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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Evaluation of the Capacity of the Codex Secretariat to Perform its Function Effectively

Consultant's Report

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Rome, March 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission calls for an evaluation of the capacity of the Codex Secretariat to perform its functions in an effective way. Said evaluation must be completed by 2009. The purpose of the evaluation is to analyse the effectiveness and resource needs of the Codex Secretariat in the operation and work management of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and in communicating with and serving the needs of Codex Contact Points. The evaluation has been conducted under the responsibility of the Codex Secretariat, in coordination with FAO and WHO, with the assistance of an external consultant. In order to follow a structured approach and ensure independence and objectivity of the evaluation, the evaluation followed the procedural guidelines for auto-evaluation in FAO. The input for the evaluation was mainly obtained by interviewing the staff of the Secretariat and staff in FAO and WHO, either responsible for Codex (Joint Food Standards Programme) or for providing services to the Codex Secretariat and the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The other sources of information come from responses to questionnaires sent to Codex Contact Points and the secretariats of host governments.

This evaluation differs from the Joint Evaluation of Codex Alimentarius and Food Standards Work of FAO and WHO, conducted by FAO and WHO in 2002 and has no intention to duplicate that evaluation; rather the present evaluation focuses on the capacity and operation of the Codex Secretariat. Many recommendations of the joint evaluation of 2002 have been implemented resulting in significant implications for the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Secretariat. Hence, the joint evaluation of 2002 has been used as a benchmark for the current evaluation of the Secretariat.

Similarly, the results of this evaluation have been reviewed in the light of the Joint Statement of FAO and WHO presented in 2007 to the 60th session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Among other matters, this joint statement called upon Codex to speed up its work, to put more emphasis on health issues and to implement modern and more efficient means of conducting international negotiation.

Codex is going through a dynamic transition period. The Agreements of the World Trade Organization accorded a new status to Codex standards, making the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission more political and controversial than in the past. The number of delegations participating in Codex activities has increased considerably in recent years. Mainly as a result of the Codex Trust Fund, more member states are now actively participating in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Developing countries and emerging economies have increasingly become more influential in international negotiations, as well as in Codex. The legacy of the Codex Trust Fund, upon its cessation, is sustainable and effective participation of all members of Codex in international standard setting. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, facilitated by the Codex Secretariat, should live up to the expectations and demands of its membership, at the risk of otherwise becoming irrelevant.

The current evaluation has tried to give an answer to the key question of whether the Codex Secretariat is sufficiently capable, in terms of availability of budget, human resources, skills and competencies, not only to support current activities but also to assist the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies in facing the challenges of a rapidly changing world and, where necessary, to act as a catalyst of change. Since the 2002 joint evaluation the Codex budget has increased considerably. However, these additional resources were readily absorbed by the enhanced workload of the Secretariat as a consequence of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation of 2002. Moreover, between 2003 and 2008 the purchasing power of the available budget had decreased significantly.

Regarding current activities, several areas have been identified where there is a clear need for further improvement, such as the timely availability of working documents and the timely update of the Codex website following each session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. These improvements can be achieved by a more rigid planning and management of the workflow and a better use of IT in the daily operations of the Secretariat. Units in FAO providing services to the Secretariat also have indicated that they can benefit from an improved management of the workflow in the Secretariat. The Codex Secretariat should play a more proactive role in the standard setting process, on strategic issues, in communication and in exploring new ways of international negotiations. This would not only require additional resources, but would also have repercussions on the required skills and competencies of the staff of the Secretariat.

Overall conclusions

- There is a considerable level of satisfaction about the performance of the Codex Secretariat and the quality of the services provided;
- Areas have been identified where there is a need for improvement, particularly a more rigid management of the workflow, the timely availability of working documents in the relevant languages, a timely update of the Codex website following each session of the CAC, the proper planning of publications, the timely conclusion of Letters of Agreement and further enhancement of language skills;
- The Secretariat should become more engaged and play a more proactive role in a number of areas, such as the standard-setting process, the strategic orientation of the CAC, communication with member states and the public at large, including well defined capacity-building initiatives targeting CCPs, and in the search for new ways of conducting international negotiations on food standards;
- The transformation of the Codex website into an interactive system and its integration in the daily work of the Secretariat will considerably improve the efficiency of the Codex Secretariat;
- Annual meetings of the CAC have had a considerable impact on the workload of the Secretariat and have resulted in an uneven distribution of the workload throughout the year;
- The Secretariat has insufficient resources to fully support the current activities of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies in a timely manner and with the desired level of quality;
- The current resources do not allow the Secretariat to become more engaged and to play a more proactive role in a number of areas, such as the standard-setting process, the strategic orientation of the CAC, communication with member states and the public at large, including well defined capacity-building initiatives targeting CCPs, and exploring new means of conducting international negotiations on food standards;
- The efficiency of the basic functioning of the Codex Secretariat, as administered under FAO rule and also subject to other bureaucratic procedures of its two parent organizations, can be further improved;
- There is confusion amongst member states about the role of Codex Secretariat regarding the Codex Trust Fund.

Key recommendations

- FAO and WHO should allocate sufficient resources to allow the Codex Secretariat to improve its current activities and to absorb new activities as seen necessary;
- FAO and WHO should re-assess their respective contributions to the Codex budget to retain a reasonable balance between the parent organizations regarding this joint programme;
- The Codex Secretariat should improve current activities when servicing the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies;
- The Codex Secretariat should further enhance communication with national Codex Contact Points, host governments and the public at large;
- The Codex Secretariat should play a more proactive role in the standard-setting process and in the strategic orientation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- The Codex Secretariat should rethink and redesign the Codex Website;
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission should return to biennial meetings and, at the same time, the Executive Committee should be revitalized.

A summary table of recommendations is presented after chapter 8.

1 INTRODUCTION

1. The 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (2007) adopted the Commission's Strategic Plan 2008-2013. Goal 3 "Strengthening Codex Work Management Capabilities" includes Activity 3.7 which is the evaluation of the capacity of the Codex Secretariat to perform its functions effectively, to be completed by 2009.

2. The purpose of the evaluation is to analyse the effectiveness and resource needs of the Codex Secretariat in the operation and work management of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and in communicating with and serving the needs of Codex Contact Points.

3. The evaluation has been conducted under the responsibility of the Codex Secretariat, in coordination with FAO and WHO, with the assistance of an external consultant. Draft terms of reference were presented to the 61st Session of the Executive Committee of the Commission in June 2008, which were finally approved by FAO and WHO. The Terms of Reference of the evaluation are attached to the report in Annex 1. The actual evaluation was conducted in the second half of 2008.

4. The evaluation followed the procedural guidelines for auto-evaluation in FAO, in order to follow a structured approach and ensure its independence and objectivity. Auto-evaluation is defined as a decentralized and participatory process of rigorous review of programme achievements and outcomes by programme managers. FAO auto-evaluations are intended to strengthen the results-based management of the Organization for the purpose of improving programmes, enhancing organizational learning and providing a sound basis for informed decision-making.

5. The current evaluation is different from the 2002 joint evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Joint Food Standards Programme conducted by FAO and WHO in 2002 and has not the intention to duplicate that evaluation. However, the 2002 joint evaluation will be used as a benchmark for the developments that have taken place in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and their implications for the Codex Secretariat.

6. In 2003 the governing bodies of FAO and WHO endorsed the recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation, taking note of the positive advice of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Between 2003 and 2008, most recommendations relative to Codex have been implemented with significant implications for the Codex Secretariat. Coincidentally, in 2003 there was also a change in the management of the Codex Secretariat. The former Secretary retired from FAO in August 2003. His successor took office in October of that year. Hence, the review will cover the period between 2003 and 2008.

2 METHODOLOGY OF THE CURRENT EVALUATION

7. The main methods used in the evaluation were:

- (i) review of relevant documentation;
- (ii) interviews with both professional and general service staff of the Codex Secretariat, staff of FAO and WHO working with the Codex Secretariat, several of whom provide services to the Codex Secretariat and the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- (iii) questionnaires for Codex Contact Points and host governments.

8. Documents reviewed will be referenced in footnotes. The list of staff members interviewed is attached as Annex 2. The questionnaires are attached in Annexes 3 and 4. The questionnaire for host governments was sent to the host government secretariats of all general Subject Committees and all active Commodity Committees. In the case of the CCFO¹ this questionnaire was not sent to Malaysia, as this Committee has not yet met under the chairmanship of Malaysia, but instead was sent to the United Kingdom as the former host country. The questionnaire for host governments was also sent to Japan, Thailand and Korea, being the host countries of the *ad hoc* International Task Forces for respectively FBT², QFF³ and

¹ Codex Committee on Fats and Oils

² Foods derived from Biotechnology

AMR⁴. The TFFBT and TFQFF were only recently dissolved at the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 2008. Regarding the Regional Coordinating Committees the questionnaire for host governments was only sent to Switzerland (CCEURO). All the other regional committees have not yet met under the chairmanship of the recently appointed coordinators.

3 OUTCOME OF THE 2002 JOINT EVALUATION

9. The major findings of the 2002 joint evaluation regarding the Codex Secretariat are summarized in chapter 4.4.3.2 of the Evaluation Report (paras. 100-107)⁵.

10. In brief, these major findings are as follows:

- the Secretariat is overworked and has insufficient resources to support present activities;
- the situation is deteriorating as the volume of activities steadily increases;
- certain functions are seen as being inadequately served, particularly:
 - support to strategic planning and programming
 - monitoring, analysis and reporting on the work of the committees
 - substantive input in standard development
 - communication and information to make Codex work accessible to all

11. It resulted in 3 recommendations pertaining to the Codex Secretariat and the Codex Secretary:

- *Recommendation 13:* The Codex Secretariat should be able to carry out managerial, strategic and communication functions. To attract someone of the calibre needed to provide continuing executive leadership and support in Codex and manage and motivate the enhanced Secretariat, a senior person should be appointed as Executive Secretary. The overall seniority of the Secretariat staff should also be raised.
- *Recommendation 14:* The Secretariat would better achieve the independent identity, high status and authority it needs by becoming a separate FAO unit rather than continue under the Food and Nutrition Division. The Secretariat would continue to report to FAO and WHO but in line with plans to give Codex more independence, the appointment of the Secretary would be carried out in consultation with Codex.
- *Recommendation 15:* As a matter of priority, more human and financial resources must be put into the Codex Secretariat to enable it adequately to perform existing functions and meet expanding demands.

12. These recommendations have only been partly implemented. The Codex Secretariat remained embedded in the AGN Division in FAO. The Codex Alimentarius Commission is not involved in the appointment of the Secretary. The post of Codex Secretary was upgraded from P-5 (senior professional) to D-1 (director). The net increase in the number of Professional staff from "before" to "after" the 2002 joint evaluation was one post (new P-5). Detailed information on budget and human resources are given below.

13. The Codex Secretariat has achieved a certain level of operational autonomy within FAO regarding its administrative procedures, stating that Codex is a Joint Programme of two independent parent organizations (FAO and WHO).

³ Quick Frozen Foods

⁴ Antimicrobial Resistance

⁵ Report of the Joint FAO/WHO evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO work on food standards. FAO, WHO, 15 November 2002; included in ALINORM 03/25/3, December 2002: conclusions and recommendations of the Joint FAO/WHO evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO work on food standards presented to the Twenty-fifth (Extraordinary) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Rome, 13-15 February 2003.

14. Several recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation directed to Codex, which have been implemented since 2003, had significant implications for the Secretariat. The most important developments were:

- annual meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and 3-4 meetings of the Executive Committee per biennium;
- the assignment of a management role to the Executive Committee comprising:
 - the strategic planning and monitoring of the implementation of the strategic plan
 - the critical review of
 - proposals for new work; and
 - monitoring of progress in standard setting by individual subsidiary bodies
 - review of applications from international non-governmental organizations for observer status
- enhanced communication through electronic means (publication of standards, recommendations and guidelines in hard copies have been discontinued; distribution of working documents is done exclusively on the internet);
- allowing the establishment of *ad hoc* physical working groups and electronic working groups operating in a more formal manner;
- gradual transfer of host country responsibilities from developed countries to developing countries.

4 THE CODEX BUDGET

15. Chronological comparison of budgets is somewhat difficult, as methods of calculating and presenting budgets have changed. However, the following table represents a best estimate of the changing contributions to the budgets by the two organizations over the past biennia.

16. The figures from 1994 through 2007 are based on actual contribution/expenditure, while the figures for 2008-2009 are those which appeared in budgetary forecasts and are subject to change/confirmation once accounting is closed for the biennial period.

Table 1. Joint Codex budget in 1000 US \$, actual expenditures; for 2008-2009 the budget forecast is given.

	WHO	change from the previous period	FAO	change from the previous period
1994-1995	919 (17.7%)	-	4,264 (82.3%)	-
1996-1997	932 (19.1%)	+1%	3,956 (80.9%)	-7%
1998-1999	951 (18.1%)	+2%	4,311 (81.9%)	+9%
2000-2001	907 (19.4%)	-5%	3,780 (80.6%)	-12% ⁶
2002-2003	960 ⁷ (20.4%)	+6%	3,755 (79.6%)	-1%
2004-2005	1,225 (17.6%)	+28%	5,734 (82.4%)	+53%
2006-2007	1,225 (17.7%)	0%	5,720 (82.3%)	0%
2008-2009	1,225 (14.5%)	0%	7,195 (85.5%)	+26%

17. The figures above do not include extra-budgetary, in-kind contribution from the member states, directly or indirectly, to the Codex Secretariat in the form of secondment of consultants or professional staff.

18. For the biennium 2004/05, the parent organizations raised their contribution to pay for an additional P5 post and for an additional meeting of the CAC. For the next biennium the budget remained the same but, due to increasing costs and the weakening of the US dollar against the Euro, its purchasing power was seriously eroded. The budget forecast for 2008/09, based on FAO's calculation, would offer the same

⁶ The apparent decrease of the FAO contribution from 1998-99 to 2000-01 is due to a change in the method of budget presentation. Prior to the 2000-01 biennium, the FAO contribution occasionally included costs that were related to Codex but were not Codex expenses *per se*.

⁷ Actual transfer of funds from WHO to FAO was USD 862,000, because a positive balance (USD 97,311) in the Trust Fund, resulting from carry-overs from previous years, was returned to WHO.

purchasing power as in the previous biennium. In fact, the purchasing power of the Codex budget was at its highest in 2004/05 and has steadily decreased in real terms since then.

19. In 2008-2009, the share of the WHO contribution appears to have hit the lowest level in the recent Codex history. This is mainly because of nominal zero growth of the WHO contribution since 2004, while cost increase and a significant devaluation of the US dollar vis-à-vis the Euro was experienced during this period.

20. Although no supporting documentation has been found, it is believed that there was an agreement concluded around 1974 that WHO would contribute 25% and FAO would contribute 75% of the Codex budget. However, the WHO contribution has never exceeded approximately 20% of the budget.

21. Over the past two biennia (2004/05 and 2006/07), the non-staff resources allocated to Codex was somewhat smaller than what was thought to be necessary to fully implement the work plan. Adjustments were made to match the programme to the resources available, mainly by reducing documentation and publications.

5 HUMAN RESOURCES

5.1 Status and changes over recent years

22. An overview of the human resources of the Codex Secretariat is given in Table 2, for the years 2003 and 2008. In 2003, the post of Codex Secretary was formally upgraded from P-5 to D-1 (level of junior Director). In response to the recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation, one additional P-5 post was added to the Codex Secretariat. FAO has recently decided to add an additional P-4 post to the Codex Secretariat. The vacancy announcement is expected at any moment. This additional post is not yet reflected in the table.

23. In 2003, one professional staff member was seconded by a member country to the Codex Secretariat. In 2008, three other professional staff members were seconded (one of them through WHO).

