

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 6(a)

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Fiftieth Session, FAO Headquarters, 26-28 June 2002*

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

The present document summarizes the actions taken to implement the decisions of the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and those of the 49<sup>th</sup> (Extraordinary) Session of the Executive Committee acting on the Commission's behalf.

#### DECISIONS OF THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION: ALINORM 01/41

#### IMPLEMENTATION

The Commission:

**agreed** that a document should be developed to provide guidance on cooperation with other International Intergovernmental Organizations on the elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts under the direction of the Codex Committee on General Principles (para. 31);

The Codex Committee on General Principles is considering amendments to the Elaboration Procedures to establish rules for the cooperation with international governmental and non-governmental organizations in the development of standards and related texts (CX/GP 02/6).

**agreed** that the draft Medium-Term Plan should be revised by the Secretariat in the light of the Strategic Framework, the Commission's discussion and the written comments received, and should incorporate the elements of the Chairperson's Action Plan agreed to by the Commission (para. 68); agreed that its work should take due account of international regulatory initiatives and developments (para. 51); agreed that the activities envisaged in the Medium Term Plan should include cost estimates to determine whether the objectives could be achieved within available resources (paras. 68-69).

See Agenda Item 5 (CX/EXEC 02/50/5).

**endorsed** the following recommendations addressed to it by the FAO Conference on Food Trade beyond the Year 2000: Science-based Decisions, Harmonization, Equivalence and Mutual Recognition requested the Executive Committee to monitor their application and their incorporation in the Medium-Term Plan as appropriate (para. 42):

- *Recommendation 12:* The Conference recommended that FAO, WHO and Codex Alimentarius should study the need, feasibility and practical conditions of introducing an international system allowing exchanges of information about the existence of potentially hazardous foodstuffs in the international trade.

FAO and WHO are studying the application of this recommendation through the internet-based Portal on Biosecurity (Food safety, plant and animal life and health).

---

- *Recommendation 13:* The Conference recognized the importance and urgency of developing Codex guidance on the judgement of equivalence, initially in a generic sense and subsequently in relation to specific topics such as equivalence of inspection and certification systems, and measures to ensure food hygiene.

*Draft Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* under development by the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems are currently at Step 6. The same Committee has agreed to defer for the time being further drafting of the proposed draft Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Technical Regulations Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems. (ALINORM 03/30, paras. 31-52 and 69-75)

---

- *Recommendation 14:* The Codex Alimentarius Commission, whilst acknowledging that food safety standards cannot be compromised, should, when elaborating and deciding upon Codex standards and any related texts, take into consideration the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources, technical and legal capabilities. Codex standards and related texts should not have the effect of creating unnecessary, unjustified or discriminatory obstacles to the exports of developing countries.

*The Proposed Draft Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius* currently at Step 3 of the Procedure (CX/GP 02/3) require that the needs and situations of developing countries should be specifically identified and taken into account by the responsible bodies in the different stages of the risk analysis process.

The Strategic Framework - Objective 6 states explicitly that Codex standards and related texts should not have the effect of creating unnecessary, unjustified or discriminatory obstacles to the exports of developing countries.

---

- *Recommendation 16:* The Codex Alimentarius Commission should continue to elaborate food standards providing for compositional, sensory and safety criteria, and examine and recommend ways to reduce problems of food quality and safety, reduce levels of detentions and rejections of food moving in international trade, and reduce levels of food adulteration.

This recommendation contains two separate elements:

  - continued standards development; and
  - examination of ways to reduce certain problems.

The Executive Committee may wish to include these two elements into the Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007.

---

- *Recommendation 17:* The Conference stressed that Codex standards for food quality and safety, including labelling aspects, should be carefully prepared to ensure that they were not over-prescriptive and not more restrictive than necessary to meet the objectives of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

This recommendation is stated explicitly in the Strategic Framework - Objective 6.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation 18:</i> Codex Alimentarius should continue to work along these principles [Good Agricultural Practice and Good Manufacturing Practice] and promote the application of HACCP principles as laid down in the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene. These principles should be applied to all foodstuffs, throughout the whole food chain and include feeding-stuffs.</li> </ul>	See Activity ID 6 of the Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recommendation 21:</i> The Codex Alimentarius Commission should consider reaffirming the effectiveness of written comments, which should be fully discussed at Codex meetings, especially written comments from countries not able to be represented at meetings. Chairpersons should ensure that all written comments received before the meeting are systematically tabled for discussion at Codex meetings and decisions made should be recorded in the report accordingly.</li> </ul>	A letter was sent from the Secretariat to all Chairpersons of Codex Committees and Task Forces drawing their attention to this recommendation.
<p><b>requested</b> FAO and WHO to circulate a letter of information on the improvements already made in relation to the selection of experts to expert bodies (para. 61);</p>	An information letter was circulated in May 2002.
<p><b>requested</b> FAO and WHO to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies and to develop recommendations for consideration by the Directors-General on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission (para. 61);</p>	The proposed consultation has been postponed pending the completion of the Evaluation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme in order to take into account the Evaluation's findings and recommendations. Certain developments have taken place in the area of establishing maximum residues limits for pesticides, including a consultant's proposal to increase the capacity of the JMPR and of ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the CCPR and to the Commission for consideration by FAO, WHO and the CCPR.
<p><b>agreed</b> in principle that FAO and WHO should establish clear rules and procedures for the establishment and functioning of a trust fund for consideration in the first instance by the Executive Committee in 2002 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission in 2003 to ensure its complete transparency and avoidance of bias and influence, to report on its implementation and to indicate envisioned sources of funding (para. 65);</p>	See Agenda Item 4 (CX/EXEC 02/50/4).
<p><b>agreed</b> that the risk analysis policies developed by Committees would be presented in a single document to the next session of the Commission (para 85).</p>	A document will be submitted to the 25 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, based on inputs from the relevant Codex Committees.

