

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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REPORT

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-Fifth (Extraordinary) Session

Geneva (Switzerland), 13-15 February 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commission adopted a Statement concerning the outcome of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards for submission to the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO (Appendix II). The Commission:

- *supported the overall thrust of the Evaluation report and expressed its commitment to the implementation of strategies that would meet the objectives of the recommendations contained therein (paragraph 30 and Statement: paragraph 1);*
- *was of the opinion that its existing mandate to protect consumers' health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade continued to be appropriate but might be discussed in the future (paragraph 14 and Statement: paragraph 5);*
- *emphasized that its first priority would be the development of standards having an impact on consumer health and safety (paragraphs 15-17 and Statement: paragraph 5);*
- *agreed that it should have greater independence, within the overall structure of FAO and WHO, for proposing and executing its work programme and budget, once approved by the two parent organizations (Statement: paragraph 7);*
- *strongly supported the recommendation that the Secretariat be expanded and that the seniority and composition of its staff should match the Commission's increased requirements (Statement: paragraph 8);*
- *expressed the view that there needed to be sufficient capacity within the parent Organizations to ensure that scientific advice was provided on a timely basis; that this work needed to have greater identity within the Organizations, stronger links to Codex priorities, and internal coordination as well as significantly increased resources; its independence from external influences and its transparency needed to be further reinforced within FAO/WHO (paragraph 23 and Statement: paragraph 9);*
- *called for a more coordinated approach for capacity building between FAO and WHO and requested the parent bodies to urgently analyse their existing means of providing capacity building and inform the Codex Alimentarius Commission on how they will improve coordination and distribution of work drawing on their mutual strengths and synergies (paragraph 24 and Statement: paragraph 10);*
- *called upon FAO and WHO to provide additional Regular Programme resources, supplemented with extra-budgetary resources where necessary, to strengthen Codex and Codex-related work throughout the two Organizations (paragraph 35 and Statement: paragraph 11);*
- *called upon Member Governments to support the follow-up to the Evaluation process including through their statements made and positions taken in the World Health Assembly and the Council and Conference of FAO (Statement: paragraph 12);*
- *developed a strategy for pursuing the outcome of the Evaluation at its next (Regular) Session in June/July 2003 (paragraphs 25-27 and Statement: paragraph 13);*

The Commission expressed its thanks to WHO and FAO for the establishment of the Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries and Countries in Transition in the Work of Codex. The Commission welcomed the arrangements made as a result of the discussions at the 51st Session of the Executive Committee to strengthen the relationship between the FAO/WHO Consultative Group and the Executive Committee and the Commission by means of regular reporting and discussion (paragraphs 39-48).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Twenty-fifth (Extraordinary) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission met at the International Conference Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, from 13 to 15 February 2003. The Session was convened by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO on the basis of a recommendation of the Fiftieth Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to consider the Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards so as to allow Member countries to express their views on the outcome of the Evaluation before the recommendations were submitted to the governing bodies of FAO and WHO.
2. The Session was chaired by the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. Thomas Billy (USA) and attended by 145 delegates representing 50 Members of the Commission and 44 representatives of 5 international intergovernmental and 20 non-governmental organizations were present as observers. A full list of participants at the Session, including the Secretariat, is given in Appendix I to this report.
3. The session was opened by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Gro Harlem Bruntland and by Mr. Hartwig de Haen, Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Commission adopted the Provisional Agenda (ALINORM 03/25/1) as the Agenda for the Session.

III. REPORT OF THE 51ST (EXTRAORDINARY) SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE¹

5. The Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission presented the report of the 51st (Extraordinary) Session of the Executive Committee in conformity with Rule III.5 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. He reported that the Executive Committee had strongly supported the overall thrust of the Evaluation report and agreed that it should be reviewed expeditiously. A number of issues had been identified as requiring further debate, but the Executive Committee believed that this should not impede progress. The Executive Committee recognized that the object of the 25th Session of the Commission was to provide the Commission's views on the Evaluation to FAO and WHO and had therefore prepared a draft statement for submission to the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO for the Commission's consideration.
6. The Executive Committee also received a report on the progress made towards the establishment of an FAO/WHO Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries and Countries in Transition in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It welcomed the news that the Trust Fund was moving ahead, and that there would be linkages between the FAO/WHO Consultative Group managing the Trust Fund and the Commission and the Executive Committee. It invited the Consultative Group to report on progress of the Trust Fund at the Executive Committee and Commission sessions in June/July 2003.

