

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME****CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION****36<sup>th</sup> Session, FAO Headquarters****Rome, Italy, 1-5 July 2013****MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMISSION BY CODEX COMMITTEES  
AND TASK FORCES****MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE 35<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION****DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CODEX COMMITTEE ON  
SPICES, AROMATIC HERBS AND THEIR FORMULATIONS***(Prepared by India)***Background**

1. During the 35th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held in Rome during July 2-7, 2012, India had submitted a paper (CX/CAC 12/35/19 later revised as CX/CAC 12/35/19-Rev)<sup>1</sup> for the establishment of Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations. The delegation of India noted that global production and trade in these products, in particular spices, was increasing internationally; that the main producers of spices were in developing countries and that due to the lack of harmonized standards, these countries were increasingly finding it difficult to comply with the various import requirements, which resulted in trade barriers. Several countries supported the proposal to establish the Committee taking into account increasing trade in these commodities and their importance for the developing countries. However, it was noted that countries needed additional time to consider the proposal. Some delegations also noted that consideration should be given to the establishment of a time-limited Task Force and the possibility of work by electronic means.

2. Noting the merits and general support for work on these products, the Commission requested the delegation of India (para 279 of REP12/CAC) to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at the next Session of the Commission taking into account the comments made at this Session, in particular, the need to better clarify the scope of work; an analysis of the gaps in terms of work in the Commission; and the mechanism to undertake this work. The Commission also agreed to request the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for their views on the proposal. It was concluded that the 36th Session of the Commission (2013) would further consider the proposal based on the discussion paper as well as views of the Coordinating Committees.

3. India prepared the Discussion Paper, which was kindly circulated by the Codex Secretariat for discussion in the Sessions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees. These are: CX/NASWP 12/12/2 Add.1 for discussion under Agenda 2; CX/EURO 12/28/2 Add. 1 for discussion under Agenda 2; CX/ASIA 12/18/2 (Annex I) for discussion under Agenda 2; CX/LAC 12/18/2-Add.1 for discussion under Agenda 2; CX/NEA 13/7/2 Add.1 for discussion under Agenda 2a; and, CX/AFRICA 13/20/2-Add.1 for discussion under Agenda 2a.

4. The Discussion Paper was presented by the Indian delegation present at the Sessions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees. India appreciates the opportunity of presenting this discussion paper and also

---

<sup>1</sup> [ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CAC/CAC35/cac35\\_19e\\_Rev.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CAC/CAC35/cac35_19e_Rev.pdf)

wishes to take this opportunity to thank the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for giving their views on the discussion paper and for their suggestions as are contained in the reports of these Committees.

### **Summary of the Conclusions from Reports of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees**

5. A brief summary of the conclusions quoted from the reports is given below:

- (a) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and South West Pacific (CCNASWP)  
(REP13/NASWP)

#### **“Conclusion**

16. The Coordinating Committee generally supported Codex work on standards for spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations, noting that prioritization would be necessary. It was noted that the Commission would determine the mechanism for this work. The Coordinating Committee also noted the offer of India to host the subsidiary body.”

- (b) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO)  
(REP13/EURO)

“14. The Committee noted a proposal to change the title of the products covered to “culinary herbs” rather than “aromatic herbs” for clarification purposes and to ensure consistency with the relevant ISO standard.

15. Several delegations considered this proposal positively but could not take a position as they needed to consult with stakeholders at the national level, and some questions remained to be considered: the range of products and quality parameters covered, the need to identify existing standards in various regions and potential trade problems, the additional work for the Codex programme as a whole and the possibility to convene a task force.

16. The Committee thanked India for this presentation and agreed that there seemed to be justification for the establishment of a subsidiary body on spices and related products and suggested considering this issue further when the discussion paper prepared by India became available for consideration by the next session of the Commission.”

- (c) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA)  
(REP13/ASIA)

#### **“Conclusion**

16. The Coordinating Committee supported the proposal of India to establish a separate Committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and suggested that the scope and terms of reference of this Committee should be carefully considered.”

- (d) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) (REP13/LAC)

#### **“Conclusion**

33) The Chairperson summarized the discussion, noting that the Committee was in agreement that work on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations is important for the countries of the region and Codex in general. However, the Committee could not reach consensus on the mechanism to carry out such work within Codex, namely by existing committees or through the establishment of a new subsidiary body, either a time-limited task force or a permanent committee.

34) If the same discussion fails to lead to a consensus at the next session of the Commission, the Committee recommends the establishment of an electronic working group by the Commission to define the scope and extent of the new work clearly and examine the available options with a view to undertaking this work, namely by existing committees, by a task force or by a new Codex committee.”

- (e) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNEA)  
(REP13/NEA)

“25. The Committee agreed on the importance of Codex work on spices, aromatic plants and their formulations as these being widely traded on the international market and highly produced and consumed within the region. Several countries indicated that they had national standards for a number of these products and that harmonization at international level would improve the overall quality of the products while ensuring fair trade practices. It was also noted that collaboration with other international

organizations active in the standardization of these products, such as ISO, should be encouraged to avoid overlapping or conflicting standards and facilitate international trade.

26. The Committee further agreed that, in view of the vast amount of work envisaged for the development of standards for the various spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations being marketed in international trade, a permanent subsidiary body, i.e. a committee, as opposed to a time-bound task force should be established in order to carry out work in a systematic way. The Committee also noted that, given the wide range of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations being produced or marketed in international trade, prioritization of work on these products would be defined by the subsidiary body, if established by the Commission, in accordance with the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* as laid down in the Procedural Manual of the Commission.”

(f) FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA)  
(REP13/AFRICA)

“14. The Committee thanked India for the presentation and agreed that there was justification for the establishment of a committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and supported it being hosted by India. The Committee however noted the concerns of some delegations that they might face difficulties in attending meetings in India and proposed that, should the committee be established, consideration should be given to co-hosting. The Committee noted the offer of Nigeria to co-host the Committee.

**Consideration of the Observations in the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees**

Consideration of the *Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies* as contained in the Procedural Manual.

6. Rule XI (Subsidiary Bodies) of the Rules of the Procedure lays down the procedure for establishment of subsidiary bodies. Paragraph 5 of Rule XI states, “*Subsidiary bodies may only be established by the Commission except where otherwise provided in these Rules. Their terms of reference and reporting procedures shall be determined by the Commission.*” Further, Paragraph 9 of Rule XI states that the establishment of subsidiary bodies shall be subject to the availability of necessary funds and that before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of such subsidiary body, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General of FAO and/or WHO, as appropriate, on the administrative and financial implications thereof.
7. The Procedural Manual<sup>2</sup> also lays down “*Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*”. According to these criteria, “*When there is a proposal for the elaboration of a standard, code of practice or related text in an area not covered by the terms of reference of any existing subsidiary body<sup>3</sup>, or the revision of standards, codes of practice or other texts elaborated by subsidiary bodies adjourned sine die, such a proposal should be accompanied by a written statement to the Commission explaining its justification in light of the Commission’s Medium-Term Objectives and containing, as far as practicable, the information contained in the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities. Should the Commission decide to establish a Subsidiary Body for the purpose of elaborating an appropriate draft standard or related text or for the purpose of revising an existing standard(s) or related text(s), first consideration should be given to the establishment of an ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force under Rule XI.1(b)(i) of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure.*”
8. Rule XI.1 (b) (i) states, “*The Commission may establish the following types of subsidiary bodies: (b) subsidiary bodies in the form of: (i) Codex Committees for the preparation of draft standards for submission to the Commission, whether intended for worldwide use, for a given region or for a group of countries specifically enumerated by the Commission.*”
9. The WTO recognizes Codex as the pre-eminent international body for establishing food safety standards and Codex has the twin objective of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in food trade. Establishment of a subsidiary body for spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations will support the Codex objectives.

