

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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ORGANIZATION



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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Thirtieth Session
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**REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING
COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

*Apia, Samoa
10-13 October 2006*

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific reached the following conclusions:

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 30TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 59TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Coordinating Committee:

- endorsed the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding the role and activities of Regional Coordinating Committees (para. 6);
- endorsed Part 1 of the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (para. 9) and made comments on Part 2 (paras 10-13) and Part 3 (para. 14);
- endorsed *Proposals 4, 5 and 7* related to the Review of the Codex Committees Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces (para. 17) and made comments on the remaining *Proposals* (paras 18-25);
- unanimously agreed that Tonga be appointed as Regional Coordinator for the North America and the South West Pacific and expressed its thanks to Samoa for the excellent work carried out as Regional Coordinator (para78-79).

MATTERS REFERRED TO CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Coordinating Committee:

Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)

- generally agreed that the current terms of reference of the coordinating committees should be kept unchanged (para. 27);
- agreed that the roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members Elected on a Geographical Basis should be clarified in the Procedural Manual and recommended that this issue continue to be discussed at the next Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (para. 31).

OTHER MATTERS

The Coordinating Committee:

- noted its appreciation for member countries' contribution to the Trust Fund as it had facilitated the participation of many developing countries of this region to Codex activities and expressed its appreciation to the activities of FAO and WHO in the region (para. 37);
- noted the status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP and agreed: i) to take a progressive approach for the implementation of Objectives 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP (para. 43); ii) to establish an electronic Working Group, led by Samoa, in its capacity of Regional Coordinator, to advance in the activities related to Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP (para. 45); to extend the Strategic Plan until 2008 and that the Regional Coordinator (the current and the new one to be appointed by the 30th Session of the Commission) would facilitate consultation among CCNASWP members and would coordinate work on the preparation of a draft new Strategic Plan to be considered at its next session (para. 46); and that the draft would retain those activities not yet implemented and include new ones according to recent developments in Codex and it include timelines for implementation of activities and measurable objectives (para. 47);
- agreed to establish a physical Working Group, under the leadership of the new Regional Coordinator, to meet immediately prior to its next session, to consider the draft new Strategic Plan (para. 48);

- expressed its appreciation for the quality of the reports on national food control system and consumer participation in food standards setting (para. 50);
- noted that the reports on the use of Codex Standards at national and regional levels showed the strong dependency of Pacific Island Countries on Codex because of the lack of resources to develop their own standards (para. 77);
- recommended to call on FAO and WHO, as parent bodies of Codex, to ensure adequate funding for the Commission to carry out its mandate and asked the CCNASWP members to make representation in the appropriate governing body meetings of FAO and WHO in support of adequate funding for the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (para. 81);
- agreed to request the electronic Working Group on Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP to add to its terms of reference the development of a comprehensive discussion paper to justify the need to develop a standard for kava, which would take into account the above points, for consideration at its next session (para. 83)
- agreed to request the electronic Working Group on Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP to add to its terms of reference the development of a comprehensive discussion paper on the need to develop a standard for Nonu products consideration at its next session (para. 84);
- noted the summary on the status of development and discussion of the standard for Bitter Cassava in the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (para. 85).

INTRODUCTION

1. The 9th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) was held from 10 to 13 October 2006 in Mulinafua, Apia, at the kind invitation of the Government of Samoa. The Session was chaired by Mr Lemalu Tate Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour of Samoa. The Session was attended by delegates from twelve Member Countries of the Region and one United Nations organization. The list of participants is attached to this report as Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Session was opened by the Hon Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa. The participants were also welcomed by Mr Aru Mathias, Officer-in-Charge of the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific Islands (SAPA) and by Dr JinJing Zhang, Technical Officer in Food Safety of the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)¹

3. The Coordinating Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the Session. It agreed that the following items would be considered under Agenda item 8 “Other Business and Future Work”:

- Codex Budget Situation (proposed by New Zealand);
- Development of a Standard for Kava (proposed by Vanuatu and Fiji);
- Development of a Standard for Nonu (noni) Products (proposed by Samoa);
- Update on ongoing work on the proposed draft Standard for Bitter Cassava in the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (proposed by Tonga).