Table 2. Capacity of the Codex Secretariat in terms of regular or temporary posts and staff on secondment in 2003 and 2008.

Staff	January 2003	January 2009
<i>Professional staff</i>		
D-1 ⁸		1
P-5	1	2
P-4	3	2
P-3	1	2
P-2	1	-
P-2 (temporary)	-	1
<i>Professional staff on secondment</i>		
P-5	-	1
P-4	1	1
P-3	-	1
<i>General Service staff</i>		
G-5	2	2
G-4	2	4
G-3	3	-
G-2	-	1

⁸ In 2003 the post of the Codex Secretary was formally upgraded from P5 to D1.

Table 3. Capacity of the Codex Secretariat in terms of functions at January 2009. It should be noted that in the past the number of GS staff was significantly higher

Function	Grade	Number
<i>Professional staff</i>		
Codex Secretary	D-1	1
Senior Food Standards Officer	P-5	2
Food Standards Officer	P-4	2
Function		
Grade		
Number		
Food Standards Officer	P-3	2
Information Management Officer	P-2	1 (temporary post)
Senior Food Standards Officer	P-5	1 (on secondment through WHO until April 2009)
Food standards Officer	P-3 and P-4	2 (on secondment until August 2009)
<i>General Service Staff</i>		
Secretary	G-5	1
Documents Clerk	G-5	1
Clerk	G-4	2
Clerk/Proof reader	G-4	2
Clerk	G-2	1

5.2 Evaluation

24. In reviewing the capacity of the Codex Secretariat, not only the number and the grade are of importance but there is also a need to consider the competencies of the staff. As indicated before, communication has become increasingly more important and the same can be said about the role of IT and the use of multimedia in the Secretariat and within Codex. At present, an IT specialist is working in the Secretariat on a temporary P-2 post (11 months). The funding for this post came from the savings obtained by discontinuing document distribution in hardcopy in 2006. This post preferably should be projected on a regular basis given the importance of the Codex website and in the light of future developments.

25. Depending on the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation, FAO may move to a certain level of decentralization of functions, including the provision of legal advice. Given the importance of legal advice in the work of Codex, this then could lead to the necessity to have legal expertise within the Secretariat itself.

26. The additional P5 post allowed the Secretariat to significantly strengthen publication and communication activities. However, the overall human resources were fully absorbed due to the increased meeting frequency of the CAC and CCEXEC, and the increased workload for servicing CCEXEC (because of new functions given to CCEXEC including evaluation of new applications for observer status, critical review, etc.). Under these conditions, the current resources do not allow for full servicing of two CCEXEC sessions per year. A process is going on within FAO to further strengthen the Codex secretariat by transferring to it one professional post. If this materializes, it may finally meet the needs associated with the new meeting frequency of CAC and CCEXEC.

27. Over the past decade, FAO has decentralized management responsibilities, which means that Directors have gained more managerial and administrative duties. Therefore, the upgrading of the post of the Codex Secretary from P-5 to D-1 meant that budget responsibility was accorded to the Secretary, resulting in a significant increase of administrative work within the Secretariat, which was not compensated for by additional General Service staff.

28. The parent organizations and the Codex Secretary are grateful to governments for seconding qualified staff to the Codex Secretariat. Seconded staff members are provided by governments to assist the Codex Secretariat and at the same time to gain international experience which can be useful to these staff members when returning to their countries. While this does add capacity to the Codex Secretariat, in practice there might be certain drawbacks. On the positive side there is the influx of new and fresh thinking and when

these people on secondment return to their governments, they have an excellent understanding of Codex and can act as “ambassadors” of Codex. However, limited language skills and level of knowledge of Codex matters and experience with UN meetings, can sometimes be a serious impediment and would require substantial training and support from the Codex Secretariat before they can fully depend on staff on secondment. This formation can take easily a few years depending on the skills and expertise of the staff member on secondment. Because of their status in their home countries, professionals on secondment tend to be over-graded due to the requests of the donors. These grades may not always correspond to the tasks that may be assigned to them in the Codex Secretariat.

6 NUMBER OF MEETINGS

29. The number of meetings of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies held since 2000 is presented in Table 4. The number of meetings is invariably high; the highest number of meetings was reached in the biennium 2002-2003, namely 42 meetings.

Table 4. Number of Codex sessions held since 2000 (planning figures for 2009)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
CAC	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
CCEXEC	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	17
CCAFRICA	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	5
CCASIA	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
CCEURO	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	5
CCNEA	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	5
CCLAC	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
CCNASWP	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
CCCF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
CCFA(C)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
CCFH	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
CCFICS	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
CCFL	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
CCGP	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	11
CCMAS	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
CCNFSDU	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
CCPR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
CCRVDF	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
CCCPC	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CCFFP	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
CCFFV	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
CCFO	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	5
CCMH	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
CCMMP	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
CCNMW	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
CCPFV	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
CCS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TFAF	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
TFAMR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
TFFBT	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	7
TFFJ	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
TFQFF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	24	14	21	21	20	19	19	19	21	19	197

	Executive Committees
	Regional Committees
	General Subject Committees
	Commodity Committees
	ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces

7 THE CODEX SECRETARIAT AND ITS PERFORMANCE

7.1 Tasks of the Codex Secretariat

30. The Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission remains almost silent about the role of the Codex Secretary and her staff. Only Rule III (Officers) refers specifically to the Secretary of the Commission (article 5).

The Directors-General of FAO and WHO shall be requested to appoint from the staffs of their organizations a Secretary of the Commission and such other officials, likewise responsible to them, as may be necessary to assist the officers (Chair and Vice-Chairs) and the Secretary in performing all duties that the work of the Commission may require.

31. The core business of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is the elaboration of standards (including guidelines and recommendations), the coordination of food standards work undertaken by other international governmental and non-governmental organizations and the finalization, publication and amendment of standards (and related Codex texts) adopted by the CAC. The task of the Codex Secretariat is directly related to the core business of the CAC. Essential functions of the Codex Secretariat are:

- organizing meetings of the CAC and the CCEXEC and preparing working documents, meeting reports and follow-up activities;
- preparing working documents, meeting reports and follow-up activities of meetings of subsidiary bodies;
- communication and dissemination of Codex documents to member states (through Codex Contact Points) and other interested organizations;
- liaising with other international intergovernmental and non-governmental standard-setting organizations.

32. In essence, the elaboration of standards is not a complex process. It is a more or less linear work process starting with a proposal and ending with an adopted text uploaded to the website. However, in the daily routine of the Codex Secretariat the elaboration and execution of the other essential functions results in a multitude of tasks, which are summarized in Table 5. It should be noted that the Secretariat is required to provide multi-lingual support on both technical and procedural matters at all stages of standards development.

Table 5. Tasks of the Codex Secretariat

<p>Overall programme management (Codex Secretary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget management (budget preparation, expenditure planning, expenditure monitoring, reporting); • clearance of financial documents (as Budget Holder); • personnel management (periodic appraisals, within-grade increases); • personnel recruitment (vacancy announcements, sorting applications, interviews, staff selection committees), including negotiating with Personnel Division at all levels including staff redeployment cases; • overtime management; • managing office space and equipment including IT deployment; • various reporting to CAC, CCEXEC, FAO governing bodies, WHO governing bodies, FAO/PBE⁹, FAO internal evaluation teams, donors (Japan and Republic of Korea have currently seconded Professional staff to the Codex Secretariat); • task allocation among officers and general oversight; • acting as Officer-in-charge for the Division during the absence of Director AGN, and advising the Director on various matters; • attending internal meetings in FAO; • meeting with visitors (diplomats, academics, INGO representatives, students); • advising officers on technical and procedural issues;

⁹ Office of Programme, Budget and Evaluation

- clearance of all Codex session reports (before final circulation);
- discussing policy matters with the Chairperson and host governments;
- answering queries from Rome or Geneva based missions, answering queries from the general public, addressing queries from the media and responding in interviews (radio, papers, etc.);
- representing Codex in external meetings (policy level);
- routing incoming communications (post, email);
- liaising with other FAO and WHO divisions including the headquarters and regional offices as well as the Codex Trust Fund secretariat.
- preparation of key documents for Codex sessions;
- commenting on FAO internal documents (e.g. working documents for FAO bodies, FAO evaluation reports, national summary papers, etc.);
- briefing newly appointed FAO representatives;
- routine reporting to FAO and WHO (Back-to-Office reports of all Secretariat staff; periodic financial reports; FAO session briefing and reports, before and after each Codex session, etc.).

Running of committees and task forces (all **Food Standards Officers**):

- support to and liaison with the host governments (especially new ones, venues in developing countries);
- support to the chairperson (preparation of briefing notes);
- issuing Circular Letters, sorting and editing replies received;
- drafting and editing working papers;
- arranging for translations, technically supporting translators and interpreters (selection of reference material);
- dispatching background and advocacy material to the venue;
- liaising with the Codex Trust Fund secretariat and supporting the trust fund operation where necessary;
- attending pre-session working groups;
- briefing the chairperson, assisting chairperson during the sessions;
- taking notes during the session, drafting report;
- liaising with in-session translation team;
- managing CRDs;
- attending social events;
- advising working group leaders;
- keeping track of working groups established by Codex bodies: attend physical meetings to make sure that procedure is well understood and followed, make suggestions on the structure of the draft standard under development, remind the working group of the links with the existing Codex documents;
- updating database [MRLs of pesticide residues and veterinary drugs, General Standard for Food Additives (GFSA)];
- liaising with FAO/WHO secretariats (managing deadline for working documents, coordination with scientific bodies secretaries);
- keeping track of FAO/WHO scientific bodies to make sure that the intent of the Codex body is well understood by the scientific body and vice versa;
- keeping track of OIE, OECD, ISO or UNECE bodies dealing with standards: attend physical meetings in Rome, Geneva or elsewhere (the Codex Secretariat can cover some 50% of all opportunities, but not more); send written comments to those bodies.

Finalization of the adopted texts for publication (all **Food Standards Officers**)

- reflect changes at Step 8 into the final version; control translation errors, formatting, updating footnotes, arranging for special translation (Russian, Arabic, Chinese)

Publication of the Codex Alimentarius, the Procedural Manual and Codex advocacy material:

- CD-ROM, Web-version, Special thematic publications, archive and historical documents;
- posters, postcards, leaflets, booklets, DVD, etc.;

- managing on-site and off-site storage;
- dispatch documentation upon demand.

Organization of CAC and CCEXEC

- all logistics, including: offices/meeting rooms management; seating plans; badges; computer and other equipment; Rome/Geneva transportation; local printing; remote translation; financials (local disbursement, Letter of Agreement with WHO, local purchase and order, recording and filming, photos); planning social events; control all informal meetings and events; liaison with key observers; liaison with Codex bureau members; parallel meetings with FAO and WHO; coordinating legal support; management of elections; document desk; advocacy; hall decoration and security.

Observers – managing new and old applications for observer status, monitoring the participation of existing observers, determining those who should lose observer status after a determined period of inactivity, information exchange.

Develop and manage Codex session planning – contact with host governments.

Represent Codex in external fora (international conferences, regional and national workshops, non-governmental meetings); due to lack of staff time, the Codex Secretariat can attend only a fraction of the meetings to which they are invited. Priority is given to international events over regional ones, and regional events over national ones.

Represent Codex in official intergovernmental meetings (WTO, OECD, OIE, UNECE, FAO, WHO, UPOV, ICO, IOC, etc.).

Tasks of the Codex Secretariat little known to outsiders

- Arranging for visas (Commission delegates, CCEXEC members) – may reach 100 per year;
- Arranging for personalised invitations (requested by some developing countries);
- Arranging for travel (CAC bureau members);
- Briefing newly appointed representatives to FAO;
- Replying to queries from outside (up to one hundred per day) – priority is given to attending to queries from governmental entities and forwarding others to CCPs (if the nationality of originators is known);
- Providing technical assistance to other units in FAO.

7.2 Outcome of the Interviews with Staff of the Codex Secretariat, Staff of FAO and WHO and the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

33. In this section of the report, a summary will be presented of the interviews held with the staff of the Secretariat staff of FAO and WHO who either hold responsibility for Codex within the parent organization or work with and provide services to the Codex Secretariat, and the Chair of the CAC. Interviews with Codex staff focused on questions such as the organization and management of their work, developments noticed during the last couple of years, level of job satisfaction, suggestions on how to improve the functioning of the Secretariat, etc., whilst the interviews with other FAO and WHO staff and the Chair of the CAC concentrated on questions such as the way they judge the capacity and effectiveness of the Codex Secretariat and ways to improve its efficiency and productivity.

7.2.1 The Management

34. The current Codex Secretary took office in October 2003. As of that date the post of Codex Secretary was graded as a D-1 post with all the responsibilities of a Service Chief reporting to a D-2 Director within FAO. It also means that budgetary and other administrative responsibilities were accorded to the Secretary, for which he was not compensated by, for instance, an additional General Service post. His

secretary (G-5) assists the Secretary of the Commission and the three Senior Food Standards Officers in performing their managerial duties, while also overseeing the whole administrative operation of the Codex Secretariat.

35. The Codex Secretary has gradually implemented a number of changes in the management of the Secretariat. Of particular note is the explicit role of the two Senior Food Standards Officers in the daily management and a more systematic rotation of Food Standards Officers over the various subsidiary bodies.

36. The two Senior Food Standards Officers (P-5) have oversight over two important areas of work. One P-5 officer has oversight over all the pre-adoption work in Codex (the standard setting work including the critical review for the CCEXEC). The other P-5 officer is responsible for the post-adoption work (communication and publications, including the finalization of standards and uploading of adopted texts to the website). Over the last couple of years, there has been a shift in emphasis in the work of Codex, with communication becoming increasingly more important. Generally the Codex Secretary primarily consults with these two senior officers on management issues in the Codex office, as well as on outstanding issues in Codex.

37. In the past, the Codex Secretariat had to service a large number of meetings with very few staff. While this meant that each member of the staff would at some point participate in almost every meeting, the main responsibility (as first officer to a Committee) remained unchanged for years.

38. The increased number of staff has enabled the Secretary to rotate staff among the various subsidiary bodies. This has been actively pursued over recent years, with the aim of broadening staff expertise, building a real team and thus reducing the vulnerability of the Secretariat (in case of sick leave or vacancies). Each biennium, after consultation with his staff, the Secretary assigns the tasks of first and second officers to serve the various committees, knowing that he "cannot satisfy the wishes of all his staff but at least can evenly spread the level of dissatisfaction".

39. In general, Codex meetings, with the exception of the CAC, the CCEXEC and CCGP, are served by two Food Standards Officers. Occasionally a third officer is present; very often, this is one of the officers on secondment. It should be noted that participation of this third officer is not at the expense of the Codex budget, but is paid by the extra-budgetary funds from the government which contributed the staff member on secondment.

40. There is some criticism on the number of Food Standards Officers serving Codex meetings. It was mentioned that better use could be made of the national secretariat of host governments. In response to the questionnaire of host governments, one host country had a similar comment (see below under b).

