



Agenda Item 2

CX/AFRICA 11/19/2
September 2010

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

19th Session

Accra, Ghana, 1 - 4 February 2011

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES

I. MATTERS ARISING/REFERRED FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (30TH AND 31ST SESSIONS)

A. Items for Information

Terms of Reference of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees¹

1. Following the discussions in the 25th Session of the Committee on General Principles², the 32nd Session of the Commission confirmed that full freedom was given under the current Terms of Reference of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to issue regional opinions on all themes under discussion in Codex of strategic importance to the region concerned and to promote the adoption of regional positions on strategic subjects, and therefore there was no need to modify the Terms of Reference.

Use of Portuguese as a language of interpretation³

2. The 33rd Session of the Commission confirmed that the use of Portuguese as a language of interpretation in the Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) would continue as requested by CCAFRICA in view of the positive experience at the last session.

B. Items for Action

Codex Alimentarius Commission

Development of Guidelines for Traceability/Product Tracing⁴

3. The 32nd Session of the Commission endorsed the recommendation⁵ of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems to request the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to discuss whether there was a need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing and report back to the 34th Session of the Commission.⁶

4. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to discuss the above request and provide its views on the matter for consideration by the 34th Session of the Commission.

Consideration of the Impact of Private Standards⁷

5. The 33rd Session of the Commission considered a paper (CX/CAC 10/33/13) prepared by FAO/WHO on private food safety standards (PFS) which addressed the extent to which PFS are consistent with Codex and the impact of these standards on market access and public health, particularly in developing

¹ ALINORM 09/32/REP, para. 122

² ALINORM 09/32/33, para. 103

³ ALINORM 10/33/REP, para. 145

⁴ ALINORM 09/32/REP, para. 196

⁵ ALINORM 09/32/30, para. 74. The discussion paper is available at: ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/ccfics17/fc17_07e.pdf

⁶ ALINORM 09/32/REP, para. 196

⁷ ALINORM 10/33/REP, paras 218 - 243

countries. The paper did not cover the issue of whether the SPS Agreement should apply to PFS, which was a question that would continue to be discussed within the WTO SPS Committee.

6. The Commission agreed to refer the matter to FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to conduct further analysis of the problems encountered with private standards and to make recommendations for follow-up by the 34th Session of the Commission. The analysis should include the financial burden especially to SMEs due to proliferation of private standards.

7. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/43-AFRICA on problems encountered with private standards and make recommendations for follow-up by the 34th Session of the Commission.

Proposed draft Standard on Processed Cheese.⁸

8. In recognizing the importance for many countries to have an international standard for processed cheese, the Commission agreed to defer decision on this matter until its 34th Session. The Commission further agreed to request the interested FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to discuss the necessity and the scope of regional standards for processed cheese and report their findings to the 34th Session of the Commission. The Commission would then base its decision on the discontinuation of work on the basis of the findings and recommendations of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees

9. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/43-AFRICA on the necessity and the scope of regional standards for processed cheese for follow-up by the 34th Session of the Commission.

II. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

A. Items for Information

Committee on General Principles

Simultaneous and Timely Availability of Documents⁹

10. The 26th Session of the CCGP considered a discussion paper (CX/GP 10/26/10), prepared by Chile, on ways to approach the timely and simultaneous distribution of documents and the length and content of reports taking into account concerns raised at the Commission and from the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Committee agreed that the document would be discussed in the CCLAC and submitted for information to the other FAO/WHO coordinating committees and the issue would remain on the agenda of the CCGP for discussion at its next session.

B. Items for action

Executive Committee

Implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013 – General Implementation Status¹⁰

11. The 64th Session of the Executive Committee, while noting that Activity 4.5 was completed in 2009, recommended that it should be continued and that the questionnaire sent in 2008 on interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level should be circulated again for consideration by the forthcoming sessions of Coordinating Committees. The 33rd Session of the Commission noted that the CCEXEC had recommended to proceed with Activity 4.5 and that a questionnaire on interdisciplinary coordination should be circulated for consideration by Coordinating Committees.¹¹

12. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/43-AFRICA on whether Codex members have mechanisms and evaluation criteria at country level to improve horizontal coordination and communication among national delegates to various food standards related international organizations for further follow-up by the 34th Session of the Commission.

⁸ ALINORM 10/33/REP, paras 89- 93

⁹ ALINORM 10/33/33, paras 99 - 104

¹⁰ ALINORM 10/33/3A, paras 44 - 56

¹¹ ALINORM 10/33/REP, para. 150

Development of new Strategic Plan for 2013 - 2018¹²

13. The Executive Committee discussed the development of the revised Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2018 and recommended that an electronic working group consisting of the Chair and Vice-chairs prepare a questionnaire or a revised proposal for a new Strategic Plan. The questionnaire was distributed for comments and consideration by the Coordinating Committee as CL 2010/43-AFRICA.

14. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL2010/43-AFRICA and to make recommendations for consideration by the 65th Session of the Executive Committee.

New Options for Physical Working Groups¹³

15. The 64th Session of the Executive Committee agreed that a survey should be carried out through a letter to Committee Chairs to collect information about their experience with physical working groups. The Committee recommended that the Commission ask the Committee on General Principles to consider new options for physical working groups. If the CCGP did not meet in 2011, the Committee proposed to consider this question at its next session, on the basis of a discussion paper that would be prepared by electronic consultation by the Chair and Vice-Chairs and other interested members of the CCEXEC, involving committee chairs as required, and taking into account the discussions held in the regional Committees. The next session of the Committee would present its recommendations to the Commission who could then ask the CCGP to consider new options for working groups. The Committee agreed with the proposal of one coordinator to forward the following options to the FAO/WHO coordinating committees, especially as the proposed process referred to the involvement of regional representatives.

Limiting the number of participants in physical working groups (pWGs) by requiring that membership be restricted to two or three relevant experts from each of the Codex Regions (this provision would limit the total number of working experts in a group to a much more practical limit of 12-18 members, instead of 30 – 50 members);

develop a mechanism that would ensure Codex Trust Fund support for developing country representatives to working groups organised along these lines (this provision would ensure developing country participation, as at present time, it is a stated goal but nothing is done to ensure that it occurs);

develop a set of expected responsibilities that would apply to the expert representatives from the various regions to the countries in their region. For example, working group experts could be expected to circulate draft working group documents for comments to countries in their regions (this provision would ensure that the process remains as transparent as the present process).

16. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to discuss the above options and provide its views on the matter for further consideration by the 65th session of the Executive Committee.

¹² ALINORM 10/33/3A, paras 54 - 55

¹³ ALINORM 10/33/3A, para. 176