<sup>2</sup> Page 38 of Codex Procedural Manual (20<sup>th</sup> Edition)

<sup>3</sup> *The Commission may wish to consider extending the Terms of Reference of an appropriate existing body to accommodate the proposal.*

10. Codex Alimentarius has been working on the development of several commodity and subject matter standards and texts. In the case of commodity committees, work has been done on a variety of products like fresh fruits and vegetables; processed fruits and vegetables; meat and poultry products; milk and milk products; fish and fishery products; fats and oils; sugars; cocoa products and chocolates; natural mineral waters; nutrition for foods and special dietary uses; vegetable proteins; cereals, pulses and legumes. Out of these, six commodity committees on, namely, milk and milk products; meat hygiene; cocoa products and chocolates; natural mineral waters; vegetable proteins; cereals, pulses and legumes have completed their work and are adjourned *sine die* and four others have been abolished. Recently, the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products has also been adjourned *sine die* in 2010.
- A. Is there a large production and trade of a variety of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations justifying establishment of a subsidiary body?
11. The international production of spices and herbs has increased from 6.5 million MT in 2004 to more than 10 million MT in 2011 and the world trade has now reached a level of 4.50 million MT and the demand is continuously on the rise. The spices are mainly produced in Asia, Africa, Near East and Latin American countries. It is noted that spices and aromatic herbs are also produced in some countries of the European Union and United States. The production has shown a growing trend as may be seen from the **Annexure-I**.
12. Briefly, the production trend has been as follows:

<b>Production (MT)</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>World Share (%)</b>
World	1,731,758	4,306,948	6,005,055	6,578,488	100.0%
Developed Countries	183,970	175,566	184,233	236,810	3.6%
Developing Countries	1,547,788	4,131,382	5,820,822	6,341,678	96.4%

Source: Calculations based on FAOSTAT

13. Consumer interest in a variety of cuisines has increased in almost all countries that have led to an increased consumption of such products not only in the house-hold but also in the manufacturing sector. Innovation in food technology have led to development of new recipes requiring a variety of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations to be used as ingredients on account of which trade in these commodities has crossed 5 billion US\$ in terms of value and has the potential to grow. It is, therefore, necessary to bring about a uniform level of quality of the final food product through harmonization of the standards to facilitate fair practices in trade in these products. Since more than 96% of the world production of such products is in the developing countries, work on Codex standards will be of immense help to developing countries not only for development of national standards but also for facilitating their exports and better returns to the farmers that are producing these products in small farms. Codex standards for these products will also help in improving the livelihood conditions of small and marginal farmers in the developing countries while facilitating trade.
14. Spices and aromatic herbs are marketed in different forms, for instance, whole spices, ground spices, cracked/crushed spices, dehydrated spices, spice mixes/blends, spice oils and oleoresins in plain and blended forms. An illustrative list of such spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations (in alphabetical order) include the following:
- Spices:** These include major spices such as allspice, annatto seed, aniseed, asafoetida, cambodge, caraway, cardamom (large and small), cassia, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, dill, dried chillies, dried ginger, fennel, fenugreek, greater galanaga, kokam, lovage, mace, mustard, nutmeg, paprika, pepper, pepper long, pomegranate seeds, poppy, saffron, star anise, sweet flag, tamarind, turmeric, vanilla, etc.
  - Aromatic Herbs:** These include mainly aromatic herbs like basil, caper, horse radish, hyssop, juniper berry, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, tarragon, tejpath, thyme, sage, etc.

15. The world import of spices has been going up year after year. The global export of spices (volume) and aromatic herbs have shown the following trend:

Product Group (MT)	2003	2007	2010
Spices	1,543,067	8,921,762	13,326,529
Aromatic Herbs	2,904,792	3,507,775	3,645,152

*Source: Calculations based on ITC trade map*

16. The increasing trend shown above has been on account of the international market potential. The income around the world is increasing creating a new middle class interested to enjoy different cuisines resulting in an increased demand for spices. Many of the spices and aromatic herbs are grown in developing countries and the expanding potential has triggered development of spices cultivation in many least developed countries also. This expresses the growing potential for trade in these products.
- B. What are impediments/gaps to trade in the absence of Codex standards and how these will help resolve such impediments/gaps and ensure fair practices in food trade?
17. In spite of the fact that the trade and consumption of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations has increased many fold and new uses are being identified everywhere in the world, there are no internationally harmonized standards for these products. It is known that some standards have been framed by trade/voluntary bodies like European Spice Association (ESA), American Spice Trade Association (ASTA), and International Standards Organisation (ISO). However, these are either private or country/region specific trade standards. Thus, different standards in different countries/regions become an impediment to trade in these products. The huge diversity in the standards of spices across countries has resulted in the prevalence of multiple standards. Therefore, the absence of harmonised international standards under the Codex does not support fair practices in trade in such products. This leads to specifications that are unilaterally demanded by buyers, consequently causing distortion in exports for most developing countries, particularly, because these products are produced by small farmers. The absence of harmonized international standards is seen as a major gap for such countries in the smooth trade in these products. The lack of a common standard has been a detriment to export of spices from several economies and there is an impending need to harmonize grades and specifications for these products.
18. It is noted that Codex texts have not been developed for ingredients like, spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations. These commodities are used in almost all food products traded and consumed all over the world and require appropriate standardization for ensuring consumer interest and fair practices in trade in such food products and to avoid trade distortions. Therefore the quality of these products is of paramount importance as it determines the quality of the food that is traded and consumed globally. Absence of Codex standards for spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations is seen as another gap in the standardization and harmonization process of food products within the framework of Codex Alimentarius.
- C. Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives
19. The justification for establishment of a subsidiary body meets with the objectives and strategic plan (2008-2013) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in terms of **Goal 1** (*Promoting Sound Regulatory Frameworks*), in particular, Activity 1.2 (*Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food quality*). The proposal for establishment of a subsidiary body also meets with the objectives of **Goal 5** (*Promoting Maximum and Effective Participation Members*), in particular Activity 5.4 (*Strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees*). The proposal not only supports development of Codex standards for food quality, it also encourages hosting/co-hosting of Codex sessions in developing countries, and in the process enhance sensitization for Codex work, promote capacity building and strengthen national Codex structure.