¹ ALINORM 03/25/2

IV. CONSIDERATION OF FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO EVALUATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND OTHER FAO AND WHO WORK ON FOOD STANDARDS²

7. At the invitation of the Chair, Professor Bruce Traill, Leader of the Evaluation Team, presented the Evaluation Report and stressed the highly consultative nature of the evaluation process. He highlighted the main recommendations that were intended to improve the efficiency of the Codex process; to strengthen scientific advice; to increase the participation of developing countries in standard-setting and risk assessment; and to improve capacity-building. Professor Traill indicated that these recommendations should not be considered individually but in their overall context.

8. Professor Ken Buckle, speaking on behalf of the Expert Panel, recalled that the Evaluation Report reflected the consensus between the Expert Panel and the Evaluation Team, as a result of extensive consultations. He stressed the need to address the various problems identified in the evaluation process in order to meet the needs of member countries in the future.

9. The Representative of WHO informed the Commission that the Executive Board of WHO had agreed that a draft Resolution on the Evaluation should be prepared for consideration by the World Health Assembly, on the basis of the views expressed by member countries in the current Session. The Representative indicated that the proportion of the budget for food safety activities in WHO had been substantially increased and that considerable effort had been made to involve the health sector in member countries. The provision of scientific advice to Codex and member countries in cooperation with FAO was currently under review in order to strengthen the scientific basis of Codex standards.

10. The Representative of FAO indicated that the recommendations of the Commission concerning the Evaluation would be submitted to the FAO Council and Conference, and that the budgetary implications would also be considered and made transparent to Member countries for comment. The Representative highlighted the close cooperation with WHO as regards scientific advice, and recalled that it was a high priority of both Organizations. The Representative stressed the importance of a food chain approach in order to ensure the safety of the food supply at all stages.

11. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Evaluation Team and the Expert Panel for their excellent work and comprehensive analysis of complex issues that would have a great importance for the future work of Codex, FAO and WHO.

12. As proposed by the Chair, the Commission had a general discussion on the main aspects of the recommendations identified by the Executive Committee: the mandate; the priorities; the establishment of an Executive Board, in place of the current Executive Committee and a Standards Management Committee; the definition of consensus; expert scientific advice; and capacity building. The Chair also recommended that the recommendations should not be considered individually but in their overall relation to these topics.

13. Several delegations expressed their support with the objectives of the Evaluation and the general thrust of the recommendations but expressed their reservations on a number of specific recommendations. Some delegations noted that the Evaluation had expressed the view that the concerns and priorities of developing countries were not adequately taken into account throughout Codex, especially in the priorities of Codex Committees, and that this question should be considered in detail. One delegation expressed concern at the reporting of the analysis in the Evaluation report, especially the emphasis on one only economic indicator.

² ALINORM 03/25/3 Conclusions and Recommendations of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards; ALINORM 03/25/3-Add.1 (FAO Management Response and Report by the Director-General (WHO) to the Executive Board); ALINORM 03/5/3-Add.2 (Note by the Secretariat); Unsolicited comments from India, Malaysia, 49P, CI, IFAH (CAC/LIM 1); CAC25/LIM 2 Chile (CAC/LIM 2); Argentina (CAC/LIM 3); Japan, Philippines, ICGMA (CAC/LIM 4); Thailand (CAC/LIM 5); Costa Rica (CAC/LIM 7).

A. MANDATE

14. Many delegations expressed the view that the current dual mandate of the Commission as expressed in Article 1 of its Statutes was adequate and reflected the objectives of Codex. Some delegations, while supporting this position, also proposed to discuss the mandate further in the future, especially to clarify what was intended by “fair practices in the food trade”. It was suggested that a specific definition might be considered for inclusion in the Procedural Manual. The Commission **agreed** that the current mandate should be retained but that it might be discussed in the future.

B. PRIORITIES

15. The Commission reasserted that the first priority in the development of Codex standards was the protection of consumers’ health and food safety and noted that the other priorities would require further discussion in the future.

16. Several delegations supported Codex work on standards intended to ensure fair trade practices, with the understanding that only essential quality factors regulated by governments should be addressed in Codex standards while commercial quality should be left to trading partners. Several delegations and some observers stressed the importance of Codex work to ensure consumer information and choice. Other delegations expressed the view that this should not be considered in the priorities.

17. A number of delegations expressed their disagreement with Recommendation 6 dealing with guidelines for the determination of acceptable levels of protection (ALOP)³.