41. In the view of the Secretariat, there are many good reasons to retain the practice of sending several officers to a Codex meeting:

- Servicing a meeting is not just writing a report: the Secretariat needs to intervene frequently in meetings and delegates always have numerous requests to make of the Secretariat; the lead officer concentrates on advising the chair and the meeting, while back-up officers keep taking notes;
- The back-up officers provide cross-sectional expertise (e.g. CCFA officer in a meeting discussing commodity standards; CCFH officer in a TFAMR, CCFH or CCFFP meeting);
- The quality of the report becomes more and more important because delegations become increasingly concerned about what is in the report. Two independent sets of notes are important. In general, the quality of a report increases if two officers work on it, reading and correcting what the other has written. A rapporteur chosen from among delegates may assist in determining, during the adoption of the report, what was said earlier during the meeting, but cannot assist in the drafting of a report as he/she is not familiar with the style and vocabulary of Codex reports;
- The number of staff to be present in a meeting depends on the length of the agenda, the number and length of draft texts to be finalized at the session and the complexity of the issues that will be discussed;
- The risk of travel incidence is reduced;
- The future takeover of a committee from the current lead officer by the next can be prepared, ensuring the continuity of institutional memory within the Secretariat;

- As complete language coverage as possible can be provided at the top table;
- During breaks, the Codex Secretariat is approached by delegations with questions and discussions. This interaction is important and two officers can better ensure a minimum time for interaction with delegates outside the plenary;
- Senior officers offer on-the-job training to junior officers;
- Having different officers serve prevents committees from taking on too much the characteristics of one particular culture or style, thus harmonizing processes across committees.

42. The contribution of host governments with their national secretariats is invaluable to the Codex Secretariat. However, they cannot fully replace officers of the Codex Secretariat. The Codex Secretariat firmly believes that sending a second officer is a justified and minor investment of resources in order to minimize the risk of failure of a Committee session, which is very expensive.

43. Between sessions, first and second officers to a Committee should also work as a team and replace one another where necessary.

7.2.2 The Staff

44. The staff of the Codex Secretariat comprises qualified and dedicated persons. Several of them have been working in Codex for a long time, while others were more recently appointed.

45. Amongst the Professional staff (P staff) there is a reasonable gender balance; General Service staff (GS staff) is mainly female.

46. On average, staff work long days. Food Standards Officers are frequently on international duty travel, serving Codex meetings or representing Codex in other international forums. Generally speaking, an important part of the work in the Secretariat is planned per biennium, so individual staff members know well in advance what is to be expected.

47. Despite the long working hours and the frequent duty travel, there is a high level of job satisfaction and most staff (if not all) did not express concerns about work-life balance.

48. As to be expected, staff members held different views about the way the Codex Secretary has organized the work within the Secretariat. Regarding the rotation of Professional staff over the various committees, while some are perfectly happy with it, others have concerns as it may create some uncertainty for the future, indicating that in their view the assignment of tasks is not fully transparent and requires more involvement and consultation with the staff.

49. Along the same lines, staff have different opinions on topics like the distinction between Senior Food Standards Officers and Food Standards Officers (P-5 versus P-4 and below); the distinction in responsibilities between first and second officers serving a particular Codex meeting or working as equal partners; the need for better communication within the Secretariat and between officers when serving a meeting; the questions of whether the rotation of Professional staff over committees has resulted in better team work and whether the work is evenly distributed among the Professional staff. It was noted that communication among staff is complicated by the frequent duty travel of Professional staff.

50. Some professionals felt that since the recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation were implemented, resulting in a set of new rules in the Procedural Manual, work has become more bureaucratic with regrettably less room for flexibility.

51. In general, food Standards Officers are seen as being responsible for handling the flow of working documents (including formatting and uploading to the website), the preparation of the reports of Codex meetings and as guardians of the rules. At the same time, they are specialists with an extensive knowledge on many aspects of Codex standards. Several staff members expressed the view that better use can be made of their expertise. In their opinion, Food Standards Officers should play a much more proactive role in standard setting, while administrative tasks should be delegated more to General Service staff, who should also take oneaccountability for these tasks. The dinalization of documents and their uploading to the website can be

further standardized. Under the current conditions, time is a factor that limits the possibilities for Food Standards Officers and the Secretary to take on more proactive roles.

52. Similar views were expressed by other staff/units in FAO and WHO. The Codex Secretary and his professional staff should play a more proactive role, not only in relation to standard setting but also in strengthening the strategic vision and direction of Codex and exploring innovative means of international negotiation on standards. It was observed that the Secretariat is currently very prudent – by some, it was characterized as overly prudent – not to be seen as imposing their views on the Codex membership. It was also mentioned that, in general, Codex staff have strict views on their responsibility and that they should become more flexible. Sometimes Food Standards Officers are perceived as delaying progress by applying the rules too rigidly. It was felt that Codex needs to find new ways to work and to become more effective and efficient, and that narrow readings of the Procedural Manual rooted in old ways of working are counter-productive to achieving these goals. It is also important to recognize that many delegations, especially delegations of new member states, look to the Secretariat for guidance on how to behave in Codex. A proactive and innovation-oriented attitude on the part of the Secretariat sends important signals to delegations.

53. Several staff members mentioned the limited career opportunities given the small size of the Codex Secretariat. Concerns were expressed about a certain lack of transparency or openness in FAO personnel policy, for instance on opportunities to work temporarily in other units of FAO or other UN organizations with the right to return to the original post.

54. Staff members of the Secretariat come from all parts of the world, so in principle they bring with them an understanding and appreciation of the different perspectives which participants, coming from different Codex regions, may have. Many of the professional officers have previous experience in national governments before joining FAO, which is an important asset of the Secretariat.

55. Regarding language skills, it should be noted that at present no staff member, professional or general service, is a native English speaker. This is certainly a disadvantage given the primacy of English in the daily work of the Secretariat. Many staff members have knowledge of the three main languages of Codex. Others are taking courses to become more fluent. Ideally, in any Codex meeting, staff at the head table should be fluent in at least English, French and Spanish. This is becoming increasingly important with the growing number of member states attending Codex meetings. At the moment, not one of the regular staff speaks Chinese or Arabic.

7.2.3 The Budget Process

56. Predictability of the budget is a critical factor in the proper management of large-scale intergovernmental meetings operations like Codex. In recent biennia, the final budget was known only six months into each biennium, making ex-ante planning difficult. This clearly has negative implications for the workflow of the Secretariat. Examples are publications. The planning of publications should fit into the budget cycle; preferably, there should be a publishing plan at the beginning of each biennium, which would avoid situations such as an accumulation of publications at the end of the biennium in order to spend the budget in time. It is not only a burden for the Codex Secretariat, but also for other units within FAO which provide services to the Secretariat. Otherwise, Codex should be allowed to use a saving account in order to have the possibility to carry money over from one year to another.

7.2.4 Workload

57. The Codex Secretariat faces a considerable workload. Serving the regular meetings of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies, and facilitating the standard-setting process from proposal to the publication of an adopted text keeps the Secretariat busy. In addition, new activities have been accorded to the Secretariat as a result of the 2002 joint evaluation of Codex. Those activities are particularly related to the CCEXEC in its new role as management body of the CAC, such as strategic planning and monitoring of the strategic plan, the critical review (review of proposals to undertake new work or to revise a standard and monitoring progress of standard-development) and review of applications from international non-governmental

organizations for observer status. All of these new activities require substantial input from the Secretary and one of the two Senior Food Standards Officers.

58. Increasingly, the Codex Secretariat has been tasked by the CAC (and the CCEXEC) to produce special reports or discussion papers on a variety of substantive and sensitive policy issues. The number and complexity of these documents has increased with the enhanced complexity of the Codex work agenda and the increased size and diversity of the Commission's membership since the mid-1990s.

59. Formerly, the review of applications for observer status was handled almost entirely by the Codex Secretary, with *ad hoc* consultations with the legal services of FAO and WHO. It has now become a much more formal process requiring advice from the CCEXEC to the Directors-General of the parent organizations. One of the reasons to formalize this process is the increased need for (international) governmental organizations like Codex to be transparent and accountable to their membership for decisions. All applications for observer status, even those which obviously do not meet the criteria for admission, are now given an appropriate form and submitted to the Executive Committee. Exhaustive communication with applicants is sometimes necessary in order to complete their dossier. One of the Senior Food Standards Officers is currently overseeing this topic.

60. There is room to set stricter priorities within the Codex Secretariat on issues like the review of the status of observer organizations and the monitoring of the Strategic Plan (regarding the frequency and level of detail). The Secretariat should make better use of IT in managing the flow of documents. This would also help other units within FAO in planning their work. It was mentioned that they currently depend on the presence of certain staff members in the Secretariat to know the status of a certain document. Likewise it was stated that there is a level of uncertainty as to when adopted standards are ready for publication and dissemination. This can be avoided by rigid timing and planning of the process or by immediate finalization, translation and publication of adopted texts after each session of the CAC. Similar comments were received in response to the questionnaires (see below under b).

61. Another major change following the conclusion of the 2002 joint evaluation was the decision of the parent organizations and the CAC to return to annual Commission meetings. As a result, the annual workload of the Codex Secretariat is unevenly distributed throughout the year, a pattern that occurred only every second year in the past. In the months before a meeting of the CAC, work steadily increases (processing working documents, organization of the meeting and related logistics, etc.). After a session of the CAC, adopted Codex texts have to be finalized, edited, formatted and uploaded to the web. The uneven distribution of work throughout the year affects almost all staff members of the Codex Secretariat but also that of several units within FAO providing services to the Secretariat. For that reason, voices within the Secretariat would welcome a return to biennial meetings. Similar views were expressed by those units within FAO that also felt the burden of the annual meetings of the CAC. In such a scenario, the role of the CCEXEC would be key.

62. The Codex Secretariat is seen by the outside world as a rich source of information on food standards in the broadest sense of the word (not only Codex standards, but also questions about EU legislation, US legislation, ISO standards, etc.). This results in a flow of queries from the outside (government entities, more often export/import companies) to the Codex Secretariat. The number of queries is substantial. A General Service staff member can easily spend about 50 per cent of his time responding to these queries; Professional staff also spend time answering more complicated questions. The policy of the Secretariat is to refer as many enquiries as possible to the appropriate organizations and agencies and where possible to refer them to CCPs. However, should a (developing) country not have a fully functional CCP, the Codex Secretariat feels obliged to assist these countries in line with the policy of United Nations organizations to support developing countries. The situation has improved since the launch of the IPFSAPH¹⁰ website.

63. The Codex Secretariat maintains an active contact with the member states through the Codex Contact Points (CCPs). The number of Codex member states continues to increase, as does the number of active CCPs. In response to the questionnaires, CCPs and host governments have expressed their views on the way they value the interaction with the Secretariat (see below under b.)

¹⁰ International Portal on Food Safety and Plant Health

7.2.5 The Codex Website and the IT Function

64. The Codex website is a very important tool for the Secretariat to communicate with the outside world, primarily with member states and their CCPs. It is to be expected that its importance will further increase. The Secretariat has interesting views on how to substantially improve the website as well as on the use of IT in supporting the workflow of the Secretariat. The current website is structured in an old fashioned way; it is very much supply driven. It serves its information function to CCPs and observers reasonably well but offers no easy access to casual visitors, nor does it support the workflow of the Codex Secretariat. It also offers no possibility to CCPs and observers to prioritize languages or Committees. A possible scenario could be to convert part of the website into a password-protected secure site where member states and observer organizations can log in, update their account (for instance up-to-date e-mail addresses of CCPs) and actively search for relevant information. Users would also see open circular letters or other documents for comments (related to standards at step 3, 5 and 7) and submit their replies on line. The advantages of such an interactive system are obvious. For instance, maintaining of a list with up-to-date information of CCPs is currently a very laborious task. It could also result in a reduction of the number of queries to the Secretariat. In the questionnaire for CCPs, several member states mentioned that when all relevant information is readily available on the website, they no longer needed to receive that information by email (see below under b). Furthermore, this would facilitate the Codex Secretariat in receiving comments. This would also reduce the possibility of submissions getting lost among the hundreds of messages that flood the inbox of each Codex officer every day.

65. The transformation of the website into what could be called a "My Codex" environment would require a careful analysis of the workflow of the Codex Secretariat and the needs of CCPs.

66. The "My Codex" environment would also be integrated in the daily work of the Secretariat. Once an officer has finalized a task, it would be automatically online and notifications would be sent to CCPs and Observers. Work processes and, for instance, website amendments can be facilitated by IT applications.

67. In addition to this protected part of the website, a "public information" part should be created, where users can find FAQs and Codex videos.

68. The renewal of the website will require substantial investment in informatics. A preliminary estimate of the cost (staff cost excluded) is US \$ 150,000.

69. In recent years, the Codex Secretariat has provided some seed money to the Regional Coordinators to develop regional Codex websites, not being a copy of the central Codex website. These regional Codex websites should have a particular focus on issues relevant to each region. The Codex Secretariat is about to add links to these regional websites on the central Codex website.

70. The Codex Secretariat has also supported the development of e-learning courses about Codex.

7.2.6 Communication

71. Codex is an important programme with clear added value for both FAO and WHO. In terms of communication and promotion, Codex is not an easy subject because of the very technical nature of the work. As Codex is a joint programme, communication has to be coordinated with both FAO and WHO; this does not make effective communication easier. Approval of a Codex press release by FAO and WHO hierarchies may take up to one week or more. Occasionally, opportunities might have been missed to proactively promote Codex. There is also a tendency within the Codex Secretariat to be averse to risks. The Codex Secretariat should take a more proactive stance in communicating about Codex and its relevance for the international community.

72. To enhance the visibility of Codex, the Codex Secretariat has been made serious efforts to create a Codex logo. However, all these efforts were in vain. For political and administrative reasons it proved almost to be impossible for a subsidiary body of two independent UN organizations to have its own logo.

73. Since the 2002 joint evaluation, the Codex Secretariat has already strengthened its communication function but it is now time to take the next steps. Proactive, less risk-averse communication is in conformity with the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO. This would justify one full staff member for proactive communication within the Codex Secretariat.

7.2.7 Capacity building

74. At present, capacity building is primarily the responsibility of the parent organizations. The Codex Secretariat provides input to FAO and WHO upon request, but would like to become responsible for those capacity building activities that are directly related to Codex and its core activities which they consider as part of their task to communicate about Codex and to promote the organization. This small task can be absorbed without many additional resources, but would require close coordination with the parent organizations. On the other hand, the Codex Secretariat considers that capacity building on Codex at the national level should remain the responsibility of FAO and WHO.

75. To enhance the impact of capacity building programmes in the area of food safety, FAO and WHO are currently looking for a more integrated approach at country level. The objective of the capacity building work is to strengthen the food safety infrastructure at country level, enhancing familiarity with Codex and international standard-setting is just part of this broader objective. Staff in FAO have certain concerns about assigning a capacity building task to the Codex Secretariat, particularly when the Secretariat would undertake this work in isolation and not in coordination with other capacity building work in FAO and WHO. Besides coordination, there should also be clear mandates and lines of demarcation between the Secretariat and other units within FAO and WHO with regard to other capacity building work.

76. Staff in FAO noticed that the promotion of FAO and WHO capacity building work would be better placed in the Regional Coordinating Committees, where there is a more targeted audience than at plenary sessions of the CAC. For them, following Codex work might give a sense of topics that are relevant in each country and of where capacity building might be of value, thus achieving a better focus on the needs of that country. A debriefing after relevant Codex meetings would be welcomed.

7.2.8 Legal advice

77. The Legal Offices of the two parent organizations have a good working relationship and through the years their advice to Codex has proven to be of crucial value. Only very rarely have the Offices held different views pertaining to Codex issues. Complicated issues are dealt with jointly by FAO and WHO, while more simple issues are dealt with by the FAO Legal Office. Matters related to the private sector are primarily the concern of WHO.

78. Both Legal Offices are relatively small units serving the needs of their respective organizations; Codex is but one important programme among many. Therefore, quite often the legal Offices have very limited time and cannot always advise Codex in a timely manner. At present, for instance, FAO Legal Office is under considerable pressure, due in part to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO. Differences in procedures within FAO and WHO add an additional layer of complexity in advising the CAC and the Codex Secretariat.

79. The Codex Secretariat maintains a good relationship with the Legal Offices of FAO and WHO. Finalization of working documents that require solid advice from the Legal Offices often is delayed for the reasons explained above, and certainly not out of a lack of interest.