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda item 2)²

4. The Coordinating Committee noted matters arising from the 28th and 29th Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and from the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles, as summarised in the working documents CX/NASWP 06/9/2 and CX/NASWP 06/9/2-Add.1.

5. In particular, the Coordinating Committee discussed the following matters:

Review of the Regional Coordinating Committees (28th CAC)

6. The Coordinating Committee noted and endorsed the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding the role and activities of Regional Coordinating Committees.

Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (29th CAC)

7. The Coordinating Committee recalled the recommendation made by the 58th Session of the Executive Committee, agreed by the 29th Session of the Commission, inviting the Coordinating Committee to comment on the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 contained in ALINORM 06/29/3A, Appendix II.

8. The Coordinating Committee considered the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and made the following comments:

Part 1

9. The Committee had no specific comments on Part 1 of the draft Strategic Plan and endorsed it.

¹ CX/NASWP 06/9/1.

² CX/NASWP 06/9/2, CX/NASWP 06/9/2-Add.1.

Part 2

10. The Coordinating Committee, recognising the ongoing discussion related to the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy and Diet, Physical Activity and Health, recommended the insertion of the following sentence after the current description of the Activity 1.3 in Goal 1: “taking into account the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, develop standards and related texts relevant to nutrition with the objective of providing member governments with information relating to the nutritional quality and safety of foods”.

11. It also agreed to seek clarification on whether Activity 2.2 and its time frame should apply to the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses (CCNSFDU) which currently does not have a risk management role in relation to expert bodies. As CCNSFDU is still in early stage on this work in relation to development of principles for risk analysis as it applies to nutrition, it is not likely that the timeframe in the draft Strategic Plan would be met by CCNSFDU by 2008

12. The Coordinating Committee, noting that the Activities 1.7, 4.5 and 5.5 should also be implemented at the regional level, proposed to add a word “regional” in these activities as appropriate.

13. With regard to the Activity 5.1, the Coordinating Committee, noting the appreciation expressed by some delegations toward the contribution from donor countries to the Codex Trust Fund, also pointed out that budget sustainability should be maintained for effective participation of developing countries in the Codex standard setting work.

Part 3

14. The Coordinating Committee supported the recommendation of the 58th Executive Committee, agreed by the 29th Commission, on the replacement of the current format used by the Executive Committee for the Critical Review with Table 2, Part 3 of the draft Strategic Plan. It was also noted the importance of comments from chairpersons/host countries of Committees to enhance Committees’ accountabilities in the standards management process.

Review of the Codex Committee Structure and Mandate of Codex Committees and Task Forces (29th CAC)

15. The Coordinating Committee discussed the proposals contained in paragraphs 1 to 28 of document ALINORM 06/29/9B Part II Add.1 “Review of the Codex Committees Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces”, prepared by the Codex Secretariat for the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

16. In noting that the deadline for the submission of comments to CL 2006/29-CAC, requesting governments and observers’ comments on the same subject was 31 January 2007, the Coordinating Committee agreed that its comments on this matter would not pre-empt the views of individual countries on the proposals.

17. The Coordinating Committee supported Proposals 4, 5 and 7 and made the following comments on the other proposals:

Proposal 1

18. The Coordinating Committee appreciated the intent of the proposal aimed at reducing the number of Codex sessions; however it expressed some reservation as to the setting of an upper limit on the number of Codex sessions planned for in one biennium and in one calendar year, as it would not allow for flexibility. It expressed the view that better prioritization of Codex work, timely development of Codex standards and longer inter-session interval (Proposal 3) could be a way to deal with the increased number of Codex meetings.

Proposal 2

19. The Coordinating Committee expressed some reservation as to the setting of an upper-limit on the number of active subsidiary bodies that can co-exist at the same time as such a decision might adversely impact on current and new Codex work on important safety issues.

Proposal 3

20. The Coordinating Committee expressed general consensus to consider longer inter-session interval and noted that this option was already used in Codex. It expressed the view that the length of the interval should be considered in the light of the frequency of the Commission's meetings in order not to delay the adoption of Codex standards.

Proposal 6

21. The Coordinating Committee did not express its view on this proposal as it was of the opinion that it needed further discussion and elaboration in the Codex Committee on General Principles.