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW BODIES

18. Many delegations expressed their concern with the Recommendations to establish an Executive Board and a Standards Management Committee, as this was not likely to increase the transparency, efficiency or inclusiveness of the process and would entail significant additional costs. These delegations supported annual meetings of the Commission, as this would be an effective means to expedite the standard-setting process, since only the Commission could adopt final Codex texts. They proposed to consider how the functions of the Executive Committee could be reviewed in conjunction with annual meetings of the Commission, especially as regards standard management and strategic planning.

D. ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

19. The Commission supported the idea of holding annual meetings but noted the relationship between annual meetings and the operation of the Trust Fund, as it was essential to facilitate developing country participation if the Commission met annually. Several delegations expressed the view that if the Commission was to meet annually, Regional Coordinating Committees would also need to meet annually. The role of these Committees should also be reviewed in order to strengthen their contribution to the Codex process as a whole.

E. CONSENSUS AND RELATED ISSUES

20. Several delegations stressed the importance of consensus in the decision-making process but expressed significant reservations on the definition proposed in Recommendation 24. Some delegations stressed the importance of strengthening the consensus building process. To this end, they proposed that a guidance paper be developed for the use of Codex Committees and their Chairs.

21. Many delegations, while recognizing the need for speed and efficiency in the standard-setting process, stressed that this should not adversely affect transparency, inclusiveness and consensus building. Some delegations stressed the need to improve the existing process of achieving consensus to take into account all relevant concerns, especially those of developing countries. Some delegations also noted that the main obstacle to rapid progress was lack of consensus on controversial issues, and not Codex structures or procedures as such.

³ **Secretariat Note:** The Evaluation report uses the term “Acceptable Level of Protection” whereas the expression used in the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures is “Appropriate level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection” (SPS Agreement, Annex A).

22. Some delegations supported further consideration of the proposals concerning work between the sessions in order to facilitate the work of the Committees but noted that clarification would be required on the transparency of the process and its practical implications, especially for developing countries.

F. EXPERT ADVICE

23. The Commission reasserted the essential importance of expert advice provided to Codex and to member countries and supported an increase in the commitment of FAO and WHO to support scientific risk assessment, in order to address more effectively current and emerging food safety issues. It was noted that FAO and WHO had agreed to convene the expert consultation on scientific advice requested by the 24th Session of the Commission as a matter of high priority⁴.

G. CAPACITY BUILDING

24. Many delegations supported the recommendations to improve capacity building and emphasized its importance in order to ensure effective participation of developing countries in the Codex process and to allow countries to address food safety issues at the national level.

H. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION

25. The Commission agreed that the implementation of the results of the Evaluation should be undertaken expeditiously. It requested the Secretariat to obtain comments from governments and interested international organizations on the report, and to prepare options and strategies for consideration by the 26th Session of the Commission for action in the following areas:

- Review of the Codex Committee structure and mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces, including Regional Committees (Recommendations 16, 17);
- Review of the functions of the Executive Committee (Recommendations 9, 10);
- Improved processes for standards management (Recommendations 18, 20, 23, 24);
- Review of the Rules of Procedure and other procedural matters (Recommendations 8, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28); and
- Implementation of other recommendations not addressed above.

26. The Commission **agreed** that, due to the implications of implementing the outcome of the Evaluation in the medium-term, the development of the Draft Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007 should be suspended for one year. It was noted that this would also allow additional time for debate on the above points at the next session of the Commission.

27. The Delegation of France, as host country of the Committee on General Principles, offered to convene one or more extraordinary sessions of the Committee to deal with those matters within its mandate.

I. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT

28. The Commission considered the draft Statement proposed by the Executive Committee and made the following comments and amendments⁵.

29. The Commission agreed that food safety should be ensured throughout the food chain and amended the text accordingly. Some delegations pointed out that Codex standards were useful not only for smaller and less developed countries but for all member states in general, and noted that harmonization with international standards was specifically mentioned under the SPS and TBT Agreements. The current text was amended to reflect the general relevance of Codex standards for Member countries under the WTO Agreements (Paragraph 3).

30. The Commission recalled the increased emphasis on food safety issues in Codex work and agreed to insert a new paragraph (4) reflecting its support for the overall thrust of the Evaluation Report and its

⁴ ALINORM 01/41, para. 61

⁵ Reference is made to the paragraph numbering in Appendix II.

commitment to meet the objectives of the recommendations, with the understanding that the specific recommendations would require further consideration.

