

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
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WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

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## REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

New Delhi, 10-16 January 1978

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Coordinating Committee for Asia held its First Session in New Delhi from 10 - 16 January 1978. The meeting was hosted by the Government of India. Representatives from the following countries of the Region attended the session:

India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

Observers from ASMO, IOCU and ISDI were also present. A list of participants is contained in Appendix I to this Report.

### INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

2. Following a brief outline of the philosophy, aims, methods of work and results achieved by the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and related activities in FAO and WHO in the area of food control and food contamination monitoring, the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia was formally opened with a speech by His Excellency Shri Raj Narain, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The text of the welcome address is attached as Appendix II.

3. His Excellency Shri Raj Narain welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Government of India. The Minister pointed out that the food habits of Asian countries were often quite different from those of Western countries and thus with regard to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission matters at times required an approach from a different angle. He further recommended that the countries of the Region should intensify their efforts in developing and improving existing food legislations and should also set up the necessary machinery to enforce these laws.

4. Concerning food exports, be these raw agricultural products or processed foods, the Minister stated that in some cases the standards recommended by the Commission might not be fully attainable. He felt sure that the industrialized countries would understand and appreciate this situation and consider it in its proper perspective. The Minister emphasized, however, the need for exported products to meet in particular the hygienic requirements of the importing countries. Shri Raj Narain expressed the view that international organizations should play an important role in assisting the developing countries in setting up food legislation and food control services.

### CLOSURE OF THE INAUGURAL PROCEEDINGS

5. Shri K.P. Singh, Additional Secretary (Health), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, thanked all those present who had come to New Delhi to participate in the work of the First Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia. Shri Singh expressed gratitude to the Minister for having been able to find the time to come and deliver the inaugural address. He indicated that the Codex Alimentarius Commission was a joint venture of FAO and WHO, and that India had an active interest in the work of the Commission. He considered that the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for Asia was a step in the right direction, in that it would enable the Commission to be better informed of the particular problems and needs of the countries of Asia. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the international standards are so developed that they facilitate trade and did not hinder it in any way. Shri Singh concluded by expressing the hope that the Coordinating Committee for Asia would stimulate more action to protect consumers.

#### OPENING OF THE SESSION

6. The Coordinator of the Committee, Dr. K.O. Leong (Malaysia) presided over the meeting. In opening the first working session he thanked the Government of India for its kindness to host this first session of the Committee.

#### ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

7. The delegation of Thailand, seconded by the delegation of Kuwait nominated Shri K.P. Singh (India) as Vice Chairman of the Committee. The Committee unanimously concurred with this proposal. For some items of the Agenda the Vice Chairman presided.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda. It was noted that the agenda had been proposed by an ad hoc meeting of delegations from the Asian Region present at the 11th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in April 1976.

#### MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE 11TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, VARIOUS CODEX COMMITTEES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES (CX/ASIA 78/2)

##### Codex Alimentarius Commission (11th Session - April 1976)

9. The Committee noted that the Commission had established the Coordinating Committee for Asia at its 11th Session. It further took note of its terms of reference.

10. The Secretariat reviewed the discussions by the Commission on cereals, tea and coffee and their respective products and subsequent deliberations of the Executive Committee on the question of whether or not Codex standards for coffee and coffee products should be elaborated. It was agreed to consider these products under a later item of agenda.

##### Various Codex Committees

11. The Committee was further informed of the activities of the Codex Committee on Food Additives, Food Hygiene, Processed Meat Products, Fish and Fishery Products, Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Fats and Oils which were dealing with a number of standards and codes of practice of particular interest to the Region.

12. The Secretariat also informed the Committee of the deliberations of the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa (September 1977) with regard to the consideration of possible standardization of certain commodities also common to the Asian Region.

13. During the discussion of the work of various Codex Committees some delegations expressed the view that in order to respect certain religious beliefs Codex standards for processed meat products should contain labelling provisions concerning the type of meat and the manner of slaughter of the animals from which the meat was derived. It was pointed out that this could best be achieved on a national level by having specific labelling requirements for such products in the relevant legislation. Under the national food control system inspection could be carried out at the place of production, i.e. slaughter house. When accepting the relevant standards governments could indicate their requirements and when commercially feasible even ask for certification from the exporting country.

14. In reply to questions relating to hygienic provisions for several commodities for which no standards had so far been elaborated by the Codex Committees, the Secretariat informed the Committee that in close collaboration with ICMSF and ISO microbiological specifications were now being elaborated for various commodities and a list of priorities had been agreed on at the last session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

15. With regard to the work presently undertaken by the various subsidiary bodies of the Commission, one delegation pointed out that the requirements contained in the provisions of some standards were too high. It was noted that a greater influence by the members of the Region on standards and codes elaborated under the Codex system could only be exercised through active participation in the work of the Codex Committees. It was also noted that where participation at meetings was not possible, the Codex system provided for written government comments on documents under discussion by the various Committees, which also constituted an effective means of influencing the work of these Committees.