7.2.9 FAO/WHO Cooperation

80. In general, cooperation between FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretary and his staff is good. However, there are a number of delicate issues which are related to the policy direction of Codex, the *modus operandi* of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies, and budget matters. Examples are the following:

81. The Representative of FAO informed the 60th Session of the CCEXEC that, as a result of the views expressed by member countries in the governing bodies of FAO and WHO and of management

consultations, FAO and WHO had agreed on a joint statement¹¹. The Representative pointed out that Codex was going through a period of change and that member states of FAO and WHO continued to express their wish for improvements in the way the two organisations, including Codex, operated. The items mentioned in this joint statement call upon Codex to speed up its work, to put more emphasis on health issues and to implement modern and more efficient means of international negotiation.

82. In recent meetings of the CAC and the CCEXEC, representatives of the parent organizations frequently referred to this joint statement. At the same time, a certain discomfort between FAO and WHO became apparent, which was particularly related to the respective contributions of FAO and WHO to the joint Codex budget. FAO is clearly disturbed about the current level of WHO's contribution, whereas WHO has repeatedly stated that unless they have a clearer view on the way the budget is spent, they are not willing to reassess their contribution. It was brought to the attention of the consultant that this issue is now being dealt with at the highest level in FAO and WHO.

83. Following the 2002 joint evaluation, WHO took the initiative to put in place an informal "Codex Management Group" consisting of the Assistant Directors-General (ADGs) of FAO and WHO, their respective Directors responsible for Codex matters, and the Codex Secretary. The objective was for the senior management of both organizations to meet two or three times a year to discuss broad policy issues regarding Codex and Codex-related activities such as the provision of scientific advice, providing also a platform for the parent organizations to exchange information and to agree bilaterally on major steps to be taken regarding the Joint Programme, such as increasing their contribution to the Codex budget. This would guarantee the high level involvement of both organizations in an important Joint Programme. Since February 2007, such meetings on "Codex and Codex-related Matters" have taken place regularly, occasionally without the participation of the ADGs.

84. In practice, the "Codex Management Group" has proven to be delicate. It is perceived as an attempt by WHO to enhance its influence over the direction of the work of Codex or it could result in another management layer, micromanaging the daily work of the Codex Secretariat. WHO is disappointed about the reluctance of the Codex Secretary to embrace the idea of a "Codex Management Group". The Codex Secretary, in turn, is concerned about the possible influence of the parent organizations on the programme of work of Codex which, in his view, is primarily a responsibility of the membership of Codex, and the risk that elements of micromanagement might creep in. The Codex Secretary believes that more timely and frequent dialogue between the senior managements of FAO and WHO will contribute to better and more efficient operation of the Codex programme, to the satisfaction of the Codex membership (which is different from that of FAO or that of WHO – not only in terms of the list of countries, but also in terms of constituent ministries). He also considers that the Codex Secretariat should primarily serve the interest of the Commission, which speaks through its own executive organ, and should not be reduced to an intermediary to receive instructions from WHO or FAO. Otherwise, Codex members may lose their sense of ownership of the programme, which has been a primary factor of success of Codex over the past decades. The position of FAO towards the "Codex Management Group" is to safeguard the autonomy of Codex and to retain a reasonable balance between FAO and WHO regarding the Joint Programme. Participants sincerely hope that these meetings will contribute to create an enabling environment for Codex and its Secretariat, making a clear distinction on policy matters regarding Codex and the management of the Codex Secretariat.

85. From the FAO perspective, Article 9 of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission clearly provides that FAO administers Codex on behalf of FAO and WHO. Administered by FAO as a Programme Entity in its Regular Programme, Codex is managed exactly in the same way as any other technical programme in FAO, subjected to financial administration and internal audit.

86. On several occasions in the past, the legal offices of FAO and WHO have informally reflected upon the relationship of Codex and the parent organizations. In their view, Codex as a subsidiary body of FAO and WHO should not ignore the broader policies of the parent organizations but at the same time should have a considerable level of autonomy given the specific and scientific nature of Codex. The CAC advised by the CCEXEC should be able to decide the priorities and work programme for Codex.

¹¹ CRD 8, 60th Session of the CCEXEC (ALINORM 07/31/3)

7.2.10 Bureaucracy

87. FAO is a fairly demanding environment for a manager responsible for an important programme. The hierarchy leaves relatively little room for individual managers to manoeuvre. Examples include the interference of central units in the selection of new staff members for vacant positions in the Secretariat, adhering rigidly to key elements of the post description. When selecting a staff member for a vacant General Service position, dozens of candidates in redeployment from within FAO had to be reviewed by a team from the Secretariat even before an internal vacancy announcement was allowed to be launched, resulting in months of delays and lost time. Frequently, managers are requested to provide all sorts of information at short notice to the senior management. Such incidents are particularly frequent at present due to the conclusion of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

88. WHO management does not usually make requests of the Codex Secretariat. Sometimes WHO takes actions where the Codex Secretariat feels that it should have been consulted in a timely manner (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding between WHO and OIE, World Health Assembly resolutions mentioning Codex and follow-up thereto). A better coordination with WHO through more frequent contacts at the level of the Codex Secretary and his staff would certainly be advisable. It could be envisaged that Codex staff members get seconded to WHO for a limited period of time to learn more about the way WHO works. A deeper understanding would certainly foster better working relationships.

7.3 Analysis of the responses on the questionnaires for Codex Contact Points

7.3.1 General analysis of replies

89. The questionnaire is attached as Annex 3. Questionnaires were sent to 176 Codex Contact Points. By the end of December 2008, 45 responses were received which is a score of 26%. In table 6 the number of responses per region is given.

Table 6:
Number of responses on the questionnaire for Codex Contact Points

Region	number of member states	number of responses received	response rate (%) ¹²
Africa	44	10	23
Asia	22	5	23
Europe, including EC	47	13	28
Latin America and the Caribbean	33	10	30
Near East	17	3	18
North America	2	1	50
South West Pacific	11	3	27
Total	176	45	26

90. This response rate is not overwhelming. Nevertheless, interesting information was obtained from all Codex regions, particularly because many CCPs gave an explanation when they had given "1" as a mark (acceptable but could be improved) or "0" (poor - must be improved) to the performance of any specific service provided by the Secretariat or the quality/satisfaction of any specific element of the website. When CCPs were not entirely satisfied, generally "1" was given as a mark; less frequently "0".

91. The questionnaire for CCPs comprises three major questions:

- (i) the importance and quality of services provided by the Codex Secretariat;
- (ii) the communication with the Codex Secretariat; and
- (iii) the Codex website.

¹² figures rounded off

92. 21 CCPs were satisfied (marked "2" or "3") with the level of service provided on all services as specified under Question 2. 24 CCPs have marked one or more service with "0" or "1".
93. 17 CCPs disagreed with all statements on communication in Question 3. 28 CCPs agreed with or had no opinion on one or more of these statements.
94. 32 CCPs were satisfied (marked "2" or "3") with the quality of the website and the sub-items as specified under Question 5. 13 CCPs gave "0" or "1" as a mark to one or more of the sub-items of the website.
95. 30 CCPs provided an explanation when they had given "1" as a mark (acceptable but could be improved) or "0" (poor- must be improved) to the performance of any specific service provided by the Secretariat or the quality/satisfaction of any specific element of the website.
96. Codex Contact Points are "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the overall services provided by the Codex Secretariat (Question 5). No CCP was "not satisfied", 1 CCP was "somewhat satisfied", 23 were "satisfied" and 20 were "very satisfied". One CCP has not indicated its level of overall satisfaction. Even when CCPs had rated certain elements in the questions with "1" or "0" or had agreed with one or more statements in Question 2 (Communication), this obviously had not influenced their overall level of satisfaction.
97. Given the low response to the questionnaire and the significant variability of ratings, given particularly under Question 2 (services provided) and Question 4 (Codex website), no further numerical analysis was performed. An analysis of the comments provided proved to be more relevant. A summary follows of the comments given on each of the Questions.

7.3.2 Question 2: Services provided by the Codex Secretariat

7.3.2.1 Working documents, Circular Letters and Letters of Invitation

98. Seven CCPs commented on the timely availability of working documents in relevant languages and the need to improve this process. They were aware that often the Codex Secretariat is not responsible for preparing the documents but that a member country has the lead in the development of a paper. The Codex Secretariat could play a more proactive role to ensure that host countries and those members leading work are well aware of the timelines required to ensure that all Codex members have sufficient time to consider the documents.
99. Some CCPs made similar observations regarding the Circular Letters and the Letters of Invitation with the provisional agenda, pointing to the deadlines laid down in the Procedural Manual and also stressing the need that all language versions of working documents, Circular Letters and Letters of Invitation should be distributed simultaneously.

7.3.2.2 Reports of meetings

100. Three CCPs provided comments on the quality of the reports. In their view, reports have become overly summarized and have lost consistency. Reports should not only reflect the decisions taken, but also a detailed description of the discussion allowing those who did not participate to understand what has happened in a meeting. One CCP mentioned that the verbatim record should be included, particularly when a country or a group of countries disagrees with a decision or conclusion.

7.3.2.3 Procedural Manual

101. A few CCPs observed that there is room for a better structuring of the Procedural Manual. One CCP suggested to split the Manual in two parts, one on the institutional arrangements of Codex and the rights and obligations of members, the remainder of the current text in a second part.

7.3.2.4 Updating the Codex Website

102. In their comments, four CCPs pointed to the importance of the timely updating of the Codex website, and noted that there is room for improvement. One of these CCPs specifically referred to the pesticide and veterinary drug MRL databases. In the light of their relevance for trade and food safety issues, and the need to be able to access the most accurate and up-to-date information, these databases should be updated immediately after a session of the CAC.

7.3.2.5 Advocacy material

103. A variety of answers has been given by CCPs on the importance of advocacy material (posters, postcards, DVDs, videos and a Codex A-5 format brochure) and their appreciation of the way the Codex Secretariat disseminates this material. Some CCPs are not aware of the existence of advocacy material. Several CCPs consider advocacy material of little importance, particularly the posters and the postcards. They do not use this material within their countries. CCPs also indicated that they do not receive this material, or at least not on a regular basis. One CCP mentioned that DVDs and videos are very useful in the conduct of local training and raising awareness of what Codex is all about. They would like to see more DVDs and videos being prepared for this purpose. The same CCP also referred to the Codex brochure as a very useful document and quick reference guide for senior managers in government and non-governmental organizations. In their view, this brochure should be distributed to CCPs on a more regular basis.

7.3.2.6 Reply to queries from CCPs

104. Almost all CCPs consider replies by the Codex Secretariat to their queries as an important service. Seven CCPs marked the performance of this service with either "0" or "1". One CCP explicitly stated that the Secretariat is always responsive to their requests for information or clarification and marked the performance of this service with "3". Other CCPs suggested that the Codex Secretariat could make available an organizational chart of its staff with contact details in order to facilitate the contact of the appropriate official on a specific subject or to indicate who is in charge when the responsible officer is on duty travel or leave.

105. The reply to queries was also an item in Question 3. See below for the responses of CCPs.

7.3.2.7 Miscellaneous

106. 14 CCPs provided comments on other services. Several CCPs pointed to the fact that sometimes relevant information is sent late to CCPs (invitations, announcements, hotel and travel information, reminders before deadlines, etc.) and that in general the Codex Secretariat could improve the distribution of documents and information to CCPs. Some CCPs mentioned that they never receive reminders to submit written comments before deadlines. One CCP in that regard was of the opinion that once this information is available in a timely manner on the Codex website, there would no longer be a need to send it to CCPs, thus saving Codex Secretariat time. The same CCP mentioned that, in their view, CD-ROMs are superfluous when this information is already available on the Codex website. One CCP stated that it would be helpful if the list of Circular Letters was completed by including Circular Letters that are listed within Alinorms. It is not very well known that Codex Secretariat staff have authored articles in magazines and journals; several CCPs stated that they were not even aware of this. One CCP stated the need for capacity building to improve the performance of the CCP.

7.3.3 Question 3: Communication with the Codex Secretariat

107. For this question, a numerical assessment of the responses gives an interesting overview of the concerns expressed by CCPs. Table 7 summarizes the responses of CCPs (agreement with a statement or no opinion). As mentioned above, 17 CCPs disagreed with all statements. Several CCPs provided comments when they had agreed with one or more of the statements. A few CCPs explicitly stated that they have no problems at all in communicating with the Secretariat.

Table 7. Number of CCPs agreeing or expressing no opinion on any of the statements in Question 3

Statement	Agree	No Opinion
Too many Codex messages flooding my e-mail box all the time	10	2
File attachments are too big in size	2	1
I face difficulties to sort out Codex messages that are relevant too me	6	1
I receive too many non-Codex announcements	3	5
I have no regular access to e-mails	3	-
Messages that I sent to the Codex Secretariat got lost	5	2
I get no reply from the Codex Secretariat or it takes a long time	13	1
Other people in my government send replies to Circular Letters or comments without informing me as CCP	7	2

108. The response of CCPs to two statements are of particular interest in evaluating communication between the Codex Secretariat and the CCPs. 10 CCPs are of the opinion that too many Codex messages are flooding their email boxes all the time and 13 CCPs stated that frequently either they do not get a reply to queries from the Codex Secretariat, or only after a long time.

109. A few CCPs noted that they increasingly rely on the Codex website and that they do not wish to receive all working documents by email and certainly not in all language versions. One CCP mentioned specifically that the Codex Secretariat should focus on a timely update of the website as this would facilitate the work of a CCP and could reduce the flow of email messages to individual CCPs. When working documents of Codex meetings are immediately uploaded to the website, there is no need to send these documents to all CCPs but only to those who wish to receive them by email.

110. The timely response of the Codex Secretariat to queries from CCPs was also an item under Question 2 (see above). Under Question 3, one CCP stated to have problems with out of office replies and proposed that another staff member should be designated to deal with the queries.

111. Three CCPs commented on the statement that other persons in their country, rather than the CCP, communicate with the Codex Secretariat; one of these CCPs suggested that the Codex Secretariat could even be clearer on the CCPs' responsibility in CLs.

7.3.3.1 Codex Trust Fund

112. Seven CCPs provided comments regarding the Codex Trust Fund; several of them criticized the management of the Fund. These CCPs stated that because of the problems with the Trust Fund (discussions on itinerary, late confirmation of travel authorization, etc.) they had missed the opportunity to attend several Codex meetings in 2007 and 2008. One CCP mentioned that frequently people in his country communicate with the management of the Trust Fund without informing the CCP or consulting the National Codex Committee. Corrective measures were taken by the CCP to avoid this in future. Another CCP stressed also the need for communication with the Trust Fund to go through the CCP. One CCP stated that better statistical informal should be provided on an annual basis in management reports. Another CCP proposed the applications and the reports of beneficiary countries should be published to enhance the transparency of the Codex Trust Fund. One CCP stated that the Secretariat should act as arbiter between beneficiary countries and the Codex Trust Fund.

7.3.4 Question 4: The Codex Website

113. Several CCPs mentioned that the on-line availability of certain documents on the Codex website is less relevant to them as their staff use primarily hard copies (for instance, the Procedural Manual, Understanding Codex). Hence they have rated the frequency of use of these sub-items with a "0".

114. Eight CCPs indicated that they face problems with service interruption. Some CCPs have sometimes difficulties in opening (certain parts of) the website or downloading documents or opening DVDs.

115. An interesting observation can be made regarding "Audio recordings". 23 CCPs indicated that they rarely or never listen to audio recordings of the meetings of the CAC and the Executive Committee. At the same time they were satisfied (or very satisfied) with this part of the Codex website. One CCP suggested to put video recordings of meetings on the website and to put translated versions of the audio recordings in French and Spanish on the web.

116. More specific comments were made on the following issues.

117. Seven CCPs recommended improving the search function of the Codex website, specifically for official Codex standards and working documents of the CAC and the subsidiary bodies.