Proposal 8

22. The Coordinating Committee did not support the proposal as it was of the opinion that it should be considered as part of the broader review of Codex commodity committees. The Delegation of Tonga expressed its reservation to this decision.

Proposal 9

23. The Coordinating Committee supported the proposal as it would contribute to expediting the work of Codex. It recommended that the proposal make specific reference to other general subject committees, e.g. Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

Proposal 10

24. The Coordinating Committee considered the proposal very important for Codex and expressed the view that the mandate of the Codex Committees on Food Labelling and on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Use be considered in the light of this proposal.

Proposal 11

25. The Coordinating Committee supported the broad thrust of the proposal and requested to clarify the words "especially other than ISO standards" in order to ensure that information on the use and development of ISO standards are also provided to the Executive Committee and the Commission in 2007.

Terms of Reference of Regional Coordinating Committees (23rd CCGP)

26. The Coordinating Committee discussed the possible inclusion of the sentence: "To promote the adoption of regional positions on strategic subjects", proposed by the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) into its own terms of reference and its possible implications.

27. Some delegations expressed their view that the current Terms of Reference were sufficiently broad to allow Coordinating Committees to formulate regional positions among members, where necessary, and that it seemed not necessary to amend them. Although one delegation supported the inclusion of the proposed CCLAC phrase, most delegations did not support its inclusion and further suggested that all Coordinating Committees should have the same Terms of Reference. The Coordinating Committee generally agreed that the current Terms of Reference should be kept unchanged.

28. The Coordinating Committee noted the view of a delegation that the inclusion of the proposed sentence should be considered further since the Coordinating Committee should be more proactive to represent the views of the region on strategic issues.

Respective Roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members of the Executive Committee Elected on a Geographical Basis (23rd CCGP)

29. The Coordinating Committee had a discussion to examine the issue on the respective roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members of the Executive Committees Elected on a Geographical Basis.

30. Some delegations supported the role of the Regional Coordinators representing the interest of concerned regions or group of countries and the role of Members Elected on a Geographical Basis to represent the interest of the Commission as a whole.

31. The Coordinating Committee agreed that the roles of the Regional Coordinators and the Members Elected on a Geographical Basis should be clarified in the Procedural Manual and recommended that this issue continue to be discussed at the next Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles.

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING (Agenda Item 3)³

32. The Representative of FAO informed the Coordinating Committee of the relocation of the renamed Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, which hosts the Codex Secretariat, the Secretariats of JECFA and JEMRA and the staff working in the field of food quality and safety, into the FAO Agriculture, Biosecurity, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Department, in line with the farm-to-table approach to nutrition, food safety and consumer protection.

33. The Coordinating Committee was informed of the funding mechanisms to improve food safety and quality, including the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and the Codex Trust Fund to increase the participation of developing countries and countries in transition in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

34. In regard to capacity building, the Coordinating Committee was informed that FAO and WHO were engaged in a programme of technical assistance activities and projects at national, regional and international levels, covering a wide range of areas related to food safety and quality. FAO and WHO also held a number of international events, workshops and expert consultations on food safety and quality. Furthermore, FAO and WHO continue to be engaged in the development of a number of manuals, guidelines and training materials to facilitate the capacity building efforts. These cover areas including the safety and quality of fresh fruit and vegetables, food safety risk analysis, national food control systems, microbiological risk assessment, enhanced participation in Codex activities, and food safety of products derived from modern biotechnology. Moreover, the Representative informed delegates about a number of specific capacity building activities carried out in the South West Pacific region, referring to CX/NASWP 06/9/3- Part 1 for further information.

35. The representative of WHO informed the Committee that the Food Safety Department has been renamed to the Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases, following the merger with the units covering zoonoses and food-borne diseases previously under the Department of Communicable Diseases. The Representative, referring to the working document, also highlighted some capacity building activities undertaken by WHO including a meeting, funded by WHO, organized by the Northern Pacific Environmental Health Association (NPEHA) in September 2006, which addressed the issues on food regulations and standards and enhancement of data collection and sharing in countries of the Northern Pacific regions and identified gaps and priority areas for development and developed an action plan to strengthen food safety legislation. He also informed the Committee of the forthcoming 4th International Total Diet Studies (STD) training course and workshop to be held in Beijing on 16-27 October 2006.