D. How does food trade benefit from this work, in particular, the developing countries?

20. The following benefits of Codex standards for spices, aromatic herbs and their formation are noted:

- Avoid multiple standards through the establishment of Codex standards. It is recognized that comprehensive work on internationally harmonized food standards is possible through an inter-governmental international organization like Codex.
- Promote consumer protection through improvement in the quality of food products.
- No scientific advice is envisaged in this work.
- Ensure transparency in international trade in these products.
- Exchange of information across trading partners is standardized.
- Supports fair practices in trade and encourage trade-supporting equivalence determination.
- Provide confidence to small producers of these products and facilitate market access, particularly, for several developing countries in all the regions.
- Enhance technical ability to meet standards and promote capacity building.
- Standardization of these products would bring about uniformity in certification and enable cost efficiency.
- Improve stakeholder involvement in the development of national standards and certification procedures.
- Support better production practices and eliminate trade distortions much to the benefit of developing countries.

E. Whether work can be done by an existing Committee such as the CCFFV, CCPFV or by a time-limited Task Force.

21. There are a variety of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations that might require standardization of quality parameters. Although spices and herbs are plant materials, these are not vegetables because such products acquire the status of spices through specific procedures after their harvest to exploit their inert properties, flavour, aroma and active ingredients. These are not consumed in fresh form as in the case of fruits and vegetables covered by the CCFFV; or after processing/drying/quick freezing to extend their shelf life or for convenience in consumption as covered by the CCPFV. On the other hand, spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations are consumed in the form of ingredients in different recipes and cuisines to provide the desired flavour and aroma, and are, thus, a different category of food products.

22. During the 35th Session of the Commission (2012) as well as during the Sessions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, some delegations expressed the view that the development of Codex standards for Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations could be undertaken by a time-limited Task Force. It is noted from the proposed revised Scope of Work (paras 38 to 43 of this discussion paper) that the proposal envisages development of quality standards for a variety of spices and aromatic herbs (illustrated in para 14 above and referred to in para 43 of this discussion paper) and for different distinct quality characteristics as explained in para 43 of this discussion paper. Hence, taking up this work through a time-limited Task Force might have practical difficulties. The proposal might, therefore, merit a separate Codex Committee to take up this work. It is noted that a Committee will allow comprehensive harmonization of quality standards in a transparent and inclusive manner to ensure fair practices in their trade.

23. It is sometimes believed that spices are used as food additives. It is, however, noted that spices are not classified as food additives since the latter have a specific technological function during the processing activity in relation to stability of the final products or for shelf-life reasons or to impart colour to the food, whereas the spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations do not have such functions. Spices are used as ingredients directly in the food preparations for immediate or direct consumption and are used for enhancing the flavour or aroma of the food product.

F. Previous Discussion on Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius

24. In 2002, at the request of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the FAO and WHO commissioned a joint evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO work on food standards. As per Recommendation 16 of the evaluation report, “*Codex should undertake a review, including a*

*detailed study by consultants of the work of general subject and commodity committees as soon as possible, and thereafter on a fixed schedule, with a view to rationalization where appropriate. The review should in particular examine:*

- *the existing committee mandates with a view to rationalization;*
- *any need for redistribution of tasks and responsibilities between committees; and*
- *any need to split committees.*

*Also:*

- a) commodity work should be handled through time bound task-forces;*
- b) no new committee should be established even in a horizontal area of work until the possibilities for progress and the need for continuing work have been established through a task force;*
- c) the treatment of health issues in commodity committees should be reduced to the essential minimum and wherever possible handled through a task force with the relevant horizontal committee.”*

25. The 25th (Extraordinary) Session (2003) of the Commission (*ALINORM 03/25/5*) reviewed the report but did not make any conclusions on the above stated Recommendation 16. It, however, requested (paragraph 25 of that report) the Codex Secretariat to obtain the comments from Government and interested international organizations on the report, and to prepare options and strategy for consideration by the 26th Session of the Commission (2003) for action on a number of areas including Recommendation 16.
26. The Codex Secretariat invited comments from Governments and interested international organizations and presented a summary of the comments at the 26th Session of the Commission (*ALINORM 03/26/11: Add 1*). It is stated in paragraph 2 that there were significant differences of opinions in relation to the three ‘sub-proposals’ contained in Recommendation 16 (a), (b) and (c), in particular, that all commodity work should be undertaken by time-bound Task Forces. One of the comments stated that this could lead to a proliferation of Task Forces with serious negative implications for developing member countries. In paragraph 3, it is stated that, *“In 1999, the Commission adopted new criteria for the establishment of subsidiary bodies which placed emphasis on the use of time-bound task forces to undertake specific work that either did not fit within the existing committee structure or else fell across the mandates of several Codex committees, thus providing the commission with a more flexible and task-directed approach to its work.”*
27. The report of the joint FAO/WHO evaluation was again discussed at the 26th Session (2003) of the Commission. It is noted that from paragraph 152 of the report (*ALINORM 03/41*) that the standard setting needs of the developing countries should be recognized and appropriate capacity building activities should be promoted. The Commission further decided that the priorities should be for processes for standards management, with due regard to the special needs of developing countries. However, there was no decision by the Commission on Recommendation 16 referred to above in view of significant differences of opinion among the members.
28. The Joint FAO/WHO evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius reviewed the Codex Committee structure and noted that, *“The use of time-bound ad hoc task forces should remain an essential element of a flexible response to urgent matters, including task forces that may take some of the work from over-burdened General Subject Committees, or draft standards on special subjects. However, the establishment of such task forces should take into account the overall capacity of all member countries to participate in the work of Codex.”* (*ALINORM 03/26/11: Add.1, paragraph 9*)
29. It is also noted from the first bullet point mentioned in the *“Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission”* given on page 38 of the Codex Procedural Manual that *‘the terms of reference of the proposed ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force shall be limited to the immediate task at hand and normally shall not be subsequently modified;’*. Thus, it is noted that the function of an Intergovernmental Task Force is limited to a specific task identified for standardization and may not apply to a function to set standards for a larger group of items such as that proposed in the proposal under consideration.

