as those of the Codex subcommittees belonging to the National Codex Committee.

GUATEMALA

91. As of 1997 the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Foods and the Ministry of Health have shared the responsibility for food safety of non-processed foods (raw materials) and processed foods respectively. Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Foods the responsibility for food safety falls under the Area of Food Safety which is also the Codex Contact Point. Similarly, the Department of Food Control and Registry is responsible for food safety within the Ministry of Health. A restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Foods will be carried out next year by which two areas related to food safety is being contemplated: one exclusively advocated to non-processed foods of animal origin and another one for non-processed foods of plant origin.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

92. The National Codex Committee is made up of governmental and private institutions, consumer associations with official recognition, academia, etc. There are currently 22 technical subcommittees hosted by different institutions and coordinated by the General Direction of Standards and Quality Systems. Activities related to international trade is carried out jointly by the Dominican Center of Export Promotion, Department of Plant Health, Agriculture Secretary of State through the Food Control Department, Public Health and Social Welfare Secretary of State. The National Contact Point is the Public Health and Social Welfare Secretary of State. The National Committee has a website at www.salupublica.gov.com.do where more detailed on its activities can be obtained. The country has Dominican Standards for food products which have been harmonized with Codex standards and related texts. There is work being carried out on a voluntary basis for the application of the HACCP System in small and medium business. There have been also contacts with other countries on food legislation and food control (at bilateral, sub regional or regional level) including training of personnel in laboratory inspection. In this regard, the country is being participating in the FAO/TCP/RLA/0065 on Strengthening of the National Codex Committees and Application of Codex Standards.

MEXICO

93. The official organisms responsible for food legislation and food control are the Secretary of Health through the Federal Commission for the Sanitary Protection of Sanitary Risks and the Secretary of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Fishing and Food through the National Service of Health, Safety and Quality of Food. These institutions are currently being restructured. A report on the results of the restructuring will be given in the future.

PANAMA

94. The country has established a Codex Contact Point under the General Direction of Standards and Industrial Technology of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The National Codex Committee was created by Decree No 4 of 20 November 2001. The national subcommittees are made up of delegates from the public and private sector, universities and consumers. All the organizations concerned have participated of the training activities carried out within the FAO/TCP/RLA/0065 on Strengthening of the National Codex Committees and Application of Codex Standards.

PARAGUAY

95. Besides of controls carried out normally by the ministries concerned, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock carries out the inspection and verification of good manufacturing practices (GMP) in refrigeration plants. There is a national plan for the reduction of pathogens such as *E. coli* 0157 H7 and *Salmonella* spp. in these plants coordinated by the Vice-Ministry of Livestock jointly with other institutions.

96. With regard to technical cooperation activities, the FAO/TCP/PAR/2801 Project on Strengthening of the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee is in progress.

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AT THE CODEX AND NATIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 10)¹⁰

97. The Committee noted that this was a standing item on the Agenda of Regional Coordinating Committees in which countries of the Region were invited to provide the Committee with new or additional information on consumer participation in Codex work at national and international level. The following countries gave an oral account to the Committee in this regard:

98. The delegation of Argentina stated that this country has clearly established the participation of consumers in its official policy through an office created within the Secretary of Commerce (Direction of Consumer Defense). As it was presented under Agenda Item 9, consumers have two permanent seats in the Advisory Council of the National Food Commission as well as a seat in the Administrative Council of the National Service for Safety and Quality of Food and Agriculture (SENASA) which are currently filled. Despite of the information provided in CRD 1 of Consumers International (page 18 of the Spanish version), the Delegation informed that its country has invited consumers representatives to participate in Codex meetings as well as in the Codex Evaluation. The delegation of Argentina considered that consumers organizations should participate and collaborate at national level within the national structures on a permanent basis. However, the Delegation stated that the Government should be not responsible for funding consumers participation in international fora.

99. With regard to what was expressed by the Argentinean delegation concerning the report presented by Consumers International in relation to consumers participation in its country (see paragraph above), the Delegation recalled that Consumers International had compromised itself to respond to this request in writing.

BOLIVIA

100. Consumer defense organizations are part of the National Codex Committee with voice and vote. The Organization of Defense of Consumers is currently part of the Executive Committee of the National Codex Committee. They participate in international Codex meetings on behalf of the National Codex Committee of Bolivia.