36. The representative of FAO briefed the Coordinating Committee on other matters arising from FAO and WHO, including outcomes of recent FAO/WHO expert meetings, as well as progress of the FAO/WHO consultative process on provision of scientific advice to Codex and member countries. In doing so, he recalled that the 29th session of the Commission had noted the budgetary situations of FAO and WHO and expressed the desire that FAO and WHO obtain an adequate level of funding to continue to provide scientific advice to support the work of Codex in a timely manner.

³ CX/NASWP 06/9/3-Part1, CX/NASWP 06/9/3-Part 2.

37. The Coordinating Committee noted its appreciation for member countries' contribution to the Trust Fund as it had facilitated the participation of many developing countries of this region to Codex activities. The Coordinating Committee also noted the suggestion from one delegation that consideration be given to soliciting contribution from sources other than member countries e.g. World Bank, so as to enhance the long term sustainability of the fund. The Coordinating Committee expressed its appreciation to the activities of FAO and WHO in the region.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP (Agenda Item 4)⁴

38. The Delegation of Samoa informed the Coordinating Committee that electronic consultation to assess progress on the implementation of Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP started in October 2005 and that a matrix with objectives and related sub-activities measured against progress from the perspective of the Regional Coordinator with corresponding strategic areas for collective future development had been designed for the review. It was also explained that Appendix II of working document CX/NASWP 06/9/4 compiled comments received from 7 countries and Appendix 3 included a summary of comments submitted and possible strategies to progress the Strategic Plan.

39. The Coordinating Committee thanked the delegation of Samoa for the excellent work and noted that some of the objectives, e.g. 1, 2 and 6, had already been partially achieved while others required more time. It was noted that a timeline for the implementation of the activities and measurable outputs were important omissions and this should be included in the next Strategic Plan.

40. In considering Annex 3 of the working document, the Coordinating Committee made the following comments:

Objective 1 - To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex

41. Appreciation was expressed to QUAD countries for taking the lead in the implementation of the activities related to Objective 1. Sharing information, documents and comments with Pacific Islands Countries (PICs) was found very useful to improve the understanding of issues under discussion in Codex and to prepare national positions. The establishment of the Codex Trust Fund and the support provided to PICs was also noted with appreciation. In order to improve the implementation of this objective it was suggested to seek for FAO/WHO technical assistance to assist PICs in the identification of priority areas of work and in the elaboration of Codex papers.

Objective 2 - To promote maximum participation of all member countries of the region in the activities of the regional coordinating committee

42. The Trust Fund was found very useful in strengthening PICs participation in Codex work.

Objective 3 - To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions.

Objective 4 - To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing countries of the region

43. For the implementation of Objectives 3 and 4, the Committee agreed to take a progressive approach in line with the activities listed in the Strategic Plan. The approach included:

- i. developing a questionnaire to be circulated to CCNASWP members to determine the progress of individual Codex Contact Points in terms of administrative and consultative procedures to support their input to the work of Codex and to gain more clarity on the scientific and technical capacity of South West Pacific member countries;
- ii. collating and matching of responses to capacity training activities;

⁴ CX/NASWP 06/9/4; CRD 2 (Comments of Tonga); CRD 4 (Comments of Australia); CRD 5 (Comments of Solomon Islands).

- iii. implementing some of the training / capacity building and communication activities identified in Objectives 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan.

44. In this regard it was noted that: the document “Capacity Building Needs of Pacific Islands Countries in the Area of Food Safety and Quality”, presented by Samoa at the Regional Workshop to Review Issues of Strategic Importance to the Region⁵, already provided useful data and information to be explored to implement capacity building activities; and working document CX/NASWP 06/9/3 provided detailed information on FAO/WHO projects and activities carried out in the region to be included in the document to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Coordinating Committee accepted the offer made by the Delegation of Australia to develop and circulate the questionnaire and compile responses.

Objective 6 – To promote the development of standards for food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries.

45. In order to advance in the activities related to Objective 6, the Coordinating Committee, agreed to establish an electronic Working Group, led by Samoa⁶, in its capacity of Regional Coordinator⁷, to:

- i. address common issues in Codex work and be pro-active in standards development for PICs food products;
- ii. identify specific food products of PICs that require standards to be developed in order to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade;
- iii. develop proposals for new standards for food products produced in the PICs; and
- iv. submit a report on the activities of the electronic Working Group to the next session of CCNASWP.