### G. Cost implications

30. There will be some expenditure for the Codex Secretariat to take up work on the proposed Committee and provisions may have to be made in the event of a decision to establish a Codex Committee for Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations. There might be a need to hold about 12 sessions and it is proposed to hold a session every 18 months to allow for adequate preparation. Holding a session every 18 months will support cost efficiency. As stated in para 10 above, six Commodity Committees have completed their work and are adjourned *sine die* and four others have been abolished. It is noted that out of the various Committees that had already been adjourned *sine die*, the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products was adjourned in 2010. In addition, the CCFICS has also taken a decision to hold the next CCFICS Session after approximately 18 months (para 66 of REP13/FICS). Moreover, the Task Force on Animal Feeding has completed its work. Thus, these savings could be utilized by the FAO and WHO for any additional expenses on the proposed committee.
31. Some members have also expressed concerns about participation on account of cost implications, in particular, because some of them are not eligible for funding support under the Codex Trust Fund and have, therefore, suggested an alternative approach through work by electronic means. On account of the fact that there are a number of products that are proposed to be covered by the proposed Committee, there might be practical difficulties in working through electronic means. However, as per the current Codex practice, draft standards should continue to be developed via e-WGs before consideration in the Committee.
32. The fact that out of the various Committees that have been adjourned *sine die*, the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products has been adjourned in 2010 and CCFICS has also decided to hold its next session after 18 months, there is opportunity for enhanced availability of resources to members under the Codex Trust Fund to participate in the proposed Committee on spices.
33. India also proposes hosting of this Committee and, hence, the relevant expenses as per the current Codex practice will be borne by India. India is also willing to have co-hosting arrangements with developing countries after gaining experience of hosting a few sessions to ensure an efficient conduct of co-hosting arrangements. This will support co-hosting experience for developing countries, particularly, those producing spices. This process will provide greater sensitization for quality standards among producers, in particular, the small farmers and processors, in the developing countries. It is noted that development of quality standards for such products essentially produced by the developing countries is an important consideration for setting up of the proposed subsidiary body in the framework of Codex Alimentarius.

### **Proposed Mechanism to undertake the work**

34. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees considered the proposal to establish the Committee. Several delegations were of the view that establishment of a Codex Committee was justified. Other delegations were of the view that a time-limited Task Force could be established. Some other delegations expressed the view that the work could be undertaken by an existing Committee. These suggestions are discussed in the paras contained under the title, "*F. Whether work can be done by an existing Committee such as the CCFV or by a time-limited Task Force.*"
35. Taking into account the considerations presented in the above paras in response to the observations of delegations during the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, in case the Commission accepts the proposal for establishment of a Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations, India proposes, for consideration, the following mechanism to undertake work on development of quality standards for these products:
  - (a) The proposed Committee would meet at an interval of approximately 18 months and as per the provisions of the Procedural Manual. The first session of the Committee can be held as soon as possible after completion of the necessary procedural arrangements with the Codex Secretariat. The specific dates will be finalized in consultation with the Codex Secretariat;
  - (b) The Sessions of the proposed Committee are proposed to be held in English, French and Spanish languages;



- (c) The proposed Committee may wish to lay down priority-setting criteria for undertaking work in the Committee;
- (d) Depending upon the items of work prioritized by the proposed Committee, development of quality standards will primarily be undertaken by electronic working groups as per the current practice followed by the Codex Committees as laid down in the Codex Procedural Manual before taking up work in physical meetings;
- (e) The proposed Committee would, as per the current Codex practice, consult with other organisations that have developed or are developing standards for spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations;
- (f) India would be willing to host the proposed Committee. The co-hosting arrangements as proposed in para 33 above and as per the current practice would be followed;
- (g) It is proposed to hold about 12 sessions during which it is envisaged that the work of the Committee would be completed and the Committee could consider adjournment.

### **Proposed Prioritization of the Work**

- 36. While considering the proposal for establishment of a Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations, there was a general observation that there should be prioritization of the work proposed to be conducted by the Committee. The suggestion assumes importance in view of a variety of products covered by the category of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations. While the recommendations on prioritization of the work may be made by the proposed Committee, the Commission may wish to provide some guidance at this stage. Should the Commission agree to establish a Committee, the Commission may wish to advise that the proposed Committee consider prioritization of its work based on their importance in global production and trade volumes.
- 37. Draft proposals for Codex standards for Pepper and Rosemary as contained in the initial proposal submitted by India (CX/CAC 12/35/19 later revised as CX/CAC 12/35/19-Rev) with relevant changes and revised timelines are at **Annexure-II** and **Annexure-III**, respectively.

### **Proposed Scope of Work**

- 38. While considering the proposal for establishment of a Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations, there was a general observation that the scope of work by the proposed Committee should be better defined. This suggestion needs to be addressed to bring clarity to the proposal in terms of the areas proposed to be covered by the proposed Committee to avoid any potential confusion.
- 39. The document entitled, "Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Plants" (CAC/RCP 42 – 1995) clarifies, "*The term spices, which includes dried aromatic plants, relates to natural dried components or mixtures thereof, used in foods for flavouring, seasoning and imparting aroma. The term applies equally to spices in the whole, broken or ground form.*"
- 40. Spices are exclusive dried commodities and each one is a stand-alone item. These are marketed in different forms, for instance, whole spices, ground spices, cracked/crushed spices, dehydrated spices, spice mixes/blends, spice oils and oleoresins. These products are required to be used as ingredients for the purposes of providing the desired seasoning, flavour or aroma to the food preparation and are distinguished from products that are used as food additives. There are a number of distinct quality characteristics that need to be standardized, depending upon the nature of the products. Such characteristics include physical parameters like size, colour, maturity, quality, presence of cracked or broken pieces/fragments, ash content, moisture, oil content, filth, excreta or other extraneous matter, etc.
- 41. Items that are used as food additives to perform a technological function during processing activity in relation to stability of the final food product or for shelf-life reasons or to impart colour to the food are not envisaged to be covered under the scope of work of the proposed Committee.
- 42. With regard to the presence of contaminants and pesticide residues, codes of practice for hygienic production, methods of sampling and analysis, inspection and certification procedures as well as labeling, the standards and relevant texts developed by the relevant subject matter Codex Committees can be referenced in the standards.

43. Thus, the scope of work of the proposed Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations would be standardization of grades and specifications of the following forms and physical parameters (quality characteristics) of spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations as illustrated in para 14 above in a format that might be agreed to by the proposed Committee:

- (h) Forms: whole spices, ground spices, cracked/crushed spices, dehydrated spices, spice mixes/blends, spice oils and oleoresins, and any other relevant form;
- (i) Physical Parameters (quality characteristics): size, colour, moisture, ash content, counts, maturity, percentage of cracked or broken pieces/fragments, volatile oil content, filth, excreta or other extraneous matter.

#### **Proposed Terms of Reference**

44. It is noted from the Codex Procedural Manual that in respect of most Codex Committees, the Terms of Reference are given in brief and in a general form. Hence, to be consistent with this practice, the following Terms of Reference are proposed:

- (a) To elaborate world-wide standards as may be appropriate for “Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations” as per the scope of work of the Committee;
- (b) To consult with ISO and other relevant organizations in the standards development process to avoid duplication;