¹⁰ CL 2002/42-LAC and comments received from Brazil and Colombia (CX/LAC 02/10); and Consumers International (CRD 1).

CHILE

101. Consumer organizations have voice and vote in the National Codex Committee. The delegation of Chile referred to the difficulties in having an effective participation of consumer organizations in the work of the different national Codex subcommittees due to availability of financial and human resources. He highlighted the importance of consumer participation in the development of standards and national positions and that joint efforts should be made to increase consumer participation in this respect. He indicated his concern on the degree of representation because they could not attend every subcommittee session although they did in the National Committee.

COSTA RICA

102. The country has a Federation of Consumers which groups 40 associations of consumers. A representative of the Federation is part of the National Codex Committee. In addition, the Federation has delegates participating in some Codex national subcommittees. The Federation has also participated in training workshops on Codex and application of standards. Up to date, no non-governmental organization of consumers (NGO) has participated in the elaboration of national positions for Codex meetings.

CUBA

103. There are two organizations of consumers, one of governmental nature which is the responsible for working on the policies and standards to protect consumers and a non-governmental recognized organization which is member of Consumers International. Both institutions are members of the National Codex Committee and participate in all the activities and decisions of the National Committee.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

104. Different consumer associations with official recognition participate in the work of the National Codex Committee as well as in the technical subcommittees with voice and vote and their participation is required for approved proposed draft standards to have official validity. The National Committee has supported the organization of meetings with consumer organizations to explain them about the mechanisms and procedures established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in its Procedural Manual for elaboration of standards and consumer participation among others.

ECUADOR

105. The Constitution and laws in force in the country provide for consumers participation. They participate actively in meetings of the National Codex Committee.

GUATEMALA

106. Consumer organizations are included in the National Codex Committee (Article 214-2002). They are represented by a League of Consumers.

MEXICO

107. The need for consumer participation and protection is guaranteed by Law. There is a governmental body the Federal Office of Consumer Defense which coordinates one of the national Codex subcommittees, among other many activities. In parallel, there is the Mexican Association for the Defense of Consumer, a non-governmental body; but this body has difficulty in coping with all its commitments.

NICARAGUA

108. There is an Organization of Consumers Defense known as League of Consumers Defense which is part of the National Codex Committee. The League also participates in the work of the standardization committees.

PANAMA

109. Two organizations participate in the work of the National Codex Committee: the National Association of Consumers and Users of the Republic and the Commission of Free Competition and Consumer Affairs. Consumers participate in the establishment of food standards at national level with voice and vote.

PARAGUAY

110. The strengthening of consumers participation in the work of the national technical Codex subcommittees is an important topic within the Plan of Action of the Codex Committee of Paraguay for the year 2003-2004. In this regard, a representative from a non-governmental organization of consumers gave a presentation on the participation and vision of consumers associations in Codex in a workshop on Codex Management organized in the framework of the FAO/TCP/PAR/2801.

CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL

111. The Observer from Consumers International gave an oral account on the contents of document CRD 1 as regards this item. He expressed concern that if no actions were taken to facilitate consumers participation, consumers trust in the legitimacy of Codex would be affected. He stressed the need to increase consumer participation in Codex at both national and international level especially from those organizations in developing countries. He also stressed the need to always have a representative from consumer organization in the structures of the National Codex Committees. In addition, he said that Consumers International would respond to Argentina as regards its request for clarification concerning the information provided in CRD 1 (see paras. 98-99).

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCLAC (Agenda Item 11)¹¹

112. Ms. Rosa Céspedes, Assistant to the Coordinator, introduced the revised Strategic Plan prepared at a meeting of Codex Contact Points for the Region in San José, Costa Rica, 4-5 November 2002. She noted that the development of the Strategic Plan had been the main initiative of the Coordinator, Dr Joaquín Rodríguez, and had been accomplished in consultation with all countries of the Region and at meetings in Washington, DC in February 2002 and in San José.

113. The Coordinating Committee expressed its high appreciation for the work of Dr Rodríguez in developing the Strategic Plan for the CCLAC.