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ASIAN CONFERENCE

16. The delegations from different countries informed the Committee about the action taken or proposed to be taken at the national level in strengthening their food control systems as recommended in the Resolution adopted by the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Asia (Bangkok, December 1975). Information was also given on services specifically related to inspection for exports to develop international trade and earn more foreign exchange. It was pointed out by all the delegations that their national authorities were giving this subject a high priority.

17. The Secretariat informed the meeting about the various actions taken on regional and global levels. These were:

- (i) In each of the FAO Regional Offices in Bangkok and Cairo, one associate expert (Food Control and Standards) had been appointed to carry out surveys of existing facilities for food control and to determine needs for outside assistance, if any.
- (ii) The associate expert in Bangkok had carried out initial surveys in Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. He would very shortly be visiting Nepal and Burma for the same purpose. Similarly, the associate expert in Cairo had also visited a number of countries.
- (iii) From the FAO Headquarters, visits had been made by experts and staff members to Pakistan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Kuwait and Qatar.
- (iv) An international training course in control of environmental contaminants in food had been organized at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, in cooperation with UNEP and the Government of India. The first six months course had already started beginning November 1977.
- (v) As a follow up to the Joint FAO/WHO/ASMO mission, a regional training course of food inspectors for the countries in the Near East would be arranged by FAO in 1978 most probably in Cairo, in the Arabic language.
- (vi) The Codex Alimentarius Commission was giving increasing priority to the needs of developing countries in further promoting international trade of commodities of importance to them. The deliberations of the Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia would be a further help in this direction.

18. Referring to the associate experts, a suggestion was made that, insofar as possible, they should be appointed from within the Region. The only country of the Region which was participating in the Associate Expert Scheme of FAO was Japan. It was agreed to request Japan, through the appropriate authorities in FAO to see if it could sponsor some associate experts in this subject area.

19. Following general discussion, the Committee re-emphasized that the Resolution adopted by the Food Standards Regional Conference for Asia was still valid and action should be continued for implementing it.

FAO/WHO/UNEP CONFERENCE ON MYCOTOXINS

20. The Secretariat informed the Committee about the recent Joint FAO/WHO/UNEP Conference on Mycotoxins held in Nairobi in September 1977. Mycotoxin contamination was an area of growing concern to all member nations because many agricultural raw materials consumed within the country or moving in international trade were susceptible to the deleterious effects of mycotoxins. The Committee noted that prior to the Conference, very valuable information and data on the incidence of mycotoxins had been supplied by India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

21. The intergovernmental Conference had recommended measures for the prevention and control of mycotoxins. Such measures were inter-disciplinary in nature and included drying of crops immediately after harvesting, proper storage of agricultural products throughout the distribution system and effective food (and feed) control measures. It was also recommended that to facilitate international trade, harmonization should be secured through bodies like the Codex Alimentarius Commission, on the design of sampling procedures and methods of analysis.

22. It was noted that by and large amongst the mycotoxins the most serious problem lay with contamination by aflatoxins of internationally traded commodities such as nuts (groundnut and pistachio) and staple foods like maize and parboiled rice. The Committee concurred with the recommendation of the Conference that the national authorities should pay maximum attention to the prevention and control of mycotoxin contamination. The need for appropriate training of national personnel was stressed.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR

23. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA 78/3. The Committee noted that the Executive Committee, at its 21st Session, in June 1975, had considered what ought to be the role of coordinators, in the light of discussions on this subject which had taken place at the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Africa in October 1973 and at the First Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa in June 1974. The Committee was informed of the role and functions of coordinators historically and under the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

24. In the case of the Coordinator for Europe (the Coordinating Committee for Europe, established by the Commission in 1964, was the first of such Committees) whatever expenses may have been incurred over the years, on travel by the Coordinator and on secretarial assistance, had been borne by the authorities in the country of the Coordinator. No expenses had fallen on FAO/WHO; as in the case of the other officers of the Commission there were no emoluments or honoraria attached to the position of Coordinator. Indeed, it had never been envisaged that the expenses of a coordinator should be much more than marginal to the costs incurred by the authorities in the country of the Coordinator in hosting a session of the Coordinating Committee away from the Headquarters of FAO or WHO.

25. The Committee was further informed that several members of the Coordinating Committee for Africa had envisaged a role for the Coordinator involving travel throughout Africa and the maintenance of an office with secretarial assistance. The Committee noted that when the question of financial assistance to enable the Coordinator for Africa to have an operational role had been suggested, the delegations to the Coordinating Committee for Africa had been thinking that governments in the Region would be motivated more effectively to devote more time and effort to the problems of their countries in the area of food control infrastructure if the Coordinator for the Region were to carry out visits to the various countries of the Region to discuss these problems with the authorities concerned.

26. The Committee was informed that the Executive Committee was fully appreciative of the points which had been made by the delegations to the Coordinating Committee for Africa. However, to give the Coordinator an "operational" role would involve substantial expenses for which there was no provision in the Rules of Procedure of the Commission. Also the Commission's work was recommendatory or advisory; it was not "operational", in the sense in which this term was normally understood. Furthermore the point had been made that the objectives sought to be achieved by giving an operational role to the Coordinator could be realized by making use of existing FAO, WHO and UNEP facilities in the Region, including FAO and WHO regional offices, FAO country representatives and senior agricultural advisers, and WHO resident representatives.