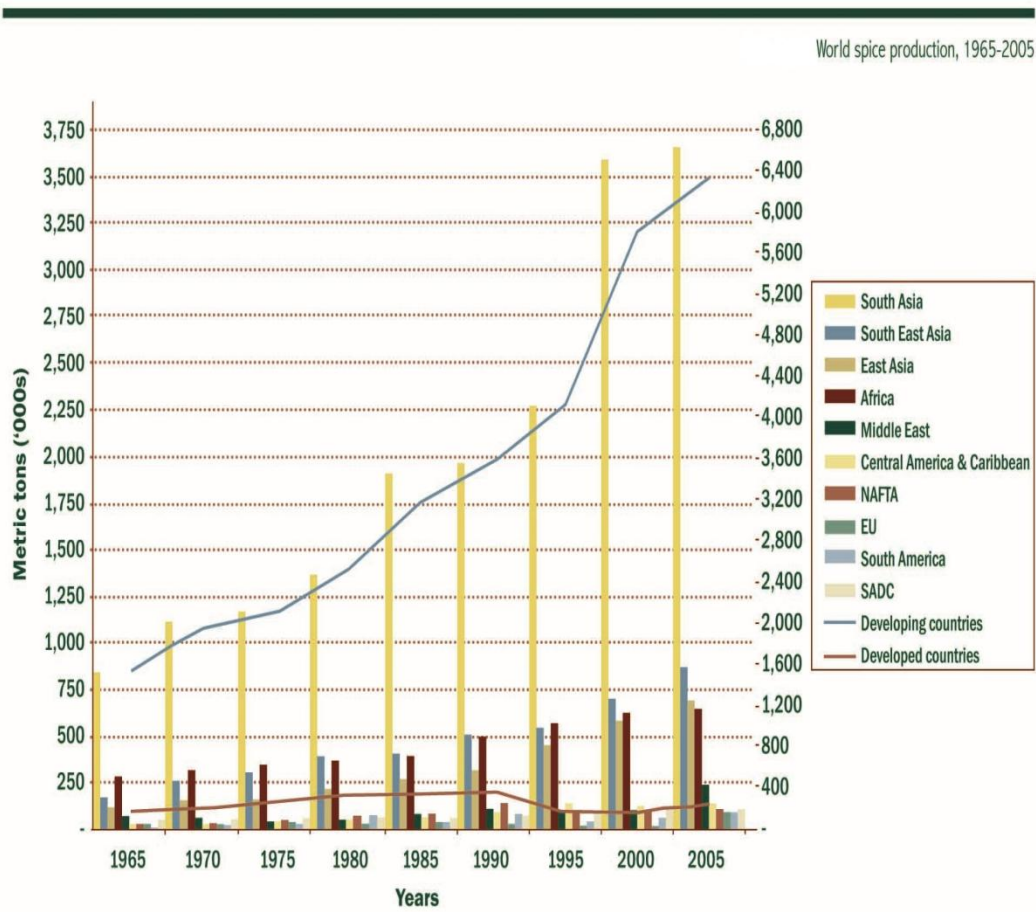
#### **Recommendation**

45. It is recommended that the Codex Alimentarius Commission may consider the proposal for the establishment of a Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations taking into account the conclusions of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees and the consideration of these conclusions as contained in this discussion paper.

46. Should the Commission agree to establish the proposed Codex Committee, it is further recommended to decide on the following:

- (a) proposed Scope of Work;
- (b) the Terms of Reference; and
- (c) consider approving the two work proposals that enable the Committee to initiate work at its First Session.

World Production of Spices  
(1965 – 2005)



Source: FAOSTAT and own calculations

## ANNEXURE-II

**Proposal for New Work on development of Codex standard for  
Pepper whole (green, black & white) and Pepper products.**

*Proposal submitted by India*

**Introduction**

Grown in many countries in Asia and Latin American region, pepper is bought across the world for its wide applications. Pepper is aromatic, pungent and contains essential oil (up to 3.5%) and 5 - 10% pungent acid-amides with piperine as well as piper line, piperoleines and piperamine, while the oil contains sabinene, pinene, phellandrene, linalool and limonene. Piperine has good anticonvulsant and antimicrobial properties, hence has lots of medicinal properties and finds applications in food, non-food and pharmaceutical industries. The pungency is strong in white pepper while black and green peppercorns are more aromatic than the white ones. Green pepper corn has an immature, herbaceous fragrance. The pepper producing and importing countries have their standards and grades fixed over a period of time and the multiplicity warrants arriving at harmonization of a global standard for green, black and white pepper.

**1. The Purpose and Scope of the Standard**

The scope of the standard is for pepper - *Piper nigrum* of the Piperaceae family. Pepper corns are the berries that are obtained from stalks of a creeper with woody stems and oval heart shaped leaves. Cultivated in Asia and Latin American regions, the plant contributes to three types of pepper in whole form: Green pepper (in brine, frozen and dehydrated forms), white pepper (the fully matured fruit after removal of pericarp before drying) and black pepper (the mature dried berry). Pepper yields oils and oleoresins besides value added products in crushed, cracked and ground forms.

The objective is to develop a world-wide standard based on characteristics like colour, size of the berries, active ingredients like piperine and any other factors that need to be considered for bringing in a transparent system of harmonisation.

**2. Relevance and Timeliness**

Pepper is one of the oldest commodities traded world-wide and traded in a tight supply situation. It is produced in countries like Brazil, Cambodia, China P.R, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam in an area of 4,76,514 hectares as of 2010. Almost all the pepper producing countries are developing nations and small and marginal farmers are engaged in farming and hence it important that fair trade practices are ensured. Pepper being a universal commodity consumed by millions of people and scores of industry segments, it is important that production and post-harvest operation including grading and packing are subject to hygienic and quality standard. The intrinsic properties in pepper have many things to do with health of the consumers.

The relevance of pepper is such that it is high time that a standard based on its properties especially active ingredients, bulk density, physical size etc. are arrived through harmonization. This will avoid discrepancies in the standards when it comes to marketing not only from producing countries but from re-exporting centres also. The process of harmonization will act as a reference that is internationally agreed through consensus between the major producing and trading countries, besides protecting consumers' health and promoting fair trade in accordance with the different international agreements.

Pepper is called as the 'King of spices' on account of its usage round the world more than any of the spices present. Dried black pepper berries are by monetary value, the most widely traded spice in the world, accounting for nearly 30 percent of all spice imports in the world. The production of pepper is dependent upon the hot and moist weather conditions and the pepper crop needs these sorts of conditions to prosper.

Pepper is in great demand and any further addition in production from any part of the world could be absorbed by the global market. This is true in the case of any form of pepper whether it be whole, crushed, cracked, powdered, dehydrated, put in brine or in the form of oils and oleoresins. Besides its culinary and industrial applications, pepper has many medicinal properties. Its culinary use, applications in aroma therapy, in the preparations of modern and ancient medicinal formulations points to the richness of the active ingredient Piperine which matters food and health of the people.

### **3. Main aspects to be covered**

The standard entails aspects related to size of the pepper corns and other physical parameters, safety and labeling in order to provide adequate product characteristics and to protect consumer's health. To supply high quality safe products, the objective of the standards are to:

- Establish the minimum requirements for pepper in addition to the quality parameters like the soundness of berry, free from pest and other extraneous matter etc.
- Define the categories to classify Pepper in accordance with the characteristics of the berries; taking into account the whole, crushed, cracked, ground, dehydrated, in brine, frozen forms.
- Establish Piperine, essential oil content and other values.
- Include the provisions to be considered related to the uniformity of the packaged product and the packaging used.
- Include provisions for the labeling and marking of the product in accordance with the general standard for the labeling of pre-packaged foods.
- Establish tolerances regarding quality and size permitted in packaged pepper.
- Include provisions for hygiene with reference to the recommended International Code of Practice for hygiene and general principles of food hygiene

### **4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities**

#### **General criterion**

- Consumer protection from the point of view of health and the prevention of fraudulent practices.
- Quality of the produce to meet consumer needs and the minimum requirements of food safety.
- Arriving at levels of standardisation based on the properties of different varieties to meet industrial and consumer needs with exactness and credibility.
- The elaboration of the standard for the forms of pepper would be to the benefit of many countries in general and more particular in the case of developing countries, for the developing countries are the major producers, exporters and consumers of pepper.