114. At the proposal of the delegation of Uruguay, the Coordinating Committee modified Action 1 of Objective 3 to indicate that CCLAC should identify needs for capacity building, rather than concentrate on training programmes. Under Action 2 of the same Objective it agreed to a proposal of the delegation of Cuba to include reference to information exchange and modified Action 3 to be consistent with this.

115. The Coordinating Committee also added a new Action (Action 4) under Objective 7 to encourage linkages with other interested parties appropriately represented in the CCLAC. The Observer from Consumers International stated that consideration should be given to preparation of guidelines explaining the role of interested parties.

116. The Coordinating Committee did not consider necessary a proposal to include under Objective 1 the effective coordination between the Regional Coordinator and the Member from the Region elected to the Executive Committee ("Regional Representative") because it recognized that such coordination should be automatic. The CCLAC underscored the fact that, for the Strategic Plan to work well, it was of great importance the coordination between the Regional Coordinator and the Regional Representative who was a member of the CCEXEC.

STATUS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

117. The Coordinating Committee unanimously adopted the Strategic Plan as modified. The Plan is attached to this report as Appendix II.

¹¹ CX/LAC 02/11-Revision 1.

NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 12)¹²

118. The delegation of Dominican Republic proposed the nomination of Argentine as the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean by the 26th Session of the Commission. This proposal was unanimously endorsed by the Coordinating Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 13)

119. The delegation of Bolivia indicated the need for "Brazil nut" producing countries in the region (mainly Bolivia, Brazil and Peru) to prepare a document that could become a draft standard or code addressing, in particular, levels and means of preventing the production of aflatoxins. The delegation of Brazil expressed that it was important to know the behavior of the fungus producing the aflatoxin in Brazil nuts. In this regard, it informed the Committee that a Code of Practice was being developed in its country for the primary production of this product and that the discussion held at this meeting would be forwarded to the Brazilian experts. On suggestion of the chairperson, it was agreed that account should be taken of the various common names of the product ("Brazilian nut", "Amazon nut") and that the scientific name *Bertholletia excelsa* Humb. et Bonpl.) should be specified to avoid confusion. The Coordinating Committee agreed that the three countries should prepare a background document in order to pave the ground for an in-depth discussion at the relevant Codex Committees as soon as possible and report to next Session of the Coordinating Committee on the outcome.

120. The delegation of Venezuela made a proposals to work on risk assessment of products in contact with food, and suggested to include this subject in future work. In this regard, reference was made to a draft technical standard developed by Venezuela to identify these products in contact with food, and the need to come up with standards on authorized materials was indicated. The Codex Secretariat indicated that this issue was identified as a priority by the Evaluation of Codex.

121. The Observer from Consumers International recalled its written request¹³ to CCLAC on the need to prepare guidelines on improving consumer participation to Codex Committees and offered to collaborate in this respect. He also called for FAO and WHO/PAHO to participate in such work.

122. The delegation of Paraguay expressed its interest in continuing the assessment of the stevioside and mentioned that this country had already raised their concern on this additive to JECFA. Similarly, the Delegation expressed its wish that, through CCLAC, the conclusion of the scientific assessment of this additive be requested to the relevant bodies in order to have an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for the consumer.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 14)

123. The Committee was informed that the next session would be held in the Argentina in approximately two years. The exact date and venue would be decided by the Secretariats of Argentina and Codex subject to the approval of the Commission.

¹² CX/LAC 02/12.

¹³ CRD.1

ANNEX

STATUS OF WORK

Subject Matter	Step	Action by	Document Reference: ALINORM 03/36
Nomination of Coordinator		26 th CAC	para. 118
Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards		25 th CAC	paras. 19-23
Consideration of the Draft Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007		26 th CAC	paras. 29-52
Consideration of "Traceability/Product Tracing"		18 th CCGP	paras. 53-63
Food Safety in Tourist Zones		Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and INPPAZ Governments 14 th CCLAC	para. 82
Discussion Paper on Brazilian Nuts		Bolivia, Brazil and Peru Relevant Codex Committees 14 th CCLAC	para. 119
Information and Reports on Food Control and Food Safety Issues including Codex standards		Governments 14 th CCLAC	paras. 83-96
Consumer Participation in Food Standards Setting at the Codex and National Level		Governments 14 th CCLAC	97-111

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**STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (CCLAC)**