27. The Committee was informed that the Executive Committee had agreed that the functions of the Coordinator would be:

- (i) to preside over sessions of the Coordinating Committee;
- (ii) to guide the deliberations of the Committee;
- (iii) to formulate policy and action proposals for consideration by the Committee;
- (iv) to be the spokesman for the Committee and to report to the Commission;
- (v) to maintain a close liaison with the Codex Secretariat and as appropriate, with FAO and WHO Regional Offices in the Region.

The Committee was further informed that the Commission at its 11th Session had concurred with the conclusions of the Executive Committee.

28. During the course of the present discussions, several delegations drew attention to the fact that out of 26 Member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the Region only seven had sent representatives to this First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia. Mention was also made of the small number, comparatively speaking, of Asian Member countries which attended sessions of Codex Committees and indeed, of the Commission itself. Various possible reasons for the small attendance were put forward by the different delegations. These included financial constraints; other priorities; a lack of knowledge or conviction as to real, tangible benefits to be derived from participation; agenda items, in some cases, not considered to be of sufficient significance - especially from an export interest point of view - to particular countries; lack of manpower with the necessary technical expertise.

29. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the fact that at sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Africa attendance was similarly less than might be wished. The Committee considered that there was a need to inform the Member countries in the Region - in particular those which had not sent delegations to the present session or which did not participate in the sessions of the Commission - of the importance of participating in Codex work in their own interest, and of the benefits to be derived from such participation.

30. Several delegations thought that the Coordinator ought to be given an operational role. It was, however, noted that this could place a heavy burden on the Coordinator. Furthermore this would duplicate the work of the existing FAO and WHO staff at regional and national levels. Hence, whether travel by the Coordinator in the Region or more effective use of FAO and WHO offices in the Region would produce better results in terms of stimulating greater participation by countries of the Asian Region in Codex work was difficult to say. At the very last, the Committee thought that for the present the role of the Coordinator for the Region could be strengthened by his being more closely involved with the Codex Secretariat and with the FAO Regional Offices in Bangkok and Cairo.

31. It was agreed that in initiating action to stimulate greater awareness of Codex work in the Region, full use should be made of the FAO Regional Offices in Bangkok and Cairo.

32. It was also agreed that as far as feasible, advantage should be taken of the travels of the regional officers in order to explain more fully the purpose of the work of the Coordinating Committee and of the Commission and to ascertain the views of countries concerning participation in Codex work. It was further agreed that in this regard it would be necessary to involve also the FAO Officers in each country and the national Codex Contact Points. The Committee agreed that there should be a close link between the Regional Offices and the Coordinator and that reports on country surveys, etc. in the Region should be made available to the Coordinator. This was particularly important, in order that the Coordinator be aware of the position and of developments in the various countries of the Region concerning not only food standards work but also the field of food control infrastructure.

33. The Committee recommended that the Commission should continue to find ways and means of stimulating greater participation by developing countries in the work of the Commission and of subsidiary bodies of the Commission of particular interest to them. The Committee requested the Executive Committee to give special consideration to this matter.

#### FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE MODEL FOOD LAW (CX/ASIA 78/4)

34. During the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Asia held in Bangkok in December 1975, a model Food Law had been considered and approved of in general terms. The Conference had agreed that it would be a useful guide to the member governments of the Region to compare with their national legislation, in order, where necessary, to bring their national legislation more in line with the Model Food Law.

35. To facilitate the comparison a questionnaire had been prepared and the Conference had agreed that it should be sent to the countries of the Region. It had been further agreed that a review of the progress made in the adoption/adaptation of the Model Food Law by the various countries would be an item on the agenda of the First Session of this Committee.

36. Written replies to the questionnaire for comparing national law(s) with the Model Food Law were received from the following countries: India, Indonesia, Iraq, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (CX/ASIA 78/4). In addition, the various delegations present further explained the position of food legislation in their countries. Detailed reports were made by most of the delegations from countries from which no replies to the questionnaire had been forthcoming. The Committee agreed to discuss the document in general terms rather than in detail.

37. In the discussion it was noted that in some countries a single law covered food, drugs and even cosmetics. The meeting agreed that in view of the rather diverging disciplines involved and the need for effective implementation, the food law should be drawn up as a separate entity.

38. It was further noted that the legislative powers of the national agencies in the various countries of the Region could also differ in that in some cases the quality surveillance of raw agricultural produce - particularly cereals, fruits and vegetables - fell wholly or partially under the jurisdiction of a ministry other than that responsible for regulation on standards for processed foods, whereas in other countries no such distinction was made.

#### Definitions (Part I)

39. From the replies to the questionnaire and the various statements made it emerged that the definitions given in the Model Food Law did not differ substantially from those contained in the national legislations of the countries of the Region.