#### **Criteria applicable to commodities**

##### **(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries:**

The world's total production was recorded at 338,380 MT in 2010, of which black pepper constitutes 264,980MT and white pepper 73,400 MT and is produced in countries like Brazil, Cambodia, China P.R, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The major producers form part of the International Pepper Community Countries (IPC) covering about 85% of the world pepper trade.

While the pepper producing countries do export of pepper, they also are importing sizeable quantities for value addition and re-exports. It has been estimated that a quantity of 46,309 MT of pepper was imported by the producing countries during 2010. The trend in imports by producing countries is on the upswing since the imports was 18,421 MT only during 2001. Pepper export by producing countries is estimated to be 265,254 MT during 2010 which is lower than 273,677 MT of 2009 but much higher than 201,285 MT of 2001.

Total import of pepper by consuming countries across the world in almost all continents is estimated to be 281,282 MT in 2010 higher than quantities of the earlier years. It is peculiar of pepper that many importing countries re-export sizeable quantities to friendly zones and other markets after value addition in one or the other form. Nearly one hundred countries do re-export and a figure for 2010 is estimated to be 75,274 MT.

Being an oldest traded commodity, pepper had made its impact in every producing and importing country. There exist lots of complexities in terms of grades and specification of pepper from different origins. Each producing country has its own grades and specifications being followed over a period of time. Hence there are separately prevailing standards for instance for Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam etc. The levels prescribed for moisture content, extraneous matter, piperine, etc. has variations in different standards. There exist further more standards prescribed by the American Spice Trade Association, European Spice Association and the International Pepper Community.

**(b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:**

Import of pepper take place for many applications. It goes for grinding, cracking, powdering and for extraction based on specific objectives. Hence the trade in pepper takes shape based on applications and customer requirement. However trade in pepper is based on producing country's and importing country's mutually agreed conditions in terms of grade and specifications. However it would be preferred that the trade in pepper and pepper products is carried under an International criteria based on Codex Standard. Therefore, the new work would provide internationally recognized specific standards in order to enhance international trade and to accommodate the importers requirements.

Forecasts show that the overall consumption and trade in pepper is on the rise. Any increase in production could be well absorbed by the global market on account of the market potential round the world.

International organisations like the American Spice Trade Association, European Spice Association and ISO have dealt with the standards for pepper. Many conventions including that of the World Spice Congress has addressed the issue of harmonisation of grades and specifications for pepper. Pepper being produced in developing countries and traded globally not only by the exporters but also through re-exports by importers, is subject to various national legislations. To overcome the resultant or potential impediments to international trade, it is essential to incorporate all existing different standards in a single improved comprehensive standard acceptable across board internationally. This warrants the establishment of a Codex standard as per the Procedural Manual.

However this is a spice of universal importance and has many things to do with health and safety of consumers. By eliminating the variable (sometimes conflicting) sets of rules and regulations, trade barriers will be reduced and would gain a comprehensive legal framework for the minimum acceptable standards for pepper internationally.

**(c) International or regional market potential:**

Total imports of pepper by consuming countries across the world are estimated to be 281,282 MT in 2010, with more than 30% growth in a decade span and it is on the increase. Nearly one hundred countries do re-export and a figure for 2010 is estimated to be 75,274 MT.

Demand for pepper is bound to go up in different markets. Other than bulk imports for wholesale application in food and non-food sector, quantities are bought and sold in retail outlets for household applications irrespective of cuisines. The oils and oleoresins from pepper will be in use for a wide range of food manufacturing and processing industries on account of its advantages of transport, storage and long shelf life. Among the producing countries, except Vietnam there is a strong domestic market for pepper.

**(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization:**

The characteristics of pepper, from its cultivation through to harvest, fruit characteristics, cultivar varieties, composition, quality and packaging all lend to adequate parameters for the standardization of the product. This will include defining the berries according to its bulk density, size in its whole form, colour of the berries, extraneous matter and other related forms like crushed, cracked, ground and extract (Oils and oleoresins).

**(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.**

There is no general commodity standard coverage for pepper, the new work will enhance consumer protection and facilitate pepper trade by establishing an international agreed quality standard.

**(f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards including whether raw, semi-processed or processed.**

The standard will be for pepper. The derivatives from pepper like green pepper (in brine, frozen and dehydrated forms), white pepper (the fully matured fruit after removal of pericarp before drying), black pepper (the mature dried berry), oils and oleoresins and value added products from pepper will be examined under this individually.

**(g) Work already undertaken by other international organization in this field.**

- (i) International Pepper Community grades of treated whole pepper, black and white.
- (ii) ASTA's Cleanliness specification for spices, seeds and herbs.

The need for setting up an international standard for pepper had come up for discussion in International Organization of Spice Trade Associations (IOSTA), International Pepper Community, World Spice Congress and World Spice Organization.

#### **5. Relevance to the Codex Strategic Objectives.**

The proposal is in line with the Strategic Vision Statement of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013, in particular, Activity 1.2, 4.1, 5.1 and aims at setting up international accepted minimum quality requirements of pepper for human consumption. It also contributes to fair trade practices wherein the farmers will be able to assess their produce with reference to the quality standards thereby empowering them to realize more monetary values.

#### **6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents.**

This proposal is for a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing CODEX text on this item, except that this standard will make reference to relevant standards and related texts developed by general subject committees.

#### **7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice.**

No need for expert scientific advice is foreseen at this stage. Published research documents by international bodies will be referred in the process of preparing the standard, if found necessary.

#### **8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for.**

The technical inputs from ISO, International Pepper Community, American Spice Trade Association and European Spice Association as well as from pepper producing countries shall be welcomed as they have already done work related to the subject. Also ISO standards can be used as a step process to frame the codex standards for pepper.