46. The Coordinating Committee, in noting that the timeframe for the implementation of the Strategic Plan was 2004-2007 and that its next Session was scheduled in 2008, agreed to extend the Strategic Plan until 2008 and that the Regional Coordinator (the current and the new one to be appointed by the 30th Session of the Commission) would facilitate consultation among CCNASWP members and would coordinate work on the preparation of a draft new Strategic Plan to be considered at its next session.

47. It was agreed that the draft would retain those activities not yet implemented and include new ones according to recent developments in Codex. It was also agreed that the draft would include timelines for implementation of activities and measurable objectives.

48. The Coordinating Committee agreed to establish a physical Working Group⁸, under the leadership of the new Regional Coordinator, to meet immediately prior to its next session, to consider the draft new Strategic Plan.

⁵ Apia (Samoa), 9 October 2006.

⁶ With the assistance of Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu; The electronic Working Group will work in English only.

⁷ This task will be transferred to the next Regional Coordinator to be appointed by the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

⁸ Open to all CCNASWP countries; the physical Working Group will work in English only.

INFORMATION ON FOOD CONTROL SYSTEM AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARD SETTING (Agenda item 5)⁹

49. The Coordinating Committee was informed of the recent development and current status on food control and food safety issues in countries in the region. The information provided by two observers Organisations was also noted. Many of the countries provided information on written form, either in the formal working papers or as Conference Room Documents (CRDs), while others provided information verbally. The Coordinating Committee noted that all the written information submitted would be made available to CCNASWP delegations.

General comments to the reports

50. The Coordinating Committee expressed its appreciation for the quality of the reports presented and the information contained therein. In this regard, one delegation noted that a wide variety of issues had been presented and that it would be useful for the Coordinating Committee to explore possibilities for sharing this information on a continuous, more frequent basis, instead of every two years. Other delegations pointed out that the reports showed significant gaps in the development of food control systems and suggested that better communication and collaboration among countries in the region would help in minimizing these gaps. In this regard it was noted that initiatives and programmes were already in place to close these gaps. It was also noted that the reports provided countries with practical experience for strengthening their food control systems and with useful information for identifying potential assistance by countries of the region.

INFORMATION ON USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS (Agenda Item 6)¹⁰

51. The Coordinating Committee recalled the decision of the 57th Session of the Executive Committee to add a new agenda item to Regional Coordinating Committees regarding the use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional levels and, in the pursuit to this decision, the recommendation that members of the Coordinating Committees submit information on the use of Codex standards¹¹. The following is a summary of individual statements made. Many of the countries provided information in a written form, either in the formal working papers, or as Conference Room Documents, while others provided information verbally.

Australia

52. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Australia is a signatory to the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement and is required to harmonize its national standards with Codex standards where possible. Australian food standards are based on scientific risk assessment, are consistently applied and are not more trade restrictive than necessary. A recent study on regulatory practice in Australia has also reaffirmed the importance of justifying variations to international standards.

53. With regard to difficulties experienced in the use or application of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional levels, Australia identified global variation as a significant issue due to diverse climate or geographical conditions.

54. Codex has a dual mandate to protect consumer's health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade. In Codex, the term "fair practices in the food trade" is generally understood to mean fraud and deceptive practices. Australia considers there are several non-safety issues that have broader trade policy implications and should not be mandated through the use of international standards, for example, prescriptive quality standards of a commercial nature which do not fit under the dual mandate of Codex.

⁹ CX/NASWP 06/9/5 (Information of Australia, New Zealand, CSPI and IACFO submitted in response to CL 2006/17-NASWP, Part A); CX/NASWP 06/9/5-Add.1 (Information of Canada and Samoa); CRD 1 (Information of United States of America); CRD 3 (Information of Tonga). CRD 8 (Information of PNG), CRD 12 (Information of Kiribati).

¹⁰ CX/NASWP 06/9/6 (Information of Australia and New Zealand Comments submitted in response to CL 2006/17-NASWP, Part B); CX/NASWP 06/9/6-Add.1 (Information of Canada and Samoa); CRD 2 (Information of Tonga); CRD 9 (Information of Papua New Guinea).