40. With regard to the definition for "food", the Committee considered a proposal to make a distinction between the article in its natural form and semi-processed or processed foods in view of the fact that, as mentioned earlier (para 38), different agencies might be responsible for the different group of products or that the quality of these may have to be controlled taking into consideration many other factors. It was ultimately agreed not to propose a change to this definition. It was noted that in the Region a very large proportion of the food was sold unpacked to the ultimate consumer.

41. The Committee was informed that the Coordinating Committee for Africa had discussed at some length the definition for "sell" and in particular whether gifts and barter would be covered by it. The Committee noted that the Coordinating Committee for Africa had considered two alternative texts to the present definition but had not expressed a preference for either. It was further noted that legal advice would be sought as to whether or not the term "gift" could be admitted to the definition of "sell" (ALINORM 78/28, paras 20-24). It was noted that in the Asian Region "sell" in most countries included offer and expose. It was further pointed out that the law was applicable to all food entering the country - even that supplied as gift.

#### General Provisions (Part II)

42. Several delegations pointed out that foods found to be sub-standard would not necessarily have to be "adulterated" as the cause of a defect might be natural and beyond the control of the producer. It was further pointed out that products which would be acceptable in one country would not be found as fit for human consumption in other countries and thus be regarded as adulterated e.g. cereal when judged on the level of the pesticide residues depending on the quantity consumed per capita.

#### Warranty (Part III)

43. The provision in the Model Food Law (III.g) requiring that a warranty be given for articles sold, did - judging by the replies received - not appear in the legislation of many Asian countries.

#### Regulation on Food Standards (Part IV)

44. It was noted that in most countries food regulations were the responsibility of more than one ministry and that in the form of joint committees, etc., mechanisms existed to achieve coordination to elaborate regulations. One delegation expressed the view that the paragraph dealing with regulations (para 11.3(b)) should be more explicit with regard to the quality of food packaging material. The need for appropriate labelling to indicate that a food was prepared in compliance with certain religious requirements was also brought up.

#### Administration and Enforcement (Part V)

45. The Committee noted with interest that in one country the question of giving quasi-judicial powers to the food control administration was under consideration. It was felt that such a provision would greatly improve the effectiveness of the control authorities in dealing with offenders. Whereas the advantages of such a procedure were readily apparent the Committee felt that the legal systems and constitutions of many countries would not permit this, and in any case, such measures required very careful handling. However, the need for summary prosecution was generally regarded as being of importance. The experiences of one delegation with regard to the setting up of statistics on food control on a national basis were explained to the Committee as a further possibility to improve the efficiency of food control services.

#### General Discussion

46. The question of nutritional labelling was also brought up. It was noted that the Codex Committee on Food Labelling was presently discussing this matter and it was agreed to await their findings and consider these in the light of the requirements of the Region.

47. The need to include legal training as an integral part of the curriculum of food inspectors was stressed in order to strengthen their position vis-à-vis possible offenders.

48. The Committee urged that governments continue to bring their legislation in line with the Model Food Law. It was agreed to request the governments of the countries in the Region to inform each other of their food legislation, including plans for modification thereof.

#### STRENGTHENING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

49. The meeting had before it the document CX/ASIA 78/5. The Secretariat introduced the paper explaining that the field of quality and safety of food covered a number of activities of FAO and WHO both separately and jointly. Many FAO projects served several purposes and thus a food production project might have a large component dealing with quality aspects. The meeting was informed that the information given on this item of the agenda was restricted to such projects only which were mainly directed to food legislation, food standards and other regulations and their enforcement.

50. Many governments had in recent years been seeking FAO's assistance in food control for a number of reasons the most important being the need to protect the consumers against health hazards and commercial fraud and at the same time to develop food industry and promote trade. Basically, assistance covered:

- (i) assistance in drafting food legislation, including standards;
- (ii) assistance in establishing or strengthening the infrastructure necessary to implement these regulations; and
- (iii) training of technical staff.

51. The mechanism for technical assistance was described briefly including the sources of funds for such assistance. It was pointed out that it would not be possible for a UN agency to provide such assistance unless the subject of food quality control received a high priority within the national government. It was also stressed that the success of a technical assistance project was directly related to the national commitment in this area. The Committee's attention was drawn to the various projects now in operation within the Region and given in the list.

52. The delegation of India suggested that greater priority should be given to the specific problems related to the regional trade and asked FAO and Codex to consider a strategy in food standards which would promote such trade. In the first instance, attention should be given to those food products of importance moving in trade within the Region. Secondly, attention should be given to those foods of importance moving in trade from or into the Region, on a global basis. An attempt should be made to identify specific problems concerning exports and imports. Where appropriate, regional or world-wide standards should be elaborated.

53. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the thinking of the Indian delegation was in line with proposals being put forward in the working paper under item 9 of the agenda where world-wide and regional standards for certain commodities were being suggested for consideration. It would be the task of this Coordinating Committee to determine its own needs and priorities in the field of food standards, both as regards regional and world-wide standards.