#### **9. Proposed Time Schedule**

In case the Commission approves establishment of the proposed Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations, the following timelines are proposed:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ADVANCE AND PROCEDURES</b>
Between July 2013 and March 2014	Prepare draft agenda along with new work proposals. These proposals will be prepared through electronic consultation with members to kick start work of the Committee.
June/July 2014	Critical review of new work proposals by CCEXEC; Approval of new work proposals by the Commission the process.
First half of 2015	Committee to hold its first session and consider new work items at Step 3; Committee also to consider prioritizing its work.
Second half of 2016	Consider draft standard at Step 5 with the possibility to recommend adoption at Step 8
CAC 2017	Adoption of the standard at Step 8

## ANNEXURE-III

**Proposal for New Work on development of Codex Standard for**  
**Rosemary (dehydrated and extracts)**

*Proposal submitted by India*

**Introduction**

Widely used in pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, Rosemary is a herb of great importance and is cultivated predominantly in Europe and Africa. Rosemary is used as a decorative plant in gardens and has antimicrobial properties. It contains antioxidants like carnosic acid and rosmarinic acid, and other bioactive compounds including camphor, caffeic acid, ursolic acid, betulinic acid, rosmaridiphenol and rosmanol. Some of these are found useful in preventing or treating cancers, strokes, and Alzheimer's disease. All these aspects make this herb a very vital plant from point of human health.

The oil is distilled from the stem and leaves of the plant before it flowers. The leaves, both fresh and dried, are used in traditional Mediterranean cuisine. They have a bitter, astringent taste and are highly aromatic, which complements a wide variety of foods. When burnt, they give off a mustard-like smell and a smell similar to burning wood, which can be used to flavor foods while barbecuing. Rosemary is high in iron, calcium and vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, 317 mg, 6.65 mg and 0.336 mg per 100 g, respectively. Rosemary extract has been shown to improve the shelf life and heat stability of omega 3-rich oils, which are prone to rancidity. These properties are very much to be considered in terms of food safety and consumer protection.

**1. The Purpose and Scope of the Standard**

The scope of the standard is for Rosemary - *Rosmarinus officinalis* of *Rosmarinus* genus. Rosemary is an aromatic evergreen shrub that has leaves resembling pine needles. Rosemary oil has many general applications as it blends well with other extracts like basil, black pepper, cinnamon, citronella, sage, eucalyptus, geranium, grapefruit, lavender, lemon, litsea cubeba, mandarin, marjoram, niaouli, oregano, peppermint, petitgrain, pine, ravensara, tea tree, thyme, etc.

Rosemary oil when distilled from the flowering tops has a clear, powerful refreshing minty-herbal smell with a woody, balsamic undertone. The oil is colourless to slightly yellow with a watery viscosity. Most producers in South Africa cut and distil the entire plant. This oil will have higher camphor content and will be inferior in quality to the above. The active ingredient in Rosemary has pharmaceutical properties. All these aspects make this herb a very vital plant from point of human health.

The objective is to develop a world-wide standard based on basic characteristics. The need to have a harmonized standard for Rosemary stems from the fact the crop is grown in developing countries in fragmented area by marginal farmers. The marginal farmers do not have the capability to collectively organize to manage the factors which influence their output and therefore the whole food chain will be put to risk by these external factors if these risks are not recognized or mitigated by an international committee under the aegis of Codex.

**2. Relevance and Timeliness**

With lots of applications in the sustenance of human life, Rosemary as a herb has lots of significance. The crop is grown commercially in countries like France, Italy, Spain and Tunisia. Some regions in Asia, The US, Mexico and South Africa also grow this crop. Being a very small crop, reliable production figures of this crop is not officially available. While the herb like Rosemary form a small portion in different segments of food, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industry food, the absence of it can alter the identity of the ultimate product. These cannot be clubbed under any other categories like food additives or vegetables as they do not provide functionality; they provide aroma and taste. Despite being only a part of the whole, rosemary has a big impact on the identity of any food. The impediment on account of non-availability of vital statistics on production, export, import and value addition needs to be overcome.



International Standard (ISO 11164:1995), prescribes quality requirements for dried Rosemary. But a total harmonization of standards is required since buying entities undertake different standards while effecting purchases which is detrimental to the interest of the marginal farmers and developing nations. The essential oil content of the dried herb is an important factor contributing to the flavour intensity. Whole Rosemary leaves should contain a minimum of one to two percent volatile oil, maximum of 10 % foreign matter, maximum of two percent woody stems, and a maximum of seven percent ash.

### **3. Main aspects to be covered**

The standard entails aspects related to the properties of Rosemary in dehydrated and extract form incorporating physical parameters, presence of extraneous matters, oil content, safety and labeling in order to provide adequate product characteristics and to protect consumer's health. To supply high quality safe products, the objective of the standards are to:

- Compile production, export and import figures for Rosemary and its products to overcome the current impediment in sourcing data for standardization and harmonization.
- Establish the minimum requirements for Rosemary in its dehydrated and extract form including and in additions to the quality parameters like the physical appearance, uniformity of the product, free from pest and other extraneous matter etc.
- Define the categories to classify Rosemary in accordance with the characteristics of the herb; such as cut herbs, essential oil, fixed oil, extracts etc.
- To monitor and strengthen the cross border phytosanitary regulations so that the pests/microbes do not travel to other countries and cross contaminate the delicate ecosystem of marginal growers of spices and herbs.
- Include the provisions to be considered related to the uniformity of the packaged product and the packaging used.
- Include provisions for the labeling and marking of the product in accordance with the general standard for the labeling of prepackaged foods.
- Establish tolerances regarding quality and size permitted in packaged Rosemary.
- Include provisions for hygiene with reference to the recommended international Code of Practice for hygiene and general principles of food hygiene

### **4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities**

#### **4.1 General criterion**

- Consumer protection from the point of view of health and the prevention of fraudulent practices.
- Quality of the produce to meet consumer needs and the minimum requirements of food safety.
- Arriving at levels of standardisation based on the properties of different varieties to meet industrial and consumer needs with exactness and credibility.
- The elaboration of the standard for the forms of Rosemary would be to the benefit of many countries in general and more particular in the case of developing countries who export so that their competency could be raised.

#### **4.2 Criteria applicable to commodities**

##### **(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries:**

The world's total production of Rosemary is not officially available as the trade figures get clubbed with total figures for herbs and spices. However figures available with the CBI Netherlands point to the fact that Rosemary is cultivated in European Union in an area of 158 hectares of which 99 hectares grow organic Rosemary. These figures are relating to cultivation of Rosemary in countries like Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK. More areas under Rosemary cultivation lie in countries like Tunisia, South Africa, Mexico, Morocco, India etc. for which precise data is not available.

Separate figures consumption of Rosemary is not available since again the figures get clubbed with spices and herbs. The largest market for herbs is Europe ( Germany 19 percent, Romania 14 percent, Hungary 12 percent, the UK 16 percent followed by North America and Asia, according to the Trade Information Brief of the Southern African Development Community, 2007. The EU market for herbs and spices increased from 265 thousand tones in 2003 to 321 thousand tones in 2007, representing an annual growth of five percent),

The demand from the pharmaceutical industry, catering industry, food industry all contribute to the off take of herbs.

Rosemary though is a herb of importance, is not discernible as a commodity. There is no fixed standard as such except the basic indication by the ISO. There exist lots of complexities in terms of grades and specification of dehydrated Rosemary and its oil and the standards are dictated by the buyer.