¹¹ ALINORM 06/29/3, para. 105.

55. Codex decisions have direct relevance for all member's WTO rights and obligations. This has potential implication both in terms of member's food trade interest, as well as the measures members might apply within their own countries to protect human health, or to protect consumer from fraud or misleading conduct in food trade.

56. It is necessary to ensure that Codex standards reflect legitimate global concerns, are scientifically based for the protection of consumer health, and do not provide scope for unjustified barriers to trade.

Canada

57. The Government of Canada Regulatory Policy requires the consideration of international standards in the establishment of domestic policies and regulations. Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency consider Codex standards when elaborating or revising Canadian food regulations. Codex standards are adopted when they meet regulatory food safety objectives. Where Codex standards are not adopted, the differences and reasons are clearly identified.

Kiribati

58. Kiribati is in the process of passing a new food safety bill, which is awaiting the endorsement of the President, and is developing its national food control system on the basis of Codex standards.

Cook Islands

59. Cook Islands is using Codex standards as the basis for its Food Act and for food regulations, which are in the process of being drafted.

Fiji

60. Fiji is using the Codex Standards as guidelines in terms of compliance to standards for imports and exports. Fiji food legislations are outdated. Fiji is currently reviewing all the legislations that are associated with Food Quality Control and Safety especially for the Ministries of Health and Agriculture.

61. The Ministry of Health is working with the National Codex Committee on the adoption of Codex standards into national legislations, for example in the new Food Safety Regulation, and is trying to harmonise its national standards with Codex standards, where possible.

New Zealand

62. Consistent with the international obligations under the WTO SPS and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements, New Zealand has a policy of basing its national measures on international standards (where these exist) to the maximum extent possible and subject to their meeting its appropriate level of protection.

63. In the case of Codex Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) New Zealand, consistent with the principle of free distribution, allows the importation and sale of products that meet the Codex MRLs for pesticides and veterinary drugs.

64. At the broader level the New Zealand Food Act 1981 and related regulations contain provisions that recognize and support the principle of international harmonization and New Zealand regulatory authorities take into account Codex standards in the development and application of national measures and regulations.

65. New Zealand also supported the views of Australia about the need for Codex standards to reflect global variations.

Papua New Guinea

66. Papua New Guinea has a Food Act and is finalising its food regulations and is using Codex standards for this purpose.

Samoa

67. Samoa is currently adopting the relevant provisions of the current draft Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Egg Products into the draft Samoan egg standard; the fishery legislation was also developed from Codex texts and Samoa will continue using Codex standards and related texts as benchmarks to all its food standards.

68. Samoa has experienced difficulties in the use or application of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level. It still requires experts for drafting relevant provisions; there is a lack of laboratories to conduct analyses that could provide sound scientific advice; there are inadequate funds to hire experts from the region; and there is a need to train staff of relevant ministries.

Solomon Islands

69. The Solomon Islands is already a WTO member and is trading its food products within and outside the region according to the SPS/TBT Agreements.

70. The Solomon Islands has incorporated Codex standards into the Pure Food Act 1996 - Fisheries Regulations 2005 and in the draft Food Hygiene Regulations, currently under technical review.

Tonga

71. Tonga is now in the process of drafting its national food standards; hence the Codex standards and guidelines have been used to draft these national standards by simply adopting and adapting of the Codex standards. These standards will not be enforced until the proposed Food Act is enacted, which is anticipated to be by the end of 2007 or end of 2008 at the latest. Lack of national technical capabilities in this area has resulted in difficulties in the adaptation of the Codex standards and guidelines at the national level.

72. As an acceding country to WTO and signatory to the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement for Closer Economic Relation (PACER), Tonga recognises the importance of using Codex standards and guidelines to ensure harmonization of legislation and regulations in the region and worldwide. However, given this is a new area and scope for the food businesses in Tonga, the initial cost to the food industries to comply with these standards and regulations would be high and they may pass on this cost to the consumers.

73. The problem for Tonga at this time or when the proposed Food Act would come into effect in late 2008/2009 is to ensure the food industries and consumers understand the need to upgrade the food control activities in Tonga and commit to its enforcement.