54. In the field of technical assistance, it was proposed that the countries of the Region should strengthen their assistance to each other e.g. regarding the supply of scientific equipment and the transfer of know-how and experience. This implied that experts should be employed from within the Region, regional institutes made use of, and the scientific equipment manufactured within the countries of the Region should be used as far as possible. It was further suggested that UNIDO, which was also doing very useful work in transfer of technology, could be involved to strengthen capabilities of countries in the Region to manufacture scientific equipment.

55. The delegation of Thailand offered the facilities available at the Institute for Food Research and Product Development (IFRPD) of the Khasetsart University and the Institute of Nutrition of the Mahidol University in Bangkok to the Member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as training and research centres for the Region, pointing out that these institutes might well serve as sub-centres to the international training centre in Mysore. The delegations of Japan, Philippines and India offered the facilities available in their respective countries for the training of food analysts and inspectors, giving detailed descriptions of the facilities available. India also offered the facilities for training in the export inspection field.

56. The representative of IOCU referred particularly to the need for training of food inspectors which should receive the highest priority. This training should be organized in a way that the problems of rural areas were equally covered so that the benefits of a food control system were also derived by the rural population.

57. The Committee was also informed that the principles of exchange of knowledge and use of national institutions and equipment within the Region were well established today in the UN system as a part of the overall programme for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). The success of this programme would depend on the cooperation amongst the countries of the Region. A continuous effort would have to be made to find out areas where such cooperation would be most significant and useful. On the part of FAO, the Committee was assured that all steps would be taken to strengthen TCDC.

58. As regards the use of experts from developing countries, the Committee was assured that this was being done. However, sometimes developing countries themselves did not accept an expert from another developing country and this was obviously beyond the control of FAO. It was the intent of FAO to find the best person for the job regardless where he or she came from. The Committee agreed in general that where two equally qualified experts were available, preference should be given to the one from a developing country.

59. Reviewing the training activities within the Region, the Committee was further informed that the Government of Libya had provided funds for a FAO/Libya Regional Training Centre for Food and Nutrition. This Training Centre would be engaged in running different types of training courses in the Arabic language covering various aspects of food and nutrition. These courses would also include those on food inspection and food analysis. The Centre had already received support from several countries of the Near East Region of FAO. The Committee was also informed that the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Lahore, was holding a 4 weeks training course on mycotoxins in February 1978. It was open to Member countries of the Region to sponsor fellowships for training if required.

60. The Committee agreed that FAO and WHO should continue to give a high priority to assisting developing countries in strengthening their food control infrastructure and that training programmes should receive special emphasis.

DRAFT CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD

61. The Committee reviewed the Draft Code of Ethics for the International Trade in Food (document CX/GEN 77/1), taking into account written comments which had been received from Kuwait and Indonesia. The Secretariat introduced the Draft Code and explained the background to its development. It was noted that, on the basis of a proposal which had been submitted jointly by FAO and WHO in a document prepared for the UN Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), the Conference had recommended the development of such a code by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Commission, at its 10th Session, had decided to refer this subject to the Codex Committee on General Principles, which held its 5th Session in Paris in January 1976. The Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Asia, held in Bangkok in December 1975, had also formulated certain views concerning the concept behind the proposed Code of Ethics.

62. The basic idea behind the Code was to help those countries which, because of the absence or inadequacy of national food legislation and food control facilities, did not have the capability of protecting their consumers against the dumping of foods which might be hazardous to health or generally "sub-standard". The help would take the form of seeking to persuade exporting countries to use their control facilities to ensure that such foods were not exported.

63. The Codex Committee on General Principles was of the opinion that the only really satisfactory way of ensuring proper consumer protection would be for the developing countries concerned to establish or up-date their food laws and regulations and to set up or strengthen their food control facilities. Because of the time required to achieve this, however, the Codex Committee on General Principles considered that the proposal to establish a Code of Ethics should be looked upon as an interim measure of protection, pending the establishment of adequate food control facilities in countries at present lacking them. The overwhelming view in that Committee was that the Code should be proceeded with, even if some difficulties were foreseen and no agreement had been reached on the content of such a Code or on the form it should take. The Commission, at its 11th Session in April 1976, agreed that the development of the Code should be proceeded with.

64. The Draft Code had been drawn up with the aid of a consultant and with funds kindly provided by UNEP. Copies of the Draft Code had been placed before the Executive Committee at its 23rd Session held in Geneva in July 1977. The Executive Committee noted that it had not been called on to make in-depth comments on the Draft Code at this time. The Executive Committee took note of the Draft Code with great interest. Some members of the Executive Committee stressed the particular importance of a Code for developing countries.

65. In accordance with the instructions of the Executive Committee, the Draft Code had received the widest distribution with CL 1977/26, July 1977. The Executive Committee also stressed the importance of drawing the attention of governments to the fact that the Draft Code would be the subject of deliberations at the Codex Committee on General Principles at its next session. As had been suggested at the last session of the Codex Committee on General Principles and accepted by the Commission at its 11th Session, the first two days of the next session of the General Principles Committee would be devoted to the consideration of the Draft Code by a working party. The Executive Committee drew the particular attention of developing countries to the importance of being represented in the discussions of the working party.