31. The Commission considered the paragraph relating to the mandate, as proposed by the Executive Committee. Some delegations proposed that the statement also recognize the importance of consumer information and consumer choice. Other delegations expressed the view that these aspects should not be included in the priorities and that they would detract from the commitment to health protection. The Commission recalled that the establishment of priorities other than health protection would require further discussion and retained the current text (Paragraph 5).

32. The Commission agreed that the statement should reflect the importance of the strong support for Codex work from member countries and stakeholders. A reference to countries with economies in transition was also added in the recommendation concerning participation. Some delegations and observers proposed to include a recommendation for increased consumer participation. Other delegations expressed the view that consumer participation was the responsibility of member countries and that the statement should reflect the intergovernmental nature of Codex, without reference to a specific group of stakeholders (Paragraph 6).

33. The Commission agreed, as proposed by some delegations, to include a reference to the improvement of risk communication in view of its importance in risk analysis, especially in relation to consumer information (Paragraph 6, 4th bullet).

34. The Commission agreed to amend the paragraph on expert advice (9) to emphasize the importance and urgency of this question.

35. In response to a statement concerning the importance of re-programming Regular Programme resources at FAO and WHO versus the use of extra-budgetary funding, as mentioned in paragraphs 10 and 11, the Secretariat and the Representative of WHO clarified that capacity building undertaken in the field programmes of the Organizations was normally based on extra-budgetary contributions from member countries and multi-lateral funding agencies. Extra-budgetary support through FAO's Government Cooperation Programme had also been used to fund several Associate Professional Officer and other posts in the Secretariat.

36. In paragraph 13, some delegations asked for clarification on the consideration of the structures and mandates of Codex Committees, as there was no recommendation in this respect in the Evaluation. The Commission recalled that Recommendation 16 of the Evaluation called for a review of general subject and commodity committees and agreed that member countries would be asked for their views on this question, as it required further consideration.

37. The Commission agreed that comments would be requested on the recommendations in the Evaluation with a deadline of approximately six weeks after the distribution of this report. On the basis of the comments received, the Secretariat would propose options or strategies for consideration by the 26th Session of the Commission on the specific aspects mentioned in paragraph 13 of the Statement, for distribution in the second half of May 2003 (see also para. 25 of this report).

38. On the basis of the above discussion, the Commission adopted the Statement appended as Appendix II.

V. TRUST FUND FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION IN THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION⁶

39. The Commission considered the Progress Report prepared at the request of the 50th Session of the Executive Committee as a follow-up to the Concept Paper submitted at that time. The goal of the Trust Fund and Project was to further the improvement of global public health and food security by promoting the provision of safer and more nutritious food and contributing to a reduction in food-borne disease. This will be achieved by (a) helping regulators and food experts from all areas of the world to participate in international standard-setting work in the framework of Codex and (b) enhancing their capacity to help establish effective food safety and

⁶ ALINORM 03/25/4.

quality standards and fair practices in the food trade, both in the framework of the Codex Alimentarius and in their own countries. The Commission was informed that an FAO/WHO Consultative Group consisting of senior FAO and WHO staff had been established to provide the daily management of the Project and that the Project would be implemented by WHO following normal WHO procedures and in accordance with WHO's financial regulations. The Consultative mechanism would provide for close liaison with FAO and the Codex Secretariat.

40. The Commission expressed its thanks to WHO and FAO for the establishment of the Trust Fund and recalled that the participation of developing countries was essential to ensure that Codex standards were elaborated on a worldwide basis. It was especially important in view of the proposals made earlier to hold annual meetings of the Commission. Several delegations drew the attention of the Commission to the need for geographical balance and that the Trust Fund would go a long way to achieving this.

41. The Commission also noted the importance of ongoing involvement in the Trust Fund by Member Nations, the Executive Committee and the Commission itself. The Chairman of the Consultative Group, on behalf of the Group, welcomed regular opportunities to receive input from these sources and undertook to report regularly to the Executive Committee and the Commission.

42. Several delegations expressed the view that clarification was required concerning the criteria for the selection of recipient Member countries of the Commission, as it appeared that under the current criteria, few countries would actually be eligible. Some delegations indicated that assistance to facilitate their participation in Codex was needed precisely because the countries lacked the appropriate infrastructures. Other delegations also proposed that priority be given to Least Developed Countries as they faced the most serious difficulties.

43. Some delegations pointed out that in some countries considerable capacity building efforts had been made in the area of food safety standards and that National Codex Committees had been established, but actual participation in Codex meetings was still a serious difficulty in view of budgetary problems.