United States of America

74. The United States takes its WTO obligations seriously and carries out its obligations under the SPS Agreement to base its measures on international standards, guidelines and recommendations where they exist, noting other valid considerations including current science and the member's appropriate level of protection.

75. Therefore, the United States routinely takes Codex standards into account in the development of its national food standards, where Codex standards are applicable. Additionally, the United States has worked within Codex Committees since Codex began with the aim at ensuring that Codex and the United States food safety and commodity standards will be as consistent with one another as possible.

Vanuatu

76. Vanuatu is not yet a member of WTO but it is endeavouring to apply Codex standards, as reflected in the draft Food (Control) Regulation which has been submitted for approval to the Minister of Health. Vanuatu is also looking at developing national food control standards and procedures in line with relevant Codex standards.

General comments to the reports

77. The Coordinating Committee noted that the reports showed the strong dependence of PICs on Codex because of the lack of resources to develop their national standards.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 7)¹²

78. On the proposal of the Delegation of Fiji, the Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Tonga be appointed as Regional Coordinator for the North America and the South West Pacific. The Delegation of Tonga thanked all the Countries for their support and accepted the nomination.

79. The Coordinating Committee expressed its thanks to Samoa for the excellent work carried out as Regional Coordinator.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 8)***Codex Budget Situation***

80. The Delegation of New Zealand recalled the decision of the Commission to approve a number of cost saving measures to deal with projected shortfalls in funding for the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and noted the importance of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in furthering the objectives of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

81. The Coordinating Committee expressed strong support to the recommendation of the delegation of New Zealand to call on FAO and WHO, as parent bodies of Codex, to ensure adequate funding for the Commission to carry out its mandate. It also asked the CCNASWP members to make representation in the appropriate governing body meetings of FAO and WHO in support of adequate funding for the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Development of a Standard for Kava¹³

82. The Coordinating Committee noted the proposals presented by the delegations of Vanuatu and Fiji regarding the development of an international standard for kava beverages and of a regional standard for dried kava products respectively. The Coordinating Committee noted that the two proposals presented many areas of commonalities and some differences and that some additional work was still needed in order to allow the Coordinating Committee to take a decision with regard to new work in this area. In particular it was indicated that: all data and information needed to be referenced; different varieties of kava needed to be identified; and more scientific evidence needed to be presented in order to substantiate statements on the safety of kava products. With regard to this latter point, it was noted that WHO would soon release a report on kava products.

83. The Coordinating Committee agreed to request the electronic Working Group on Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP (see para. 45) to add to its terms of reference the development of a comprehensive discussion paper to justify the need to develop a standard for kava, which would take into account the above points, for consideration at its next session.

Development of a Standard for Nonu (Noni) Products¹⁴

84. The Delegation of Samoa informed the Coordinating Committee of their wish to start work on the elaboration of a standard for Nonu (Noni) products. The Coordinating Committee agreed to request the electronic Working Group on Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP (see para. 45) to add to its terms of reference the development of a comprehensive discussion paper on the need to develop such a standard for consideration at its next session.

¹² CX/NASWP 06/9/7.

¹³ CRD 6 (Kava Standard, submitted by Vanuatu); CRD 11 (Proposal for Dried Kava Products, submitted by Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga).

¹⁴ CRD 10 (Developing a Standard for Nonu Products, submitted by Samoa).

Update on ongoing work on proposed draft Standard for Bitter Cassava in the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables¹⁵

85. The Delegation of Tonga provided a summary on the status of development and discussion of the standard for Bitter Cassava in the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

86. The Coordinating Committee was informed that arrangements for the next Session would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

¹⁵ CRD 7 (Brief Report on the Progress of the Work in Cassava, submitted by Tonga).

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY:	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (ALINORM 07/30/32)
Report of the Electronic Working Group on Objective 6 of the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP		Electronic Working Group	Para. 45
Draft new Strategic Plan for CCNASWP	-	Regional Coordinator	Para. 46
Discussion Paper on the Development of a Standard for Kava	-	Electronic Working Group	Para. 83
Discussion Paper on the Development of a Standard for Nonu (Noni) Products	-	Electronic Working Group	Para. 84

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