

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 8

CX/GP 00/9

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES Fifteenth Session

Paris, France, 10 - 14 April 2000

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS

The participation of consumers in Codex work and related matters was discussed by the 20th and 21st Sessions of the Commission and the 22nd Session considered specifically the participation of NGOs in the work of Codex; it also agreed that a paper on consumers' involvement should be prepared for consideration by the next session. The 23rd Session of the Commission discussed a document prepared the Secretariat in cooperation with Consumers International on this question (ALINORM 99/37, paras. 35-46).

The Commission expressed full support for efforts to enhance the participation of consumer organizations in the development of food standards and also in relation to Codex at the national level. It agreed that it was highly desirable for consumers and their organizations to participate in training activities designed to establish or strengthen Codex Contact Points or National Codex Committees. The Commission had an extensive discussion on this question and agreed on the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Commission considered the recommendations addressed to it in the paper. The Commission:
 - Agreed to consider the development of a "checklist" of measurable objectives to assess consumer participation in Codex work at the national and international levels and asked the Committee on General Principles to review the proposal contained in the document¹;
 - Noted the recommendations of the Quito Workshop without endorsing them (see para. 39, above);
 - Recommended that consideration be given by FAO and WHO, in co-operation with consumer organizations, to the development of guidelines or models for enhancing consumer participation in Codex and food standards work at the national and international levels;
 - Noted that there was little support for the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and related FAO and WHO programmes to identify funds to support expanded participation of consumer International Non-Governmental Organizations in Codex, stating that any resources available to Codex should be directed first to developing Member countries of the Commission;
 - Recommended that FAO, WHO and national governments work with national and international consumer organizations to improve the dissemination of Codex information to consumers;
 - Recommended that FAO, WHO and national governments invite consumer organizations to participate in national, sub-regional or regional workshops and seminars relevant to Codex matters; and
 - Proposed that Regional Coordinating Committees continue to take the opportunity to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences on the ways and means of developing consumer input into National Codex Committees and Contact Points.

¹ ALINORM 99/8

The Commission noted the recommendation that the Committee on General Principles develop proposals that would allow for a limited number of representatives of the INGOs in Observer Status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be invited as observers to Sessions of the Executive Committee. This question will be discussed under **Agenda Item 5 - Composition of the Executive Committee and Related Matters**.

In accordance with the first recommendation of the Commission, the proposal contained in document ALINORM 99/8, Appendix A on a “checklist” of measurable objectives to assess consumer participation in Codex work is circulated for government comments and consideration by the Committee on General Principles.

Governments and international organizations wishing to submit comments should do so in writing to the Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, with a copy to Mrs. Roselyne Lecourt, Chargé de mission, Direction générale de la concurrence, de la consommation et de la répression des fraudes, 59 Boulevard Vincent Auriol, Teledoc 051, 75703 Paris Cedex 13 (Telefax No. +33.1.44.97.30.43), **before 1 March 2000**.

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDANCE ON MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES TO ASSESS CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

To assist Codex in assessing the goal of increasing consumer participation in Codex over time, the following measures may be useful to consider:

1. the number or percentage of member countries that have established a National Codex Contact Point
2. the number or percentage of member countries that have established a National Codex Committee
3. the number or percentage of member countries which hold public consultations to develop national positions for Codex meetings
4. the number or percentage of member countries that have identified independent consumer NGOs and invited them to participate in Codex meetings or in submitting written comments
5. the number or percentage of member countries where independent consumer NGOs have participated in developing national positions for Codex meetings.
6. the number of consumer NGOs that participate in the Codex process at the national level.
7. the number of international consumer NGOs that participate in international Codex meetings.
8. the number of consumer NGOs that receive training to be more effective participants in Codex.