66. This Committee fully supported the thinking behind the Code and the aims it sought to achieve, even if, at this stage, all the details of how the Code might be adopted and enforced had not yet been worked out. The Draft Code was at a very early stage of consideration in the Codex system and, as had been mentioned at the last session of the General Principles Committee, some difficulties would probably arise, but they would have to be dealt with in due course.

67. Although there were some countries that had legislation governing food exports, there were many countries which did not have such legislation or, if they have it, it related only to certain food products. The aim was, therefore, to seek a moral commitment from governments and those engaged in the international trade in food to support the Code.

68. The delegation of Kuwait referred to the options on proposals contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the chapter entitled "Issues in Elaborating a Code" in the introduction to the Code and indicated that Kuwait would be in favour of the Code being mandatory, specific and international, i.e. maximum regulation.

69. The Committee considered a written comment which had been submitted by Indonesia concerning sub-articles 2.2, 2.3 and 7(c) of the Code which suggested the addition of the word "manufacturer" to "exporters" and "importers", on the grounds that manufacturers were responsible for the food they produced. The Committee drew attention to the fact that the Code dealt only with international trade in food. Therefore, exporters and importers alone had figured in the Code. To add "manufacturers" would broaden the scope of the Code and, in any event, such manufacturers who exported would be covered by the reference in the Code to the term "exporters".

70. The delegation of India drew attention to a problem which sub-section 4.2(c) of the Draft Code would present for India in the light of existing Indian legislation. The provision prescribed that no food should be in international trade which is adulterated. The word "adulteration" had been defined in very rigid terms in Indian food law. It was a legal definition and went beyond the mere physical adulteration. On the other hand, the definition of "adulterated" in the Model Food Law was in very general terms. Under the Model Food Law, a product would be considered to be adulterated "if any prescribed substance or class of substance is present therein or had been added thereto or extracted or omitted therefrom".

71. During the discussions, it was suggested that one way of overcoming the difficulties resulting from the rigidity of the definition of "adulterated" in the Indian Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and perhaps in the laws of some other countries as well would be to delete the provision in the Code. In this connection, it was also stated that the other provisions of sub-article 4.2 covered the essential elements of adulteration. Attention was further drawn to the fact that sub-article 6.1 of the Draft Code would provide full safeguards to the importing country. The Committee agreed to bring this matter to the attention of the Codex Committee on General Principles for consideration of how best to overcome the problem.

72. The delegation of Kuwait pointed out that certain countries re-exported food while still on the high seas without taking physical delivery of the product. How the Code would apply in such cases would need to be looked at. The Committee agreed that Codex Committee on General Principles might like to review Article 7 of the Code.

73. The Committee discussed the written comment of Indonesia concerning sub-article 5.6 "Microbiological Contaminants". India too made similar observation. The Committee was informed that the existing text of sub-article 5.6 was in line with that recommended by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene where there had been discussions concerning how best to formulate this sort of provision. The Committee agreed that the intent of the proposed amendment of Indonesia was already provided for in the existing text.

74. Concerning sub-article 5.9 "Food for Infants, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups" the delegation of Thailand drew attention to the statement which it had made at the 11th Session of the Commission concerning the non-acceptability to Thailand of the Recommended Codex Standards for (a) Infant Formula, and (b) Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Children. The delegation of Thailand maintained the position, as expressed in paragraphs 342 and 349 of the Report of the Eleventh Session of the Commission.

75. Regarding sub-article 5.10 "Nutritional Aspects" the observer from ISDI doubted the wisdom of having what, in his view, was a vague general statement of this kind. He thought that this could present difficulties, more especially as the whole question of nutritional labelling at the international level had still to be considered further.

76. The Committee agreed with the written comment of Indonesia that there should be a sub-article on "Packaging" included in the Draft Code. The Committee agreed to include the thought contained in the following text which had been suggested by Indonesia, the wording of which would be the basis for further consideration:

"Food should be packed in containers which will safeguard the hygienic and other qualities of the food. The containers, including packaging materials, should be made only of substances which are safe and suitable for their intended uses".

77. The Committee did not think it necessary to include a sub-article on "Food Registration" as had been suggested in written comments by Indonesia.

78. The delegation of India drew attention to certain serious misgivings which it had about Article 9 "Exchange of Information" where it was recommended (a) that importing countries should compile and distribute to interested parties lists of foods offered for import which were denied entry because of non-compliance with national legislation or the provisions of this Code, and (b) that the lists should contain such information as the name of the food product, quantity involved, country of origin, manufacturer and shipper, date and reason for rejection.

79. The delegation of India considered that the provisions of this recommendation were open to being used unfairly, by way of unjustified and unfair publicity on matters which could more appropriately and in accordance with the generally accepted practice, be settled bilaterally.

80. The delegation further indicated that if these provisions were adhered to this could result in a set back to the basic aims of the Code, which was not intended. It further considered that for a provision of this kind to be worthwhile and fair, there should be (a) internationally accepted standards for the food commodities concerned and not different national standards, and (b) the article should apply only to gross violations, as otherwise there would be unfair publicity, which could even affect bilateral relations.