44. Some delegations and observers expressed the view that contributions from the private sector, and especially the food industry and related sectors, should not be accepted as it might unduly influence the Codex process. Other delegations indicated that, were such contributions to be accepted, they should be subject of very strict rules.

45. The Representative of WHO noted that pending decisions from FAO and WHO on the issue of conflict of interest, private sector funding was at this stage neither being sought nor being accepted. It was indicated however that financial contributions could be received from private sector institutions (including foundations and trusts) that do not constitute a conflict of interest, and that the issue of private sector contributions would be further considered on the basis of FAO and WHO Rules and Regulations.

46. The Commission discussed the relationship between the Trust fund and the other capacity-building initiatives of FAO and WHO and other organizations such as the WTO/World Bank Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and stressed the need for cooperation and coordination between the organizations involved in order to optimize resources and efficiency. It was recalled that the Trust Fund covered only participation in Codex and only those aspects of technical assistance that were directly related to Codex, such as improvements in the use of information technology at the national level.

47. Some delegations indicated that progress that might be achieved through the Trust Fund should be sustainable, and that further consideration should be given to this aspect, although it was already partially addressed in the current Terms of Reference.

48. The Commission welcomed the arrangements made as a result of the discussions at the 51st Session of the Executive Committee to strengthen the relationship between the Consultative Group and the Executive Committee and the Commission by means of regular reporting and discussion. It noted that specific criteria for selection of beneficiaries remained subject to further review and that the comments of member countries would be taken into account. It was confirmed that the Trust Fund would be used only for aspects directly related to participation in Codex, and close coordination would be ensured with other relevant capacity-building initiatives, especially as regards food safety and risk assessment. The question of sustainability had been addressed in the Project.

A. LAUNCH OF THE TRUST FUND

49. The Director-General of WHO, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland and the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf, formally launched the *FAO/WHO Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries and Countries in Transition in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission* at a ceremony during the Commission Session on 14 February 2003. Dr. Brundtland announced that the first contribution to the Trust Fund had been received from Switzerland.

50. The Delegation of Norway announced that Norway was prepared to make a contribution to the Trust Fund in 2003 subject to the clarification that the contribution would benefit those countries that needed it most.

51. The Commission expressed its appreciation to its Chairperson, Mr Thomas Billy (USA), for his efforts in pursuing the establishment of the Trust Fund as part of the Chairperson's Action Plan and congratulated him on the realization of this vision.

APPENDIX I

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LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

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Heads of Delegation are listed first, followed by alternates and advisors listed in alphabetical order.

Les chefs de délégation figurent en tête et les suppléants et conseillers sont énumérés en ordre alphabétique.

Figuran en primar lugar los Jefes de las delegaciones, los suplentes y asesores aparecen por orden alfabético.

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APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO EVALUATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND OTHER FAO AND WHO WORK ON FOOD STANDARDS

1. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, having considered the report and recommendations of the *Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards*, expressed its appreciation to the parent Organizations for having initiated the Evaluation and ensuring that it was carried out in a consultative, efficient and effective manner. It also expressed its appreciation to the Evaluation Team and Expert Panel for their excellent report, the depth of the analysis and the comprehensive proposals and recommendations contained therein.
2. The Commission noted with satisfaction the finding of the Evaluation that its food standards had a very high importance to Members as a vital component of food control systems designed to protect consumer health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade. It endorsed the view that standards were a fundamental prerequisite in consumer protection but had to be looked at in the context of the total system throughout the food chain, especially for food safety.
3. The Commission recalled that Codex standards were used as references for Member Nations in relation to their obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. In this regard, it recognized that many Member Nations with less developed economies or with economies in transition were able to use Codex standards directly as a basis for domestic legislation and standards setting in conformity with these Agreements. It noted that this was particularly true when standards were based on global data including those derived from developing countries.
4. The Commission supported the overall thrust of the Evaluation report and expressed its commitment to the **implementation** of strategies that would meet the objectives of the recommendations contained therein. It strongly agreed that these recommendations should be reviewed expeditiously. The Commission noted that since the 1991 Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade, significant changes had been made in the Commission's priorities and programmes with increased emphasis on food safety issues. This emphasis had resulted in an increased output of health-related standards and was now being extended to the whole food chain; this process would continue to be developed.
5. Noting the Evaluation's recommendations concerning the Commission's mandate, the Commission was of the opinion that its existing **mandate** to protect consumers' health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade continued to be appropriate but might be discussed in the future. Within this mandate, the Commission emphasized that its first priority would be the development of standards having an impact on consumer health and safety.
6. In order to maintain the strong support from all Member Nations and stakeholders, the Commission **agreed** that in their response to the Evaluation, the Commission and its parent Organizations should work towards:
 - greater efficiency and effectiveness in the development of Codex standards, whilst maintaining transparency and inclusiveness and procedural consistency in the process of their development;
 - increased participation of developing Member Nations and Member Nations in economic transition in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission throughout the standards development process;
 - greater usefulness of Codex standards to Member Nations in terms of relevance to their needs and timeliness;
 - strengthening of the scientific base for risk analysis, including food safety risk assessment to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in providing expert scientific advice to the Commission and Member Nations and to improve risk communication; and
 - more effective capacity building for the development of national food control systems.