118. Two CCPs would welcome a listing of all physical working groups and electronic working groups, sorted by Committee or Task force, with dates, agendas, deadlines for submission of comments, much as is currently done for ordinary meetings of the CAC and the subsidiary bodies. This would give members a better overview of all Codex activities in a given year and it would work as a planning tool for members to organize their participation in Codex meetings and to provide input through comments on Circular Letters.

119. A variety of other suggestions were made by individual CCPs: extending the website with an Arabic version; including links to the websites of the Regional Coordinating Committees; improving the presentation of the databases of MRLs for pesticides and veterinary drugs and the GFSA¹³; including explanatory information; and adding a glossary of definitions. The necessity of the timely updating of the website, simultaneously in all the official languages, was mentioned.

7.3.5 Question 5: Overall Satisfaction

120. As indicated above, CCPS are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall level of services provided by the Codex Secretariat.

121. One CCP noticed that during Codex meetings the Codex Secretariat does not always give equal attention to interventions and requests from member states but that some staff members of the Secretariat tend to systematically ignore requests from developing countries. This affects the relationship with and the confidence in the Secretariat. The Codex Secretariat should be strictly neutral.

7.3.6 Summary of main conclusions to be drawn from the Questionnaire for National Codex Contact Points

122. Main conclusions

- CCPs are generally satisfied with the services provided by the Codex Secretariat;
- Need to improve the timely distribution of working documents and other relevant documents and information;
- Need to improve the timely update of the Codex Website, particularly after each meeting of the CAC;
- Need to reduce the number of Codex messages send by email to CCPs;
- Need to improve the process of responding to queries from CCPs;
- Need to improve the search function on the Codex website;
- Need for better clarification of the responsibilities of FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat regarding the Codex Trust Fund.

¹³ Codex General Standard for Food Additives

7.4 Questionnaire for Host Governments

123. The questionnaire is attached as annex 4. Responses were received from nine out of 16 host governments that had received the questionnaire, which is a score of 60 per cent. Eight governments that had filled in the questionnaire gave an explanation for their rating or provided additional comments. Responses were received from governments hosting General Subject Committees, Commodity Committees or *ad hoc* International Task Forces. All of them had at least 5 years of experience as host government; many of them have been host countries since the inception of their respective subsidiary body. As a result, the appreciation of these host governments regarding the services provided by the Codex Secretariat might not be entirely representative for all host governments currently responsible for one or more subsidiary bodies of Codex.

124. Host governments in the Codex system share the workload with the Codex Secretariat in terms of drafting and finalization of working documents, providing translation (of working documents and reports) and interpretation. Translation and interpretation is entirely the responsibility of host governments according to current guidelines¹⁴. In the past, these guidelines were interpreted and implemented by host governments in different ways but this has now been fully harmonized. In the case of the Regional Coordinating Committees cost of translation and interpretation is covered by the Codex budget. .

125. One host government was not satisfied with the services provided by the Codex Secretariat. Their comments showed that this was due to the experience with individual Food Standards Officers serving a recent meeting of their subsidiary body rather than reflecting a general vision on the performance of the Codex Secretariat in its entirety. The problems they had faced regarded the timely briefing of the chair and the national secretariat on procedures, logistics and the agenda of the meeting, the handling of the preparation of the draft report throughout the week and the deadlines set by the Secretariat for translation and distribution of Circular Letters. On those three issues they saw a need for considerable improvement.

126. As the criticism of this host government could be linked directly to two individual Food Standards Officers, the views of the Codex Secretariat were also explicitly sought in this case.

127. Without going into detail, much of the discord seems to have stemmed from misunderstanding between the host government and the Codex Secretariat and the situation can only improve for the next session of this Committee.

128. Several specific observations can be made on the responses received regarding the importance of services provided by the Codex Secretariat and their level of performance. The overall conclusion is that host governments value most of the services provided by the Codex Secretariat and that they are satisfied with the level of performance.

7.4.1 Importance of services provided

129. The following services provided by the Codex Secretariat are seen as less important or less relevant (when 3 or more host governments have rated the importance by "0" or "not applicable").

- advising on the choice of venue for the session;
- advising on the selection criteria for a Chairperson;
- advising on other logistics including seating plan, documentation, use of advocacy material;
- technically assisting translation by the host government of draft report;
- technically assisting translation by the host government of final report;
- providing support to the host government to develop capacities of the national secretariat.

130. Regarding the place of venue, one host government felt that the Secretariat could play a more active role in the selection of venues outside of the host country especially in assessing venues against the "factors" to be taken into account as identified by the Codex Secretariat. The following services are generally seen as

¹⁴ Guidelines to Host Governments of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces, Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 17th Edition, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 2007.

important but less applicable given the experience of the host governments that responded to the questionnaire:

- advising on timetable including opening, social events and possible night sessions;
- assisting translation by providing references;
- assisting in identification of qualified interpreters;
- providing support to Chairperson to develop skills.

7.4.2 Level of performance

131. On three issues, several host governments have indicated that services could be improved (3 or more host governments rated a service with "0" or "1"):

- facilitation of conclusion of Letter of Agreement and Memorandum of Responsibilities;
- finalization of working documents;
- uploading adopted Codex texts to the Codex website.

132. Timely conclusion of Letters of Agreement and Memoranda of Responsibilities has now become much more important because host governments regularly move the venue outside their country. Several host governments pointed to recent experience with the Letters of Agreement stating that this process needs to be improved considerably. When Letters of Agreement are not signed in time, invitations cannot be sent out. A host government then runs the risk that a meeting may not be able to be held.

133. Another unit in FAO, (KCCO)¹⁵, rather than the Codex Secretariat, is responsible for the Letters of Agreement. They are aware of the problems that have occurred. In practice there are two lines of communication: the informal one is between the Codex Secretariat and Ministries of Agriculture or Health, whose representatives participate in Codex meetings; the formal one is between FAO (KCCO) and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When problems arise, the Legal Office also becomes involved. KCCO is somewhat concerned about Codex Secretariat practice of sending draft Letters of Agreement to member states that have showed an interest in hosting a Codex meeting. It may be perceived as an invitation to open negotiations where in reality there is very little room to negotiate. The Codex Secretariat has produced a working document on this matter for the upcoming 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in connection with the evaluation of co-hosting arrangements.

134. The observations regarding the timely finalization of working documents and the uploading of adopted Codex texts to the website are consistent with similar observation made by CCPs in response to the first questionnaire. When working documents are not available in a timely manner, this hinders the preparation of national positions. One host government attributed this to insufficient resources being available to the Secretariat.

7.4.3 Other comments

135. One host government stated that the cost of overseas travel is a significant expense for all involved in Codex. The use of the host government secretariat or rapporteurs during committees could reduce the amount of duty travel done by the Codex Secretariat, for example some meetings could be serviced by one Codex Secretariat staff member working closely with the host government secretariat and rapporteurs. Another host government suggested that Codex staff should travel with their own laptop computers for recording the proceedings of a session to facilitate the drafting of the report. In general, the Secretariat should move to use modern word-processing technology when taking notes to document what is said during sessions and during the adoption of the agenda. It was stated that some host governments employ such technologies and the utility of such approaches should be evaluated with a view to their broader use.

136. The view of the Codex Secretariat was solicited on the issue of host governments assisting in drafting reports of Codex Sessions. In order to maintain the high level of quality of the reports in terms of uniformity, consistency and language (i.e. Codex style and terminology, United Nations spelling, political

¹⁵ Conference and Council Affairs Division (Knowledge and Communication Department)

correctness) the Codex Secretariat prefers to draft reports themselves rather than to share this work with host governments. Experience gained so far shows that disadvantages outweigh advantages, if any.

137. Taking notes and converting them into a draft report is an intellectual exercise, not merely mechanically recording interventions. Interventions are condensed to the essence while notes are taken and are grouped together in drafting the report. In the final report the order of interventions and the way they are presented may need to be changed in order to strengthen the flow of logic and make the report concise. Each officer usually chooses the best method for him or her, including the choice of language (some take notes in English, others in the language of the intervention).

7.3.4 Summary of main conclusions to be drawn from the questionnaire for Host Governments

138. Main conclusions:

- Host governments are reasonably satisfied with the assistance provided by the Codex Secretariat;
- There is room for a tailor-made approach by the Secretariat when providing services to a host government, based on the experience and needs of that government;
- Urgent need to improve the process to conclude Letters of Agreement between host governments (particularly when the venue is moved to another country) and FAO;
- The process of the finalization of working documents could be improved;
- Adopted Codex texts should be uploaded to the website immediately following each session of the CAC.

8 APPRAISAL, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

139. Codex is going through a dynamic transition period. In 1994 Codex standards were recognized in the Agreements of the WTO. Codex has since become more political and as a consequence more controversial. Previously, given the purely voluntary and technical nature of its standards, Codex was able to operate in a quieter environment. At the same time, the world is changing and emerging economies and developing countries are becoming increasingly influential in international negotiations, including in Codex. On substance, Codex has significantly broadened the scope of its work. Until the mid-1990s, Codex focused primarily on commodity standards, issues such as food labelling and standards on chemicals in food. Codex has now fully implemented the working principles of risk analysis, facilitating the work on health related standards, and has elaborated important standards and guidelines in the area of microbiological food safety, biotechnology and import and export systems.

140. In 2002, FAO and WHO launched the Joint Evaluation of Codex Alimentarius and Food Standards Work of FAO and WHO, the first large-scale evaluation since the establishment of Codex in 1961/63. Its recommendations related to Codex have been almost fully implemented, with the exception of a definition on consensus and the use of facilitators¹⁶. Recommendations regarding the Codex Secretariat have been only partly implemented, in line with the agreement reached by FAO and WHO.

141. In line with the spirit of the 2002 joint evaluation, in 2003 FAO and WHO established the Codex Trust Fund to enable the enhanced participation of developing countries in Codex. Five years after its inception, the Trust Fund has contributed significantly to the enhanced participation of developing countries from all regions in Codex meetings.

142. Despite the full implementation of the recommendations regarding Codex, FAO and WHO presented a Joint Statement to the CCEXEC in December 2007 urging Codex to speed up the elaboration of Codex standards, give priority to health-related issues and modernize its working methods. In the opening address of the 2008 CAC, representatives of the parent organizations reiterated these concerns.

¹⁶ ALINORM 08/31/Rep, para 147 (Report of the 31st Session of the CAC, 2008)

143. In the same meeting of the CAC, developing countries expressed deep concerns about the legitimacy of Codex as not yet all member countries are able to participate actively in Codex negotiations, nor have they been enabled to do so despite the Codex Trust Fund and the technical support provided by FAO and WHO.

144. The Codex Secretariat, as a crucial part of the Codex organization, operates in the centre of these dynamic developments. The Secretariat, in close cooperation with the host governments and the national Codex Contact Points in member states, is responsible for the continuity in the work of Codex. An appraisal of its performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness can only be made in the context of developments made since the early 1990s and which have continued during the past 5 years (the period that was taken into account by the current evaluation).

8.2 Summary of findings

145. The conclusions of the 2002 joint evaluation regarding the Codex Secretariat are, in fact, still valid. The enhanced resources of the Codex Secretariat were readily absorbed by the new activities accorded to the Secretariat, mainly as a consequence of the new status of the CCEXEC as management body of the CAC, including the Critical Review and monitoring the progress of the Strategic Plan and the annual meetings of the CAC. In particular, the increase in the contribution from WHO was completely absorbed by the loss of the exchange rate of the US dollar against the Euro.

146. The interviews held and the responses to the questionnaires indicate a reasonable level of satisfaction with the performance of the Codex Secretariat and the services provided to CCPs and host governments.

147. The changes the Codex Secretary has implemented in the management of the work, notably the explicit role of the two Senior Food Standards Officers in the management of the work and the more systematic rotation of the Food Standards Officers over the subsidiary bodies of Codex, seem to function well. Further improvement in team building among Codex staff and communication within the Secretariat is desirable.

148. Staff in FAO, without any exception, recognize the hard work of the Codex Secretariat and the good cooperation between their respective units and the Secretariat. Units responsible for translation and publication indicated that they would welcome a more rigid planning of the workflow within the Secretariat as this would help them to better organize their work. In light of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE), it was mentioned that the Secretariat should strengthen its communication function, including in its communication to the public at large. Proactive communication fits in with the new strategy of FAO. It should be noted that as a result of the IEE, FAO may in future decide to decentralize certain functions, such as the provision of legal advice, which would then have significant implications for the Secretariat.

149. More critical voices were heard in WHO, expressing criticism that was partly of a political nature, and partly with regard to more technical aspects. Regarding political issues, there is an ongoing dispute between FAO and WHO about the WHO contribution to the joint Codex budget. WHO insists on a more detailed breakdown of budget figures to better understand the way the budget is spent. FAO, for its part, is becoming increasingly concerned about the increased disparity between the respective contributions of the parent organizations to the joint Codex budget. These issues are closely related with the FAO/WHO Codex Management Group; FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretary may have different views on the role of this group, or different perceptions of that role. WHO regrets that the Codex Secretary opposes this Group as a management structure. WHO is in favour of a more proactive role of the Codex Secretariat. In their view, the Codex Secretary should create in Codex a sense of urgency for change. On technical matters, WHO is of the opinion that the Codex Secretary can economize on expenditures by reducing the number of staff sent to Codex meetings, making better use of the national secretariats of host governments and improving the logistics of the meetings organized by the Secretariat (CAC and CCEXEC).

150. CCPs are generally “satisfied” to “very satisfied” with the services provided by the Codex Secretariat. Nevertheless, CCPs have identified areas of work where there is a need for improvement:

- timely distribution of working documents and other relevant documents and information;
- timely update of the Codex website, particularly after each meeting of the CAC;
- reduction of the number of Codex messages sent by email to CCPs;

- improvement of the process of responding to queries from CCPs;
- improvement of the search function on the Codex website.

151. Several CCPs commented on the Codex Trust Fund, with regard to the selection criteria for eligibility, the management of the Fund and the perceived role of the Secretariat in the Trust Fund. The fact that several CCPs commented on the Codex Trust Fund in relation to the performance of the Codex Secretariat or even suggested that the Codex Secretariat should have a role in the management of the Codex Trust Fund is an indication that it is not clear to the outside world who in fact is responsible for this Fund. The Codex Secretariat is not responsible for the Trust Fund. This responsibility rests entirely with the parent organizations, while WHO is responsible for the administration of the Trust Fund on a daily basis (review of applications, travel authorizations, etc.).

152. Host governments are reasonably satisfied with the assistance provided by the Codex Secretariat. Host governments have also provided useful suggestions as to how the Codex Secretariat could further improve their services to host governments:

- There is room for a tailor-made approach by the Codex Secretariat when providing services to a host government, based on the experience and needs of that government;
- Urgent need to improve the process to conclude Letters of Agreement between host governments (particularly when the venue is moved to another country) and FAO;
- The process of the finalization of working documents should be improved;
- Adopted Codex texts should be uploaded to the website immediately following each session of the CAC.

8.3 Appraisal

153. In the follow-up to the independent Codex evaluation, FAO and WHO allocated additional resources to the Codex Secretariat. However, these resources were readily absorbed by the enhanced workload. Devaluation of the US dollar against the Euro between 2003 and 2008 had a dramatic impact on the purchasing power of the Secretariat. In January 2003, one Euro was worth about one US dollar; in summer 2008 this ratio had shifted to 1.5. According to the 2002 budget preparation guidelines, one P-5 post based in Rome, Italy, cost USD 253,000 for a biennium; in 2008 the same post cost USD 436,000.