---

**DECISIONS OF THE 49<sup>TH</sup> (EXTRAORDINARY) SESSION  
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
ALINORM 03/3**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Executive Committee:

**recommended** that the Committee on General Principles consider [...] aspects of traceability [...], however, it was of the opinion that first consideration should be given to the use of traceability as a risk management option in the Working Principles for Risk Analysis (para. 31).

The recommendation of the Executive Committee has been brought to the attention of the Committee on General Principles (CX/GP 02/2).

**agreed** that Regional Coordinating Committees may wish to contribute to the debate on this issue (para. 32).

The item has been included on the Provisional Agendas of all Regional Coordinating Committees and the same paper will but submitted.

**asked** to be kept informed of progress in this work (para 33).

A follow-up paper will be prepared following the Sessions of the relevant Committees meeting in the current period.

---

**recommended** that the proposals to facilitate consensus be formally adopted as decisions of the Commission at its next session (para. 35).

See Agenda Item 7 (CX/EXEC 02/50/10).

---

**recommended** that the Secretariat make information on consumer participation available periodically to the Commission on the basis of the Checklist of Measurable Objectives to Assess Consumer Participation in Codex (para. 36).

See Agenda Item 7 (CX/EXEC 02/50/10).

---

The 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee also noted a number of matters referred from its 48<sup>th</sup> Session to the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission including antibiotics used on agricultural commodities and antimicrobial resistant bacteria in food (See ALINORM 03/3, para. 28). The Executive Committee had recommended that FAO and WHO should give consideration to convening as soon as possible a multi-disciplinary expert consultation in cooperation with OIE and if required the IPPC, to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken including the establishment of a new task force if necessary. The consultation should consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines (See ALINORM 01/4, paras 36 and 37). The Secretariat has been advised that FAO and WHO, in cooperation with OIE are planning to convene an Expert Consultation on the agricultural use of antimicrobials, with a focus on antimicrobial food residue as well as antimicrobial resistance. The outcome of the Consultation could be used to advise the Commission on possible future directions in this area. In preparation of the Consultation, WHO is presently in the process of identifying funding sources and an inter-organisational meeting (WHO and FAO in cooperation with OIE) will be convened shortly.

**Special Note:**<sup>1</sup> An informal meeting of Chairpersons with Committees/Task Forces responsible for aspects of "Traceability/Product Tracing" was convened by the Chairperson of the Committee on General Principles on 18 April 2002. It was attended by the Chairpersons (or their representatives) of the Committees/Task Forces on General Principles, Food Labelling, Food Hygiene, Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems, Animal Feeding, and Foods Derived from Biotechnology. The Chairperson, two of the Vice-Chairpersons and the Secretary of the Commission also attended. The delegation of Switzerland acting as chair

---

<sup>1</sup> Note prepared by the Secretariat.

of the CCFICS drafting group was also in attendance. The meetings was convened consequent to the Executive Committee's suggestion that the Chairpersons of the Committees concerned and the Secretariat should coordinate work so as to avoid a divergence of approach (ALINORM 03/3, para.32).

The Chairpersons were of the opinion that decisions taken by the CCGP, CCFICS, and CXFBT subsequent to the Executive Committee's discussion were coherent and that considerable progress had been made in some areas such as foods derived from biotechnology and animal feeding. It would be important, however, for the Working Group of CCFICS to concentrate on modalities of transmitting information on the assumption that traceability/product tracing was a requirement of the importing country, in the sense of a "requirement" as described in the Principles of Food Export Inspection and Certification (CAC/GL 20-1995), rather than on the use of "Traceability/Product Tracing" in risk management or as a non-food safety legitimate objective. These latter issues would be discussed by the CCGP. Work would be taken up in other Committees as required.

The meeting also noted that the Secretariat would prepare a paper for discussion at the next session of the CCGP and that this would include inputs from the Regional Coordinating Committees. Its timing would therefore be constrained by the meeting schedule of these Committees. The common paper to be prepared for discussion by the Regional Coordinating Committees would seek to obtain a broad expression of views on the matter of "Traceability/Product Tracing" and would not therefore be prepared as a "draft" of the paper for the CCGP.