81. Mention was made of the fact that the Food and Drug Administration of the USA published certain details of shipments which infringed US import regulations. In this connection, it was also mentioned that the USA appeared to be the only country which did this.

82. The representative of IOCU thought that the difficulty might be overcome by giving consideration to the revision of the text of this provision (Article 9).

83. The Committee agreed that the foregoing comments on Article 9 should be brought to the particular attention of the Codex Committee on General Principles. It further reiterated that it found the Code to be generally acceptable. However, the member governments would be free to make further specific comments on the document.

#### DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

84. The Committee had before it a Conference Room Document entitled "The Needs of Asia in the Field of Food Regulations including Food Standards and Suggested Programme of Work for the Coordinating Committee for Asia taking into consideration the work of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission" (CX/ASIA 78/8). This document had been prepared by a consultant who had been engaged by FAO (Dr. Daya Nand, India) and had been drawn up in consultation with officers of FAO concerned with Codex work and with food control.

85. The Committee also had before it an attachment to the above-mentioned document, also prepared by the consultant. The attachment briefly reviewed the situation concerning food legislation and implementation in a country of the Region that imported almost all its food supplies - Kuwait.

86. The consultant, in presenting the paper, referred to its main features. Attention was drawn to the needs for increased emphasis on ensuring adequate food control infrastructure, in the interest of protecting the consumer generally, in the interest of building up a sound food industry and in the interest of promoting exports.

87. The paper was divided in sections dealing with problems of the Region related to food quality, the need for and advantage to be derived from national action on food control, the elements of an effective food control system, the need for reviewing and up-dating food laws and regulations and the role of and need for training facilities.

88. The paper also contained recommendations concerning priorities and the role of the Coordinating Committee for Asia. The paper further included recommendations as to standards for:

- (i) products which are produced in the Region and which have a world market;
- (ii) products which are produced in the Region and which have importance essentially for intra-regional trade; and
- (iii) products of national importance which may have regional or perhaps international market potential in the future.

89. During the course of the discussions, attention was directed, once again, to the small attendance at the Session. It was pointed out that many Codex Committees did not have a large attendance at the start, but that gradually participation increased when the work got under way and when countries noted that matters of interest to them were being discussed. In fact the Committee was making a good start. Nevertheless, a strong effort should be made to find ways and means of stimulating greater attendance.

90. The suggestion was made that as the Asian Region was very vast, those countries interested in particular topics could get together on a sub-regional basis to discuss their needs and problems relating to the work of the Committee. Such meetings could be arranged by the countries concerned, if they so wished and did not need sponsorship by FAO/WHO.

91. The Committee re-emphasized that development of food control infrastructure should have the highest priority because, by and large, it was generally inadequate throughout the Region as was also the development of the food industry. It was important to find out why food control infrastructure still remained inadequate and how the countries of the Region could best be helped to improve this situation. The Committee would be the forum for discussing these problems.

92. The Committee strongly endorsed a suggestion that FAO should organize a workshop/seminar in the Region to discuss the difficulties and the specific needs of the countries of the Region in food control infrastructure, in order to make recommendations for action at the national or regional level amongst others in the following areas:

- (a) training;
- (b) development of laboratories; and
- (c) transfer of technology.

It was agreed that if such a workshop/seminar could be arranged to be held immediately prior to the next session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, this could result in much better attendance at the next session of the Committee.

93. In discussing the role of the Coordinating Committee, the Committee agreed with the recommendation in the paper that it should have a fact finding role. The Committee should be kept informed of developments in the Region concerning food laws and food control infrastructure, the state of the food industry and trade, important food items of commercial interest in the Region, and the need for international or regional standards. In this connection again countries of the Region might wish to get together at a sub-regional or group of countries level outside the range of Codex meetings. The Committee also agreed that harmonization of food standards, where there was a need and keeping the cost/benefit ratio in mind, would be one of its main activities.

94. The Committee re-emphasized the value of the Model Food Law as a guide for all countries. The Committee agreed that there was no need at this stage to develop a model set of regulations. It urged all the countries of the Region to make the fullest use of the Codex recommendations in the development of their national regulations. These recommendations covered many topics from safety of food additives to codes of hygienic practice for different foods.

95. The Committee agreed with the recommendations in the paper that an important part of its role would be to influence the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the global level. It was pointed out that the Committees' ability to influence the work of the Commission would be related to the extent to which the countries of the Region participated actively in the work of the Committee, of the Commission and, indeed, of the Programme as a whole.

96. As regards priorities for future work, the Committee agreed as under:
- (i) First priority to the strengthening of national food control infrastructure. In this connection, it was also noted that FAO was preparing a food inspectors manual.
  - (ii) Review of the programme of work and priorities of the Commission to determine the extent to which they were of importance to the Asian Region.
  - (iii) Review of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and its working procedures for the development of standards, in order to see, if they could be improved in the interest of, amongst other things, reducing the period of time required for the development of recommended Codex standards.
97. For both reviews mentioned above the Committee requested the governments of countries of the Region which thought that there was a need for any amendments or changes, to send to the Codex Secretariat specific proposals, together with supporting reasons for consideration by the Committee.