154. At present, three professional staff members have been seconded by their respective governments to the Codex Secretariat but they will leave Rome in the course of 2009, and not all of them may be replaced. Without these staff members, the Codex Secretariat will be unable to support all the ongoing activities in Codex and to implement the improvements in the current work as indicated in this review. In recent years, the CCEXEC has accepted with regret that only three meetings per biennium could be served by the Secretariat; ideally, the CCEXEC should meet twice per year. Any programme needs a minimum critical mass, and the current number of staff is really a minimum. With the departure of seconded staff and the eventual departure of temporary staff (currently a professional staff member with IT expertise is working in the Secretariat on a short-term contract), the capacity of the Secretariat is becoming unsustainable.

155. Operating within the current boundaries of human and financial resources means that only by a significant reducing the number of Codex meetings can capacity be freed up to implement the necessary improvements and initiate new activities, particularly in relation to those issues as indicated in the Joint Statement in which the Secretariat should play a proactive role.

156. It is not very likely that the Codex membership will easily consent to a significant reduction in the number of meetings. Based on the responses to the questionnaire for CCPs, the CAC will continue to have different views on the length of reports. Likewise, it is to be expected that language policy of the Commission will remain a sensitive topic. On these issues, the Codex Secretariat and the CAC can only prudently manoeuvre, seeking to strike a balance between inclusiveness and equity among members and an effective use of resources. But it is unlikely that on those issues significant savings can be achieved.

157. There are options to further improve the management of workload and workflow in the Secretariat, such as the use of IT in the support of these processes, more systematic planning of certain activities and delegation of specific administrative tasks from Professional staff to General Service staff.

158. There are also factors to improve the functioning of the Codex Secretariat which are not within the Secretariat's control. Serious inefficiencies hampering the basic functioning of the Codex Secretariat can be identified. Some of these inefficiencies are related to the administrative procedures in FAO. Others stem from the necessity to coordinate matters with the parent organizations, for instance, on communication, legal advice, budget matters but also on the formal approval of provisional agendas of Codex meetings. Frequently, the necessary input or clearance is only obtained after a serious lapse of time, absorbing substantial time and energy from the Secretariat.

159. The present evaluation touched upon those factors that affect the proper functioning of the Codex Secretariat and ultimately that of the Commission, but which are not under the control of the Secretariat. A full review of these factors was not in the remit of the present evaluation. It might be useful to undertake an independent evaluation of the relationship between FAO and WHO with regard to their support for Codex, and, in addition, of each organization's own interaction with Codex and the Secretariat with a view to improving the enabling environment in which the Secretariat must operate and, where possible, to enhancing the relative autonomy of the Codex Secretariat, another of the recommendations of the 2002 joint evaluation.

160. The meetings of the CAC, held annually in conformity with the 2003 decision taken by the parent organizations and the CAC, have a significant impact on the Codex Secretariat and result every year in an uneven distribution of the workload of the Secretariat, which is also felt by other units in FAO. A return to biennial meetings of the CAC, as was customary for many years before 2003, would result in a reduction of the workload and would allow for a better management of the workflow. Sharp peaks in the workload of the Secretariat arising from uneven distribution of work before and after a meeting of the CAC will be flattened. Simultaneously, a serious attempt should be undertaken to revitalize the CCEXEC as the managerial body of the CAC, as it was recommended following the joint evaluation of 2002. In the scenario where the CAC would meet only biennially, the CCEXEC should meet twice every year.

161. In the past, the CCEXEC had the power to advance proposals from step 5 to step 6 in the Codex step procedure. This power has been removed from the CCEXEC as it was felt that the CCEXEC was not sufficiently representative of the membership of Codex and that only the CAC should take this kind of decision. At present, the CCEXEC also plays an important role in advising the CAC on proposals for new work. It is not very likely that the return to biennial meetings of the CAC would result in a significant delay of the elaboration and adoption of standards. The current rules allow subsidiary bodies to undertake new work taking into account the outcome of the critical review by the CCEXEC subject to the subsequent approval by the CAC at the earliest possible opportunity. Similarly for proposals in step 5 the Secretariat can already send proposed draft standards for government comments prior to its consideration at step 5 by the CCEXEC and the CAC when this is seen as necessary to advance the work.

162. Since the joint evaluation of 2002 the Codex Secretariat has substantially improved communication on Codex. The additional post of a P-5 officer that was added to the Secretariat in 2003 is particularly used to strengthen the communication function. It is to be expected that communication will only become more important. The number of actively participating member countries is on the rise, particularly due to the Codex Trust Fund and the efforts of the parent organizations and increasing commitment of Codex members. The Codex website has become an indispensable communication tool. The public at large is also becoming more interested in Codex, unfortunately this is frequently due to anti-Codex misinformation campaigns. The outside world is inclined to rely on the Codex Secretariat rather than on FAO and WHO to answer its queries on any Codex issue. The responses to the Questionnaires indicate that there is a need for further improvement of the communication between the Codex Secretariat and the CCPs as well as of the Codex website.

163. The Codex Secretariat should build an active network with CCPs and the host governments, in response to the need for enhanced communication. A well designed and maintained website would have a key function in such a network. There are interesting views within the Secretariat with regard to how to transform the present outdated website into a much more dynamic environment where account holders can

find all the information relevant to them. Such a conversion would require an in-depth analysis of the needs of potential users and could result in an audience-segmented website. Such a new approach needs to be carefully introduced to the member states as they will also require adequately functional IT infrastructure.

164. Much of the success in the collaboration between a host government and the Codex Secretariat depends on the quality of the working relationship between the chair and the national secretariat and the Food Standard Officers of the Codex Secretariat. In some cases, the relationship has evolved over the course of years, in which provided Food Standards Officers and their counterparts host governments have become acquainted, learned each other's working habits, how to anticipate the other's needs and to develop trust.

165. There is a need to facilitate the development of new relationships whenever there is a change within the host government or the Codex Secretariat. Increasing demands for efficiency may no longer provide the luxury of years for a relationship to mature and improve.

166. Therefore, it could be very useful for a host government and the Codex Secretary to find opportunities for new Food Standards Officers and/or a new host country programme managers to meet in person for several days to become familiar with each other and to discuss ways to improve efficiency of work and customer satisfaction.

167. The enhanced importance of communication supports the idea of the Codex Secretariat becoming more involved in assisting member states in better understanding Codex (capacity building). The Codex Secretariat has an in-depth knowledge of all adopted and draft Codex texts and the procedures of Codex and in that regard is best placed to provide this type of assistance to member states. It would require close coordination with the parent organizations that are responsible for capacity building the area of food safety.

168. In order to explore new means of international negotiation, it would have merit to learn from other international intergovernmental organizations (e.g. CBD¹⁷, IPPC¹⁸ and OIE) and international non-governmental organizations (e.g. ISO) about how they organize meetings, manage the flow of documents and handle the writing of reports. Such activities could result in best practices worth consideration and implementation by the CAC.

169. Codex is one of the most important joint programmes of FAO and WHO to which substantial resources are allocated. The Codex Management Group, comprising the responsible Assistant Directors-General of both FAO and WHO, provides a unique opportunity to regularly discuss at this senior level policy matters regarding Codex, including budget issues and other Codex related matters such as the provision of scientific advice. FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretary should further develop this informal platform for policy discussions, recognizing the prerogative of the CAC to set its priorities. The Management Group should not become involved in the daily management of Codex for which the Secretary is responsible.

170. In the light of this evaluation, a preliminary estimate can be made of the desirable size of the Codex Secretariat. Enhanced communication needs would require one full Professional post. At present one Senior Food Standards Officer (P-5) spends less than 50 percent of his time on communication, due to other duties. Given the importance of the IT function, the current temporary Professional post for the Information Management Officer (P-2) should become a regular one. The departure of the three staff members on secondment (and less than full replacement of them) means a significant reduction of the work force. As they were mainly involved in the regular activities of the Secretariat they should preferably be replaced by two regular professional staff members. The FAO has already decided to allocate an additional professional post (P-4) to the Secretariat (USD 379,000/biennium at the cost of 2008-09). Efficiency can be improved by better use of IT in the management of the workflow and certain tasks should be delegated from Professional staff to General Service staff. If the number of Professional staff is increased, an adequate complement of General Service staff must also be maintained. On top of the additional P-4 post, it is advisable to allocate two other Professional posts and one General Service post to the Secretariat (one P-3 and one P-4 and one G-3 post correspond to USD 849,000/biennium at the cost of 2008-09). The cost of the transformation of the Codex website is about USD 150,000.

¹⁷ Convention on Biological Diversity

¹⁸ International Plant Protection Convention

8.4 Conclusions

171. The overall conclusion of the current evaluation of the Codex Secretariat is:

- There is a considerable level of satisfaction about the performance of the Codex Secretariat and the quality of the services provided;
- Areas have been identified where there is a need for improvement, particularly more rigid management of workflow, timely availability of working documents in the relevant languages, timely updating of the Codex website following each session of the CAC, proper planning of publications, timely conclusion of Letters of Agreement and further enhancement of language skills;
- The Secretariat should become more engaged and play a more proactive role in a number of areas, such as the standard-setting process, the strategic orientation of the CAC, communication with member states and the public at large, including well defined capacity-building initiatives targeting CCPs and exploring new means of conducting international negotiation on food standards;
- The transformation of the Codex website into an interactive system and its integration into the daily work of the Secretariat will considerably improve the efficiency of the Codex Secretariat ;
- Annual meetings of the CAC have a considerable impact on the workload of the Secretariat and result in an uneven distribution of the workload throughout the year;
- The Secretariat has insufficient resources to fully support current activities of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies in a timely manner and with the desirable level of quality;
- The current resources do not allow the Secretariat to become more engaged and to play a more proactive role in a number of areas, such as the standard-setting process, the strategic orientation of the CAC, communication with member states and the public at large, including well defined capacity-building initiatives targeting CCPs and exploring new means of conducting international negotiation on food standards;
- The efficiency of the basic functioning of the Codex Secretariat, as it is administered under FAO rule and is subject to other bureaucratic procedures of the two parent organizations, can be further improved;
- There is confusion amongst member states about the role of Codex Secretariat regarding the Codex Trust Fund.

Summary Table of Recommendations

No.	Addressed to	Recommendation
1.	FAO and WHO	FAO and WHO should agree as a matter of urgency on the desirable balance in their contribution to the Codex budget.
2.	FAO and WHO	FAO and WHO should allocate sufficient resources (staff and non-staff) to the Joint Codex budget to create a sustainable Secretariat, able to support current activities of Codex, to implement the necessary improvements in their daily operations and to enhance their role in the standard-setting process, the strategic orientation of the CAC, communication with member states and the public at large, including well defined capacity-building initiatives targeting CCPs and exploring new means of conducting international negotiation on setting standards.
3.	FAO and WHO	FAO and WHO should agree in a timely manner on the Codex budget for a biennium and should allow the Codex Secretariat to use a saving account in order to have the possibility to transfer money from one biennium to the next when the balance is positive at the end of a biennium.
4.	FAO and WHO	FAO and WHO should improve their communication about the Codex Trust Fund, particularly regarding the responsibilities for the management of the Codex Trust Fund.
5.	FAO and WHO	FAO and WHO should initiate a joint evaluation of the relationship of FAO and WHO to each other as they support Codex and of each organization's separate interaction with Codex with a view to improving the efficiency of the Codex Secretariat and strengthening its relative autonomy where possible
6.	Codex Secretariat	<p>The Codex Secretariat should improve the daily operations of the Codex work, more specifically through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a more rigid management of workflow • the timely availability of working documents • the timely finalization of adopted texts including the uploading to the website • the proper planning of publications • the timely conclusion of Letters of Agreement • further enhancement of language skills
7.	Codex Secretariat	The Codex Secretariat should play a more proactive role in the standard-setting process and the strategic orientation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and should explore new means of conducting international negotiation on food standards.
8.	Codex Secretariat	The Codex Secretariat should improve communication with host governments member states, through the national Codex Contacts Points, and the public at large, and should explore new ways of communicating.
9.	Codex Secretariat	The Codex Secretariat should fundamentally rethink and redesign the Codex Website as a function of more proactive communication with the membership, observer organizations and the public at large.
10.	Codex Secretariat	The Codex Secretariat should further integrate IT into the daily work of the Secretariat.
11.	CAC, FAO and WHO, Codex Secretariat	Biennial meetings of the CAC should be reinstated and the CCEXEC should be revitalized.

**Evaluation of the Capacity of the Codex Secretariat to Perform its Function Effectively
(Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013 / Activity 3.7)
Terms of Reference**

1. Background

The 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 2007 adopted the Commission's Strategic Plan 2008-2013. Its Activity 3.7, under Goal 3 "Strengthening Codex Work Management Capabilities", requires that an evaluation of the capacity of the Codex Secretariat (FAO/AGNC) be conducted by 2009.

Draft terms of reference were prepared by the Codex Secretariat in consultation with the Evaluation Unit of FAO (PBEE) and were presented to the 61st Session of the Executive Committee of the Commission in June 2008, as CRD 7. Comments were noted in its report (ALINORM 08/31/3A).

WHO was also informed of the scope and process of the evaluation. It was agreed that WHO would be consulted in the selection of an external consultant and the latter would interview WHO staff, among others, during the conduct of the evaluation.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

Description: Evaluate the effectiveness and resource needs of the Codex Secretariat in the operation and work management of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and in communicating with and serving the needs of Codex Contact Points.

Output: Report to the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (June 2009) on the staff and other key resources.

This evaluation does not aim at duplicating the Joint Codex Evaluation that took place in 2002 and the implementation of which has been completed by 2007. While taking full account of the finding of the former evaluation, the present evaluation will focus on the effectiveness and resource needs of the Codex Secretariat, particularly in the light of a number of changes made to the operation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission during the last years. Such changes include:

- Annual sessions of the Commission instead of biennial sessions;
- Increased frequency of the Executive Committee (3 to 4 sessions/biennium);
- Increased number of Codex sessions over the past decades;
- Newly assigned functions of the Executive Committee including the critical review, the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and the review of applications for observer status;
- Increased use of Internet facilities and other electronic means in communicating with Codex members and observers;
- Needs of Codex Contact Points (nature and frequency of information dissemination by the Codex Secretariat; *ad hoc* assistance from the Codex secretariat);
- Needs of host governments (assistance to host government secretariats during the preparation, organization and follow-up of Codex sessions; assistance to the Codex bodies working in "correspondence" mode and to electronic and physical working groups).

The evaluation may have an impact on the preparation of a Codex budget for the biennium 2010-2011 and contribute to possible improvements in the *modus operandi* of the Codex secretariat.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation covers the following aspects:

- Human and non-human resources of the Codex Secretariat;
- Service needs of the Codex meetings directly operated by the Codex Secretariat
- Service needs of the host governments of Codex subsidiary bodies;
- Service needs of the Codex Contact Points;
- Communication and publication capability of the Codex Secretariat;

- Communication and coordination with other international organizations.

4. Roles in the Evaluation

The Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the evaluation. He will consult relevant units of FAO and WHO as appropriate. FAO and WHO will be requested to provide their opinion on the final report.

An external senior consultant, to be chosen in consultation with FAO/AGN and WHO/FOS, will conduct the evaluation with methodological support from the Evaluation Unit of FAO (PBEE). The external senior consultant will be assisted by a junior consultant, as necessary, for data processing and analysis.

5. Methodology

The following methods will be used in the evaluation:

- Desk study, on the basis of existing documentation and the access statistics of the Codex website;
- SWOT analysis involving the staff of the Codex Secretariat;
- Interviews of the Codex Secretariat staff (both professional and general service), the staff of FAO (e.g. AGNS, AGPP, FII, LEGA) and WHO (e.g. FOS, NUT, LEG);
- Sample Questionnaire Surveys (Codex Contact Point, Host government secretariats of Codex bodies).

The evaluation process will be guided by FAO Auto-Evaluation Guidelines with modifications as required.