7. The Commission agreed that it should have greater independence, within the overall structure of FAO and WHO, for proposing and executing its **work programme and budget**, once approved by the two parent organizations.

8. The Commission concurred with the views expressed in the Evaluation Report that the Codex **Secretariat** was hard working, efficient and member-oriented but overworked and with insufficient resources to support the present activities of Codex. It strongly supported the recommendation that the Secretariat be expanded and that the seniority and composition of its staff should match the Commission's increased requirements.

9. On the matter of **expert advice** to Codex, the Commission agreed fully with the view that this was a very important element to all Member Nations and to the Commission itself. It expressed the view that there needed to be sufficient capacity within the parent Organizations to ensure that scientific advice was provided on a timely basis. It also agreed that this work needed to have greater identity within the Organizations, stronger links to Codex priorities, and internal coordination as well as significantly increased resources. Its independence from external influences and its transparency need to be further reinforced within FAO/WHO. The Commission stated that there should also be greater distinction between the function of risk assessment undertaken by experts and that of risk management undertaken by Codex committees, while noting the linkages that needed to exist between these functions. The Commission emphasized that the provision of expert scientific advice was a joint responsibility of FAO and WHO and should continue to be so. It strongly recommended that WHO markedly increase its contribution to health risk assessment carried out by FAO/WHO expert committees and FAO/WHO Expert consultations. It also recommended that FAO strengthen its input in areas reflecting its responsibility and expertise. The Commission welcomed the statement by Dr Bruntland in her opening remarks to the present session that FAO and WHO would prepare for and convene as an immediate priority, the consultation requested by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 24th Session⁷ on strengthening scientific support for Codex decision-making.

10. In the area of **capacity building**, the Commission welcomed the valuable initiatives described in the report including the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) operated by the WTO in collaboration with the World Bank, FAO, WHO, OIE, and in particular the new FAO/WHO Trust Fund to enable effective participation in Codex. It called upon FAO and WHO to undertake a major effort to mobilize extra-budgetary funds and foster coordinated bilateral assistance in capacity building. It also called for a more coordinated approach for capacity building between FAO and WHO and requested the parent bodies to urgently analyse their existing means of providing capacity building and inform the Codex Alimentarius Commission on how they will improve coordination and distribution of work drawing on their mutual strengths and synergies.

11. The Commission called upon **FAO and WHO** to provide additional Regular Programme resources, supplemented with extra-budgetary resources where necessary, to strengthen Codex and Codex-related work throughout the two Organizations.

12. The Commission called upon **Member Governments** to support the follow-up to the Evaluation process including through their statements made and positions taken in the World Health Assembly and the Council and Conference of FAO.

13. The Commission reiterated its **commitment** to pursue with all speed full consideration of the recommendations addressed to it in the Evaluation report and in this regard:

- Invited **Member Nations** and interested international organizations to submit written comments to the Secretariat;
- Requested the Secretariat to analyze the comments dealing with the **Codex Committee structures and their mandates** and to provide options for consideration by the Commission at its next Regular Session;
- Requested the Secretariat to analyze the comments dealing with the functions of the **Executive Committee**, and to provide options for consideration by the Commission at its next Regular Session;
- Requested the Secretariat to analyze comments dealing with **standards management** and the procedures for **standards development**, including the establishment of priorities recommended by

⁷ ALINORM 01/41, para. 61.

developing Member Nations, and recommend strategies for the early implementation of more efficient and effective processes, providing options for consideration by the Commission at its next Regular Session;

- Requested the Secretariat to identify a strategy for consideration by the Commission at its next Regular Session on the implementation of the recommendations dealing with the revision of the **Rules of Procedure** and other internal procedures; and
- Requested the Secretariat to analyze the comments on those recommendations in the Evaluation Report not covered by the above and to provide options on how to proceed.