**(b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:**

Imports of Rosemary take place for many applications. It goes for dehydration and distillation in the producing countries. In some cases dehydrated material is imported by processing companies. The consignments are traded based on applications and customer requirement. However it would be preferred that the trade in dehydrated Rosemary and Rosemary extracts is carried under an International criteria based on Codex Standard. Therefore, the new work would provide internationally recognized specific standards in order to enhance international trade and to accommodate the importers requirements.

Forecasts show that the overall consumption of and trade in Rosemary will rise with more application. Any extra addition in production could be well absorbed by the global market on account of the continued demand by processing industries.

International organisations like the European Spice Association, American Spice Trade Association and ISO have been dealt with the standards for Rosemary. Many conventions including that of the World Spice Congress and the World Spice Organisation have addressed the issue of harmonisation of grades and specifications for herbs. Rosemary is a herb produced in developing and developed countries. Since the ultimate products in which Rosemary oil is an active ingredient addresses health related matters, the importance of hygienic practices come to the fore.

Due to absence of a global harmonised standard for Rosemary oil and dehydrated Rosemary, and work already undertaken by many other international organizations like European Union, incorporation of these aspects under this point is necessary as per the Procedural Manual. Hence, to incorporate all existing disparate standards in a single improved comprehensive standard acceptable across the board internationally, the establishment of a Codex standard is seen as a necessity.

As a result, by eliminating the variable (sometimes conflicting) sets of rules and regulations, trade barriers will be reduced and we would gain a comprehensive legal framework for the minimum acceptable standards for Rosemary internationally.

**(c) International or regional market potential:**

Global trade figures for Rosemary is not available and the volumes get classified with the total figures of trade in herbs and spices and the exporters of medicinal and aromatic plants from East European countries like Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus etc..

There is considerable demand for Rosemary extracts in the international markets. Value addition is happening in many of the producing countries like France, Spain and India.

There is no available data that indicates total world import and export of Rosemary oil. The only available information is USA's import statistics. Accordingly annual import of Rosemary oil by US is shown below.

<b><u>IMPORT OF ROSEMARY OIL BY USA /Year</u></b>	<b>Import in MT</b>
2000	89.56
2001	76.58
2002	124.57
2003	98.21
2004	148.72
2005	109.04

**Source:** US Department of Commerce, Horticulture and Tropical products division, FAS/USDA.

As can be seen for the above import of Rosemary oil by the USA, it has shown a general growth. During the period 2000 – 2005, US import of Rosemary oil averaged at 107.78 MT, with an annual average growth rate of 10%. Assuming that USA accounts for one third of global demand of Rosemary oil, the total global demand is estimated at 323 MT per annum.

The following are the major products from this herb:

- i. Oil-soluble Rosemary extracts: Carnosic acid 5%-90% powder, Rosemary oleoresin- Carnosic acid liquid 5%-25%. This is widely used in edible oil, fish oil, oil-rich food, meat, baked food & fried food as natural high effect antioxidant.
- ii. Water-soluble Rosemary extracts: Rosmarinic acid 2.5%-20%. This is widely used in beverage, health food and make up as water soluble natural antioxidant.
- iii. Rosemary essential oil 100%,: Used for skin care and anti-aging essential oil.
- iv. Rosemary Leaf Powder.
- v. Rosemary as fresh herb

According to a new ITC market study, some possibilities exist for exporters of herbs in developing countries to increase their sales to Europe. Imports of dried herbs into four of Europe's largest markets total approximately 12,000 MT to 13,000 MT annually. Although traditional suppliers hold a strong position in this trade, exporters who can offer herbs of consistently high quality that have properties distinguishing them from those of their competitors in terms of flavour, colour and essential oil content should be able to obtain a firm foothold and possibly even command higher prices than current sources of supply.

Imports of dried herbs into the four markets (France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) are estimated to average almost 12,600 MT yearly, of which 37% goes to France; 30% to Germany; 21% to the United Kingdom; and 12% to the Netherlands. Over 77% of the imports of herbs into the four markets are of six types: rosemary, sage, oregano, marjoram, mint, and thyme. According to trade estimates, overall demand for herbs in these markets is increasing by 1 to 2% annually in volume. Growth rates differ for the various types. Sales are expected to go up much faster in the industrial food and institutional catering sectors than in the retail trade.

**(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization:**

The characteristics of Rosemary, from its cultivation to harvest, fruit characteristics, cultivar varieties, composition, quality and packaging all lend to adequate parameters for the standardization of the product. This will include defining the herb according to its size, colour and extraneous matters in dehydrated form and colour and density in its extract form.

**(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.**

There is no general commodity standard coverage for Rosemary. The new work will enhance consumer protection and facilitate trade by establishing an international agreed quality standard.

**(f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards including whether raw, semi-processed or processed.**

The standard will be for one commodity Rosemary and the standard is to be harmonized for dehydrated Rosemary and its extracts. Products to be considered are:

- i. Oil-soluble Rosemary extracts: Carnosic acid 5%-90% powder, Rosemary oleoresin- Carnosic acid liquid 5%-25%.
- ii. Water-soluble rosemary extracts: Rosmarinic acid 2.5%-20%.
- iii. Rosemary essential oil 100%.
- iv. Rosemary Leaf Powder.
- v. Rosemary as fresh herb.

**(g) Work already undertaken by other international organization in this field.**

- i) European Commission directives.
- ii) CFR – Code of Federal Regulation Title 21 of USFDA.

The need for setting up an international standard for Rosemary had come up for discussion in International Organization of Spice Trade Associations (IOSTA), World Spice Congress and World Spice Organization.

**5. Relevance to the CODEX Strategic Objectives.**

The proposal is in line with the Strategic Vision Statement of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 aims at setting up international accepted minimum quality requirements of Rosemary for human consumption. It also contributes to fair trade practices wherein the farmers will be able to assess their produce with reference to the quality standards thereby empowering them to realize more monetary values.

**6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents.**

This proposal is for a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing Codex text on this item, except that this standard will make reference to relevant standards and related texts developed by general subject committees.

**7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice.**

There is no need foreseen for expert scientific advice. Published research documents by international bodies will be referred in the process of preparing the standard, if found necessary.

**8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for.**

The technical inputs from ISO, EU, American Spice Trade Association, European Spice Association and World Spice Organization as well as from Rosemary producing countries shall be welcomed as they have already done work related to the subject. Also ISO standards can be used as a step process to frame the codex standards for Rosemary.

**9. Proposed Time Schedule.**

In case the Commission approves establishment of the proposed Codex Committee on Spices, Aromatic Herbs and their Formulations, the following timelines are proposed:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ADVANCE AND PROCEDURES</b>
Between July 2013 and March 2014	Prepare draft agenda along with new work proposals. These proposals will be prepared through electronic consultation with members to kick start work of the Committee.
June/July 2014	Critical review of new work proposals by CCEXEC; Approval of new work proposals by the Commission for the process.
First half of 2015	Committee to hold its first session and consider new work items at Step 3; Committee also to consider prioritizing its work.
Second half of 2016	Consider draft standard at step 5 with the possibility to recommend adoption at step 8
CAC 2017	Adoption of the standard at step 8

\*\*\*\*\*