6. Evaluation Outputs

A draft report shall be produced by end of December 2008, for review by AGNC and PBEE. A final report should be produced, taking into account comments from AGNC and PBEE, by end of January 2009.

FAO and WHO, and the Codex Secretariat, will provide formal comments on the final report by end of February 2009.

The final report, together with the formal comments, will be presented to the 62nd Session of the Executive Committee and the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in June/July 2009.

Annex 2

List of Persons interviewed by the Consultant

FAO	Unit	Name	Function	
	AGNC, Codex Secretariat	Mr Kazuaki Miyagishima	Codex Secretary	
		Ms Selma Doyran	Senior Food Standards Officer	
		Mr Tom Heilandt	Senior Food Standards Officer	
		Ms Noriko Iseki	Senior Food Standards Officer	
		Ms Annemaria Bruno	Food Standards Officer	
		Mr Jeronimas Maskeliunas	Food Standards Officer	
		Ms Gracia Brisco	Food Standards Officer	
		Ms Verna Carolissen	Food Standards Officer	
		Mr Masashi Kusakawa	Food Standards Officer	
		Mr Ymshik Lee	Food Standards Officer	
		Mr Roberto Sciotti	Information Management Officer	
		Ms Jocelyne Farruggia	Secretary	
		Ms Valeria Scorza	Clerk	
		Ms Daniela Salvi	Documents Clerk	
		Ms Patricia Lezzi	Documents Clerk	
		Ms Raquel Imbermann	Clerk (Proof reader)	
		Ms Florence Martin de Martino	Clerk (Proof reader)	
		Mr Peter Di Tomasso	Clerk typist	
		AGND	Mr Ezzedinne Boutrif	Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
		AGNS	Ms Sarah Cahill	Nutrition Officer (Food Microbiology)
	Ms Renata Clark		Nutrition Officer (Food Safety)	
	Ms Mary Kenny		Nutrition Officer (Food Control and Consumer Protection)	
	Ms Catherine Bessy		Nutrition Officer (Food Science)	
	AGPP	Mr Mike Robson	Systems Manager	
		Ms Zhen Yang	FAO Joint Secretary JMPR	
	LEGA	Mr Antonio Tavares	Chief, General Legal Affairs Service	
	KCCO	Mr Stephen Dowd	Chief, Conference, Council and Government Relations Branch	
		Ms Isabella Pontecorvo	Correspondence Officer	
	KCCM	Mr Fernando Servan	Senior Programming Officer	
		Mr Pierre Fournier	Chief Interpretation Group	
	KCI	Mr Nicholas Parsons	Director, Communication Division	
	KCIR	Ms Sharon Lee Cowan	Chief, Public Relations and Promotions Branch	
	KCII	Mr Steven Dembner	Chief, Electronic Publishing Policy and Support Branch	
WHO	FOS	Mr Jorgen Schlundt	Director, Food Safety, Foodborne disease and Zoonosis	
		Mr Peter Benembarak	Scientist	
		Ms Angelika Tritscher	WHO Joint Secretary JMPR and JECFA	
		Ms Catherine Mulholland	Administrator, Codex Trust Fund	
	NUT	Ms Chizuru Nishida	Scientist	
CAC		Ms Karen Hulebak	Chairperson CAC	

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIONAL CODEX CONTACT POINT

The core functions of the Codex Contact Points (CCPs) are mentioned in the Procedural Manual (17th Edition, Section II). Several core functions directly relate to services provided by the Codex Secretariat. Other core functions relate more to the responsibilities of CCPs within their countries or their regions but are supported by services provided by the Codex Secretariat.

These core functions are:

- Act as a link between the Codex Secretariat and Member countries
- Coordinate all relevant Codex activities within their own countries
- Receive all Codex final texts (standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other advisory texts) and working documents of Codex sessions and ensure that these are circulated within their countries
- Send comments on Codex documents or proposals to the Codex Commission or its subsidiary bodies and/or the Codex Secretariat
- Work in close cooperation with the national Codex Committee. The CCP act as liaison with all interested parties to ensure that the government is provided with balanced advice upon which to base decisions on any issue related to Codex
- Act as a channel for the exchange of information and coordination with other Codex members
- Receive the invitation to Codex sessions and inform the relevant chairpersons and the Codex Secretariat of the names of participants from their own countries
- Maintain a library of Codex final texts¹⁹
- Promotion of Codex activities

Question 1: Please tell us who you are

- (a) Name of country:
 (b) Your affiliation (ministry/department/unit):
 (c) You are assuming duties of CCP approximately since: years and months
 (d) Your name (*not obligatory*):

Question 2: Importance/Quality of Services Provided by the Codex Secretariat

- (a) The Codex Secretariat provides several services to Codex Contact Points (CCPs) allowing a Codex member to participate effectively in the Codex standard setting process.

Please rate each service according to the following scales:

Importance of this service to fulfil your functions:

- 0:** Less important
1: Important
2: Very important

Your perceived level of **performance** of the Codex Secretariat:

- 0:** poor – must be improved
1: acceptable but could be improved
2: satisfactory
3: very good

¹⁹ Has lost much of its relevance since Codex moved towards electronic publication; the Codex Secretariat supports their “Codex Showcase” function in various ways

Type of service provided	Importance	Performance
Meeting reports (ALINORMs)		
Codex Alimentarius CD-ROM		
GSFA CD-ROM		
Thematic booklets of Codex texts (B5 series)		
Procedural Manual		
Working documents of Codex sessions		
Circular Letters		
Sending reminders before deadlines for submitting written comments		
Sending announcements related to working groups		
Sending announcements related to the Codex Trust Fund		
Processing comments of member states in response to Circular Letters		
Formal invitations and provisional agendas to meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies		
Advocacy material: Posters		
Advocacy material: Postcards		
Advocacy material: DVD, Video		
Advocacy material: Codex Brochure (A-5 format)		
“Understanding the Codex Alimentarius” booklet		
“Guide for First-time Delegates” leaflet		
Travel and hotel information		
Food safety related information and news from FAO or WHO		
Information on vacancy announcements in FAO and WHO		
Updating the Codex website (www.codexalimentarius.net)		
Reply to queries from CCPs (by phone, email, fax, or postal mail)		
Codex secretariat staff participation as speaker in national, regional or international seminars/workshops organised by FAO, WHO, WTO or other international agencies (officers from CCPs are often participants/beneficiaries of these events)		
Codex secretariat staff authoring articles in magazines and journals		

(b) If you marked “0” or “1” for the performance of any of the services under (a) please elaborate why you are not satisfied what action should be undertaken by the Codex Secretariat to improve the level of service provided to you.:

(c) What additional services should be provided by the Codex Secretariat and why?

Question 3: Communication with the Codex Secretariat

(a) The Codex Secretariat actively communicates with CCPs through the Codex e-mail lists and receives Comments and other communications from the CCP.

Please mark an “x” in the appropriate column if you agree or disagree with, or have no opinion on the following statements:

Statement	agree	disagree	no opinion
Too many Codex messages flooding my e-mail box all the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
File attachments are too big in size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I face difficulties to sort out Codex messages that are relevant to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I receive too many non-Codex announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have no regular access to e-mails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Messages that I sent to the Codex Secretariat got lost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get no reply from the Codex Secretariat or it takes a long time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people in my government send replies to Circular Letters or comments without informing me as CCP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If you have identified problems in the communication with the secretariat please elaborate and state how you think the situation could be improved.

Question 4: The Codex Website (www.codexalimentarius.net)

The services provided by the Codex Secretariat through the Codex website become increasingly important. How often do you use this service and how satisfied are you with it.

Please rate the service in each row according to the following scales:

Frequency of use:

- 0: Rarely/never
- 1: A few times per month
- 2: A few times per week
- 3: Daily

Quality/satisfaction with the webpage:

- 0: poor- must be improved
- 1: acceptable but could be improved
- 2: satisfactory
- 3: very good

Page in the Codex Website (www.codexalimentarius.net)	Frequency of use	Quality/ satisfaction
Codex Website in general		
About Codex		
Understanding Codex		
Committees and Task forces		
Members		
International organizations		
Procedural Manual		
Standards Management		
Strategic Planning		
Evaluation of the Codex Programme		
Contacts		
Meetings and Events		
Forthcoming meetings		
Reports		
Circular Letters		
Audio recordings		
Information for delegates		
Official Standards		
Official Codex Standards		
Pesticide MRLs		
Veterinary Drugs MRLs		
GSFA Online (Food Additives)		
Special Publications		
Sales and Marketing		
Related Codex Links		
External Links		
Do you face problems with service interruption? (please mark with "x")		<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) If you marked "0" or "1" for any of the page under (a) please elaborate why this particular webpage is not satisfactory and what could be done to improve it.

(c) What additional services should be provided by the Codex Secretariat on the website and why?

Question 5: Overall Satisfaction

(a) How satisfied are you over all with the level of service provided by the Codex Secretariat?

0 not satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 satisfied 3 very satisfied

(b) In case you marked "0" or "1" under (a), please indicate why you are not satisfied and what action should be undertaken to improve the level of service provided to you:

Thank you
October 2008

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOST GOVERNMENTS OF CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Introduction

Host governments of Codex subsidiary bodies are served by the Codex Secretariat in exercising their responsibilities. With this questionnaire the perceived level of service they receive from the Codex Secretariat (before, during and after a Codex session) is assessed.

Question

(a) The Codex Secretariat provides several services to host governments of Codex Committees (including Regional Coordinating Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces) before, during and after a Codex session, and on a continuing basis. How do you value the importance of these services and how satisfied are you with the Codex Secretariat's performance?

Please indicate your rating in the table below for each service, according to the following scales:

The **importance** of this function for you as host government:

- 0: less important/ less relevant
- 1: important
- 2: Very important

Your perceived level of **performance** of the Codex Secretariat:

- 0: poor – must be improved
- 1: acceptable but could be improved
- 2: satisfactory
- 3: very good

Type of service provided	Importance	Performance
<i>before the session</i>		
Facilitation of conclusion of Letter of Agreement and Memorandum of Responsibilities		
Advising on the choice of venue for the session		
Advising on the selection criteria for a Chairperson		
Preparation of the draft agenda		
Advising on the timetable including opening, social events and possible night sessions		
Advising on other logistics including seating plan, documentation, use of advocacy material		
Advising "in advance" the national secretariat/chairperson on key procedural or substantive issues		
Despatching documentation (Procedural Manual, etc) from Rome to the meeting venue		
Distribution of the Invitation		
Finalization of working documents		
Assisting translation by providing references		
Assisting in identification of qualified interpreters		
Compilation of replies on Circular Letters		
Preparation of briefing notes for the Chairperson		
Briefing of the Chairperson		

Type of service provided	Importance	Performance
Advising pre-session working groups on procedural and technical issues		
<i>during the session</i>		
Advising the Chairperson on procedure		
Advising the Chairperson on substantive issues		
Drafting session report		
Advising on <i>ad hoc</i> logistic questions		
Advising in-session working groups on procedural and technical issues		
Assisting the Chairperson in report adoption		
Technically assisting translation by the host government of draft report		
<i>after the session</i>		
Preparation of print-ready final report		
Technically assisting translation by the host government of final report		
Timely preparation and distribution of Circular Letters		
Advising stand-alone working groups on procedural and technical issues		
Updating databases (MRLs for pesticides and veterinary drugs, Maximal Limits for food additives (GSFA))		
Uploading adopted Codex texts to the website		
<i>Continuing</i>		
Convening informal meeting of Codex Chairs		
Providing support to Chairperson to develop skills		
Providing support to the host government to develop capacities of the national secretariat		

(b) In case you have rated any of the services “0” or “1” please indicate why you are not satisfied and what action should be undertaken to improve the level of service provided to you.

(c) What other services than mentioned above you would like to receive from the Codex Secretariat? And why?

Respondent information:

- (a) Name of Codex subsidiary body:
- (b) Host country:
- (c) Your affiliation (ministry/department/unit):
- (d) Your name (*not obligatory*):

Thank you
October 2008

Management Response to the Evaluation of the Capacity of the Codex Secretariat

FAO, WHO, Codex Secretariat

(April 2009)

A. Overall Response to the Evaluation

The FAO management has carefully reviewed the report and recommendations of the Evaluation of the Capacity of the Codex Secretariat to perform its function effectively, and wishes to congratulate the consultant and the Codex Secretariat for the quality of the analysis made and for the value of the recommendations provided. As shown in Section B below, FAO agrees with most of the recommendations; FAO, however, considers that it is necessary to clarify some of the points raised in the report. More specifically:

Capacity Building: The report states that there is a need for a well defined task of capacity building directed to Codex Contact Points, and that the Codex Secretariat would like to become responsible for those capacity building activities that are directly related to Codex and its core activities, rather than providing input to FAO and WHO as it currently does.

- FAO is of the opinion that training courses/workshops related to Codex and implemented by FAO/WHO with the participation of specific members of the Codex Secretariat have proved to be successful and welcomed by the participants. It ensures from one side the provision of up-to-date information on the Codex procedures and from the other the FAO experience in training and in linking Codex activities to the broad range of food control activities.

- FAO agrees that members of the Codex Secretariat should play a stronger role in Codex capacity building for example in Seminars in the SPS format, Seminars on how Codex operates and how to prepare and present Codex documents, etc. However, we believe that there should be better communication and planning between FAO/WHO staff and the Codex Secretariat in order to ensure a clear demarcation of responsibilities and ensure cohesion between Codex capacity building in countries, and other FAO capacity building activities in the same countries. The Codex Contact Point (CCP) for example is often an important player in a much larger system of food control at national level.

- FAO supports the participation of members of the Codex Secretariat in the development of tools and training materials on Codex and related food safety matters.

Efficiency of Codex: The report includes a statement that “as it is administered under FAO rule and is subject to other bureaucratic procedures, suggestion that it becomes a separate FAO unit”. FAO does not agree with this statement, or suggestion. Administrative procedures are needed in all public administrations and are decided by Governing Bodies to ensure proper management of public funds, transparency, accountability and other important principles. Under the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal approved by the FAO Conference in November 2008, FAO is reforming its administrative process to increase efficiency. Since 2003, the Codex Secretariat has become a Service, headed by a Service Chief (the Codex Secretary) and already operating in a very autonomous way with well identified Programme Entity and a separate budget. For management purposes, a secretariat of an intergovernmental body must be attached administratively to a structure in the Organization to be able to operate.

Codex Management Group: FAO and WHO have had a series of *ad hoc* meetings to discuss the management of Codex matters at a high level (ADG level). Following the recommendation of the Codex Evaluation of 2002, and since 2004, these meetings became more formal and periodical (once a year). These meetings covered not only Codex matters but also other related matters (provision of scientific advice and capacity building issues related to Codex). FAO believes that this arrangement is perfectly suitable for the purpose of monitoring Codex and Codex-related work and ensuring that it is responding to Member countries expectations.

Relationship of FAO and WHO to each other as they support Codex: It is important to clarify if this recommendation refers to FAO/ WHO support to managerial and budgetary aspects of FAO and WHO towards Codex operation or also refers to joint efforts to support technically the work of Codex, and therefore facilitate the work of the Codex secretariat, On the latter, both organizations implemented since 2004 a consultative process to enhance collaboration between them to enhance provision of scientific advice to Codex as one important tool to improve the timely, scientific base, and transparency of Codex work. One important contribution of this consultative process was the production of the FAO/WHO Framework for the provision of Scientific Advice on food safety and nutrition and an enhanced collaboration between focal points on scientific advice on both organizations and members of the different Joint Secretaries of specific expert groups and meetings and the respective members of the Codex Secretariat. Unfortunately, the evaluation implemented did not touch on the important interaction needed between members of the Codex Secretariat and the FAO/WHO staff responsible for scientific advice.