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

**TO OPTIMIZE THE ROLE OF CCLAC AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS
WITHIN THE
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND THE LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION
(Adopted by the Thirteenth Session of the Coordinating Committee, Santo Domingo, 12 December 2002)**

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COORDINATION OF CCLAC

OBJETIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
<p>1. To foster effective communication between the CCLAC members, with other regions and Codex members, the Codex Secretariat and relevant organizations.</p>	<p>1. To maximize the use of electronic communication systems in countries of the region, and stimulate the development of a web page for each contact point.</p> <p>2. To conclude the development of the virtual page of CCLAC and to encourage its use.</p> <p>3. To organize a virtual chat room with the primary objective of exchanging information prior to Codex meetings, with CCLAC members as well as with other regional committees or Codex member countries.</p> <p>4. To maintain an up-to-date directory of the National Codex Contact Points including other addresses as indicated by the CCLAC member countries.</p>	<p>The regional Coordinator of CCLAC will be responsible for points 1, 2 and 4. For point 3 Argentina and a representative from an English speaking country have the responsibility.</p> <p>The Codex Commission in coordination with the contact points of CCLAC.</p>
<p>2. To achieve the active and effective participation of all countries of the Region in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies in particular in the CCLAC.</p>	<p>1. To solicit Inter-Agency collaboration (INPPAZ/ PAHO/ FAO/ IICA) to carry out the translation of information of interest to CCLAC countries into English, Spanish and French.</p> <p>2. To establish working groups to examine strategic aspects of the Codex activities.</p> <p>3. To involve all countries of the region in active participation in the work undertaken by CCLAC.</p>	<p>The regional Coordination of CCLAC with the assistance of the countries of the Region.</p>

OBJETIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
3. To promote the development and strengthening of the capacities of the National Codex Committees and/or Codex Contact Points in CCLAC Member Countries.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify needs for capacity-building and to coordinate them with the efforts of other organizations and possible funding resources. 2. To establish an exchange of information and experiences between the Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committees in the CCLAC countries and others. 3. To keep a record of training activities, exchange of information and experiences between countries, negotiations with international organizations and other activities defined in the Action Plan. 	The responsibility for the execution of this objective will be subject to suggestions and further approval of the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCLAC by the CCLAC member countries.
4. To take advantage of the technical and scientific capacities existing in CCLAC member countries.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To elaborate a list of specialists and institution available in the CCLAC region based on the information provided by each country. 2. To identify and prioritize items that in the working groups need a specialized opinion. 3. To identify available support from regional specialists and organizations regarding themes where a specialized opinion is required and promote their participation in the committee of experts. 	The responsibility for the execution of this objective will be subject to suggestions and further approval of the Strategic Plan for the Coordination of CCLAC.
5. To ensure the continuity, development and sustainability of the committee's tasks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To design a biennial operational plan, to be implemented between the CCLAC meetings, consistent with this Strategic Plan. 2. To carry out periodical evaluations and follow up of the actions contemplated in the Strategic Plan. 3. To establish mechanisms for the transfer of information during the transition of the Coordination. 4. To present a final report of the compliance of the actions contemplated in the Strategic Plan, in the framework of the holding of the regional meeting of the CCLAC. 	<p>The responsibility of the Regional Coordination.</p> <p>The responsibility of the Regional Coordination.</p>

OBJETIVES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
6. To attain technical cooperation and funding mechanism to allow CCLAC to develop and sustain its activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To elaborate a list of organizations offering technical and financial cooperation. 2. To organize working groups to formulate the necessary Projects to seek the resources and follow up on them. 3. To conduct analysis and follow – up of proposals to establish the trust fund and other means of funding in the sphere of codex with respect to the interests of the Region. 	For point 3, the Coordination, with the support of all CCLAC member countries, will solicit the support of the organizations of the Region and other countries to sponsor these actions.
7. To identify and prioritize the needs of the Region on food safety and other themes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To carry out surveys in member countries to detect the needs of the Region. 2. To incorporate the issue of analysis and prioritization on the agenda of the Committee. 3. To develop Standards, guidelines and other recommendations of regional interest. 4. To encourage linkages with other interested parties duly/properly represented on the CCLAC. 	The Regional Coordination.