The WHO management considers the evaluation provides useful background documentation on the current activities of the Codex Secretariat and how the secretariat views its role and function. It also provides some insight in the environment under which the Secretariat is operating. However, the evaluation does not provide a clear analysis of the role and constraints by which the WHO is supporting - and collaborating with - the Secretariat. The evaluation seems to focus recommendations on what the Secretariat feels it needs rather than on the needs of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and of the Member States. More specifically:

Report writing: Assistance of host countries should be re-considered; it is an effective means to decrease workload on the Codex Secretariat. Clear guidance on how to write Codex reports should be prepared (just as has been developed for JECFA reports)

Number of Codex staff servicing Codex sessions: While the report states that only three officers from Codex secretariat participate in Codex meetings, in practice this is sometimes more, it could be argued that with efficient host country support, you might only need one officer for some Committees.

Relationship of FAO and WHO to each other as they support Codex: It seems not to be discussed that additional resource contribution to the Codex Secretariat from FAO or WHO would normally have direct negative implications on resources available for the work on scientific advice, which actually forms the basis for Codex work.

Resource need of the Codex Secretariat: A description of potential options if no increased resources will become available is clearly missing in the report, consideration should be given to pros and cons of different scenarios.

The Codex Secretariat has provided, in Section B below, its responses to Recommendations 6-11 which are specifically addressed to it. On more general notes, it considers that the Evaluation has proved an extremely useful and enlightening experience. Through the interviews conducted by the consultant, the members of the Codex Secretariat could give a concrete shape to their recurrent but otherwise easily forgotten thoughts and observations and were able to deepen their insights as to how the operation of the Secretariat could be improved. Furthermore, the feedback given to the consultant's questionnaires from Codex Contact Points and host governments, which are the most

important customers and partners of the Codex Secretariat, was helpful in understanding the importance of various services the Codex Secretariat provides to them and in prioritizing and improving them in the future.

In relation to the other recommendations aimed at providing an improved operational environment to the Codex Secretariat, the latter can only welcome regular contacts to be made at the senior management level between FAO and WHO to foster more effective dialogue and coordination between the two parent organizations in order to fully implement the joint iterative process as provided for in Article 9 of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Codex Secretariat notes that a “Codex Management Group” should operate principally as a channel for this purpose, and not attempt to micro-manage the Codex Alimentarius Commission, above the head of its Secretary, or impose certain policies and directions upon the Secretary, who is serving the best interest of the Commission. The functional autonomy of the Commission and the strategic and programmatic authority of the Commission’s own executive organs (i.e. the Commission and its Executive Committee) must be fully recognized and safeguarded in the future. The memberstatesdriven model has been the heart of the operation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the source of its success since its first meeting in 1963. The Commission will have to continue to meet the emerging needs of its members and adapt to the changing global environment in which it operates by modifying its strategic directions, rules and procedures wherever necessary. However, its 180-plus members should remain the owners of the Codex programme, as established by the Statutes. The parent organizations are fully entitled to have their say on Codex matters and convey their messages to the Commission for its consideration in an open and transparent manner. The Codex Secretariat is pleased to note that this document has offered one such opportunity.

B. Response by Recommendation

This section includes, in a tabular form, comments from the FAO and WHO managements as well as the Codex Secretariat on the recommendations addressed to them.

B.1 Response by the FAO Management						
Recommendations	Further funding required	Acceptance by Management			Comment on the Recommendation	Action to be taken Action Timing Unit Responsible
		Accepted	Partially Accepted	Rejected		
Recommendation 1 FAO and WHO should agree on the balance of their contribution to Codex budget	No	X			The matter has been raised by FAO at several occasions at the Codex Executive Committee meetings and at the Commission. The ratio of FAO/WHO contributions to the Codex Regular Programme budget has started at 75/25 and evolved to the current ratio of 85/15 which is heavily imbalanced at the expense of FAO. FAO has made an exceptional effort to continue to base its contribution on regular programme funds and to maintain the level of funding in real terms despite the Organization's general financial constraints.	FAO funding can be reduced if WHO increases its share in the Codex budget
Recommendation 2 FAO and WHO should allocate sufficient resources	FAO contribution increased since 2008/09	X			FAO believes that in order to ensure sustainability of the Codex programme and guarantee its multilateral nature, its core funding should continue to be provided through the Regular Budgets of FAO and WHO, in accordance with Article 9 of the Statutes of the Commission.	FAO has recently decided to provide an additional post at P-4 level to strengthen the Codex Secretariat. The recruitment of the new staff member is underway. This should enable easing the workload pressure on the present staff.
Recommendation 3 FAO and WHO should agree in a timely manner on the Codex budget and allow transfer from one biennium to the next of unused resources.			X		As follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) and under the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) 3.11, FAO Governing Bodies are considering possibilities to introduce provisions for roll-over of up to five percent of the assessed budget, between biennia, in order to smooth income and expenditure, thus reducing wasteful and inefficient transactions.	The implementation of this action will require an amendment to the Financial Regulations of FAO to be approved by the FAO Conference, subsequent to review by reviewed by the FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters and the FAO Council.
Recommendation 4 FAO and WHO should improve their communication about the Management of the Codex Trust Fund		X			Although there is a great deal of communication between FAO and the Trust Fund Secretariat in WHO, there is room for FAO to follow more closely the management and strategic direction of the Codex Trust Fund (CTF). The current mechanism for FAO involvement in Codex Trust Management is through (1) participation in the regular teleconferences of the FAO/WHO Consultative Management Group for CTF; and (2) participation in the side events and discussions on CTF during the CAC.	FAO will approach WHO to strengthen the joint nature of the Trust Fund Secretariat, by possibly designating a representative from its staff as a full member of the Trust Fund Secretariat.

Recommendation 5 FAO and WHO should initiate an evaluation of their relationship to Codex to improve the Secretariat efficiency		X			In accordance with IEE-IPA Action 2.69 FAO is required to undertake a review with a view to making any necessary changes to enable those statutory bodies that wish to do so to exercise financial and administrative authority and mobilise additional funding from their members, while remaining within the framework of FAO and maintaining a reporting relationship with it. This review, which is at very early stages of preparation, will concentrate on the bodies established by international agreement under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution and will address a range of practical issues in the light of the requirements of the bodies in question.	After completion of the review regarding Article XIV bodies under IPA Action 2.69, FAO is prepared to examine the extent to which a number of conclusions of the review could be extended to Codex, taking into account the different legal nature of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
Recommendation 6		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 7		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 8		X			See comments in Section A above on capacity building. Participation of the Codex Secretariat in relevant fora could be a good mechanism to be enhanced in addition to the action suggested in Recommendation 9.	
Recommendation 9		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 10		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 11	No	N/A			This recommendation is outside the scope of the present evaluation. It is a matter for Codex membership to decide on.	

B.2 Response by the WHO Management						
Recommendations	Further funding required	Acceptance by Management			Comment on the Recommendation	Action to be taken Action Timing Unit Responsible
		Accepted	Partially Accepted	Rejected		
Recommendation 1 FAO and WHO should agree on the balance of their contribution to Codex budget	No		X		WHO has initiated the convening of regular joint senior management meetings at the ADG level on Codex matters to inter alia coordinate their contribution to Codex. These discussions have not translated into Gov Body action, as evidenced during the present biennium, where previously jointly agreed figures and share were accepted by the World Health Assembly in May 2007 but changed radically by the FAO Conference in November 2007. WHO has increased its funding for Codex significantly since 2003, resulting in less funds for provision of scientific advice.	Senior Management of both Organizations should promote the idea of national joint consultations and coordination among national delegations dealing with FAO and WHO matters respectively.
Recommendation 2 FAO and WHO should allocate sufficient resources	Yes			X	This recommendation suggests that resources should be adapted to the optimal needs felt by the Secretariat of its needs while WHO is of the opinion that resources in this area are limited and the products delivered by the Secretariat should reflect the funds available, as in any other programme area - there are areas where greater efficiency is possible.	
Recommendation 3 FAO and WHO should agree in a timely manner on the Codex budget and allow transfer from one biennium to the next of unused resources.	No		X		WHO agrees that the process for joint agreement on the budget can be improved and has therefore set up the Joint Senior Management Meetings on Codex matters to facilitate this process. Transfer of funds from Biennium to biennium depends on the Organizations' financial rules.	Joint Senior Management Meetings should be given higher priority by both Organizations and more stringent meeting calendars should be considered. LEG to be consulted on the feasibility of transfer of funds.
Recommendation 4 FAO and WHO should improve their communication about the Management of the Codex Trust Fund					Communication from the Codex Trust Fund needs to be improved - and WHO has taken step together with Codex Secretariat and FAO to provide more reader-friendly reporting for this year's CAC as well as for other Codex meetings.	
Recommendation 5 FAO and WHO should initiate an evaluation of their	Yes		X		FAO and WHO have already conducted one evaluation of Codex in 2002. WHO has initiated the setting up of the Joint Senior Management meetings on Codex Matters specifically to improve the support of the two	FAO and the Secretariat to support WHO in its efforts to facilitate the work of the Senior Management Meetings.

relationship to Codex to improve the Secretariat efficiency.					Organizations to Codex and to Strengthen and support the work of the Secretariat.	
Recommendation 6		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 7					The recommendation “ a more proactive role in standard setting process” needs to be better defined.	
Recommendation 8		X			Agree.	
Recommendation 9					Major needs are in a more user friendly and intuitive interface when searching for Codex documents.	
Recommendation 10		N/A			For the Codex Secretariat	
Recommendation 11	No			X	Returning to Biennial meetings of the CAC is not supported by WHO as it would slow down the delivery by CAC of its Standards. Introducing yearly meetings was a clear recommendation of the review of Codex 2002 and has been contributing substantially to a higher output of CAC.	

B.3 Response by the Codex Secretariat

Recommendations	Further funding required	Acceptance by the Codex Secretariat			Comment on the Recommendation	Action to be taken Action Timing Unit Responsible
		Accepted	Partially Accepted	Rejected		
Recommendation 6 The Codex Secretariat should improve the daily operations of the Codex work.	Yes (more staff resources)	X			Smooth management of workflow by the Codex Secretariat is hampered largely by Codex member states (including working group leaders) not respecting deadlines for submission of comments and working documents for whose production they are responsible. It is also hampered by relevant FAO and WHO units not producing or clearing working documents in time. Sometimes in-house services of FAO cannot deliver products by required short deadlines (e.g. translation, printing). Codex is a priority programme in FAO but FAO needs to service other meetings and publications of priority. All these factors are beyond the control of the Codex Secretariat. Management of workflow is also hampered by insufficient staff resources within the Secretariat, especially when workload hits a peak.	Codex members are encouraged to respect all deadlines for submission of documents/comments, since handling of last minute comments absorbs Secretariat resources at a critical moment. Longer intervals between Codex meetings should be considered to allow Codex members to conduct full consultation and complete preparatory work on time; this is achieved by reducing the number of Codex sessions. No Codex sessions should be held in May and June, to allow Food Standards Officer to semi-finalize all Step-8 texts in English, French and Spanish; this would also allow Codex members to receive all ALINORMs in three languages prior the Commission.

				Delayed conclusion of the LOA is mainly due to non-acceptance by venue countries of the standard duties and is basically outwith the control of the Codex Secretariat (this problem is hard to anticipate when a country expresses its initial interest to host a Codex session).	The Codex Secretariat should be allowed to contract freely external service providers (editing, translation and printing) whenever FAO units cannot deliver required services to Codex due to other more urgent work (e.g. FAO governing bodies, summits and other high-level conferences). Prospective venue countries of Codex sessions should ascertain, before expressing its interest to host a Codex session, that all necessary conditions would be met by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FAO should allow the Codex Secretariat to recruit staff with required competencies (including language skills) in accordance with the need within the Codex secretariat, instead of imposing generic FAO personnel policy. The Codex Secretariat needs to be assigned more staff.
Recommendation 7 The Codex Secretariat should play a more proactive role in the standard-setting process and the strategic orientation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and should explore new means of conducting international negotiation on food standards.	Yes (more staff resources)	X		The Codex Secretariat fully agrees with the recommendation. Until now it has not been possible for the Secretariat to exercise a more proactive role since the available human resources have entirely been absorbed in providing the minimum necessary services to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Additional human resources will allow the Secretariat to better analyse technical and strategic issues at hand and propose policy options to the Commission.	Recruiting consultants to review the working methods of general subject committees, their scope of work and strategic approach (e.g. the role and status of GSFA in CCFA, possibility for CCPR to work on matters other than MRLs). The Codex Secretariat needs to be assigned more staff.
Recommendation 8 The Codex Secretariat should improve communication with host governments, member states, through the national Codex Contacts Points, and the public at large and should explore new ways of	Yes (more staff resources)	X		The Codex Newsletter has been launched in early 2009 as a means of periodic communication with Contact Points. Participation of the Codex Secretariat staff in external events is a useful means to raise awareness and advocate the importance of Codex; however this was limited by insufficient staff resources. The Codex Secretariat is committed to support Contact Points to fully operate as national Codex information centres, raising the profile of Codex in their territory. The Codex Secretariat also sees that Codex chairpersons	Enhanced consultation between the host governments/chairpersons and the Codex Secretariat; regular meetings/retreats of Codex chairpersons to ensure harmonized approach. Regular issuance of Codex Newsletter and production of other communications tools (video, booklet, etc.), budget permitting. Renewal of the Codex website with inclusion of material aimed at a general audience (e.g. Q&A page). Continued participation of the Codex Secretariat staff in international, regional and sub-regional events on

communicating.					can act as “Ambassadors” to promote Codex widely.	Codex. Continued production of advocacy materials and their wider diffusion. <i>Ad hoc</i> media training of Codex chairpersons. The degree of activity will depend on the budget allocated.
Recommendation 9 The Codex Secretariat should fundamentally rethink and redesign the Codex Website as a function of more proactive communication with the membership, observer organizations and the public at large.	Yes	X			The Codex Secretariat recognises that the current website needs to be redesigned and enhanced. The current website is functional and provides essential services to those who regularly use it, but is generally not “user-friendly”. Until three years ago, the Codex website had been managed exclusively by a central FAO unit external to the Codex Secretariat, making regular updates nearly impossible. Since then, the Codex Secretariat has acquired, over time, certain autonomy and authority to update the website on its own.	Tailored-made, password-protected and interactive services (“My Codex” page) will be offered to Codex members and observers in the course of 2010. Information in the Codex website targeted at the general public will be enhanced. The search function of the Codex website will be enhanced. Scanning of historical documents and their uploading to the website will continue to the extent possible within budget limitations.
Recommendation 10 The Codex Secretariat should further integrate IT into the daily work of the Secretariat	Yes (if a fixed-term post is to be created for IT)	X			The Codex Secretariat recognizes that the use of information technology is key to delivering more with less. FAO offers many useful services (e.g. Intranet, regular server backups, modern telephony including Blackberry) to the Codex Secretariat but also imposes FAO-wide rules; every time the Codex secretariat intends to purchase “non-standard” software or hardware, it is obligatory to obtain FAO clearance based on justification.	The Codex Secretariat intends to maintain a post of information technology officer (also acting as Web Master) to act as a focal point for ongoing and future projects, as far as the budget allows. The Codex Secretariat will pursue its “internalization” policy for the development and maintenance of its basic Internet tools, including the Codex website, while coordination will be made with the IT units of FAO where necessary.
Recommendation 11 It is recommended to return to biennial meetings of the CAC and simultaneously revitalize the CCEXEC	No (some savings will be achieved)	X			The Codex Secretariat welcomes this recommendation. Reducing the frequency of Commission meetings would free up Secretariat human resources and allow fuller implementation of Recommendations 6, 7 and 8. There are benefits for Codex members as well.	The Codex Secretariat expects that the Commission carefully will examine the pros and cons associated with the recommendation and take a fully informed decision on this matter. The solution should be sustainable and viable on the long term.