#### AGENDA FOR NEXT SESSION

98. The Committee agreed that the following items should appear on the agenda for next session:
- (i) Strengthening the Infrastructure for National Food Control Systems.
  - (ii) Review of Programme of Work and Priorities of the Commission.
  - (iii) Review of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and its working procedures for the development of standards.
  - (iv) Problems which may be encountered in the meeting of Codex Standards.
  - (v) Problems encountered in meeting the requirements for tin content in some Codex Standards, for certain canned fruit juices and canned fruits and vegetables (Paper to be prepared by the delegation of India).
  - (vi) Consideration of specific labelling provisions for processed meat products with regard to Islamic religious requirements (Paper to be prepared by the delegation of Malaysia).
99. Several commodities of particular interest to countries in the Region were identified:
- (i) Cashew Kernels - The Committee held the view that a world-wide standard for cashew kernels should be elaborated. The Committee was informed that during the course of the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa, the delegation of Kenya had indicated its willingness to host a meeting in order to determine whether there was a case for the standardization of certain products, including cashew nuts (see ALINORM 78/28, para 34). Interested countries should therefore contact the delegation of Kenya to expedite the matter. (Mr. J.C. Obel, Chief Public Health Officer, Ministry of Health - P.O. Box 30016, Nairobi, Kenya).
  - (ii) Canned Mango Slices - The Committee noted the action taken at the 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (May 1977), where it was decided to request the delegation of Mexico to prepare for the next session of the Committee a justification paper for the development of a standard for canned mangoes. The Committee was informed that the delegation of Mexico had asked for information from governments on this product. The delegation of India indicated that it would be willing to draw up a standard for canned mangoes in the Codex format for submission to the Processed Fruits and Vegetables Committee in collaboration with Mexico and also to submit justification data for the preparation of the standard. It might then be possible for the Processed Fruits and Vegetables Committee to start work immediately on the standard. The Committee agreed with this proposal.

- (iii) Mango Juice and Mango Nectar - The Committee agreed that world-wide standards be prepared for mango juice and mango nectar. The delegation of India offered to prepare a paper for the next session of the Fruit Juices Committee outlining the need for the elaboration of standards for mango juice and mango nectar. The Committee concurred with this proposal. The delegation of India further undertook to prepare drafts of the two standards for consideration by the Fruit Juices Committee at its next session.
- (iv) Mango Chutney - The Committee noted that the United Kingdom and India were the largest producers of mango chutney in the world and recommended that the delegation of India should approach the United Kingdom to enquire about its views on the possible elaboration of a standard for the product.
- (v) Tropical Fruit Juices - The Committee agreed that world-wide standards could be developed for certain tropical fruit juices other than mango juice. The delegation of Malaysia agreed to prepare for consideration by the next session of the Committee on Fruit Juices a list of tropical fruit juices, other than mango juice, which in its view merited such standardization together with supporting data showing the need for such standards and the drafts of the standards (see Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission).
- (vi) Pickles in Oil or Vinegar - The Committee agreed that world-wide standards should be prepared for pickles in oil. India agreed to prepare a justification paper and a draft of a standard for consideration by the next session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables. It was not thought necessary to develop standards for pickles in vinegar.
- (vii) Soy Sauce - The Committee was informed by the delegations of two important producing countries, namely Thailand and Japan, that in their view - although soy sauce was of recognized economical importance in international trade - a standardization of this product was for the time being not feasible.  
It was noted that this traditional product varied considerably in composition even within the different countries. The Committee agreed that at this stage no standard for soy sauce should be developed.
- (viii) Dehydrated Onions and Garlic - The Committee considered the possible elaboration of a standard for dehydrated onions and garlic. It noted that ISO was preparing standards for those products and decided to await these recommendations.
- (ix) Wheat flour - The need for the elaboration of world-wide international standards for wheat flour was discussed at some length. The majority of the delegations expressed themselves in favour of such work being undertaken although some difficulties were foreseen. It was agreed that this matter should be brought to the attention of the Commission.
- (x) Legumes - The Committee was of the opinion that for the present there was no need for standards for legumes.
- (xi) Fish Pastes - There was some deliberation on the possible need for a standard for fish pastes. It was thought that these were traditional products manufactured in the main for local consumption and that standardization was not feasible.
- (xii) Edible Tapioca Products - The Committee reviewed the need of the Region for standards of tapioca flour, tapioca starch, tapioca chips and tapioca sago. The Committee agreed that there was no need for standards at this stage in the Region.

- (xiii) Spices and Condiments - The Committee agreed to request the Commission to consider the possibility of ISO standards on spices and condiments to be adopted by the Commission.
- (xiv) Products with Regional or International Market Potential - A number of products i.e. fermented soya products were reviewed with regard to their potential for regional or international markets. It was agreed that in the main these products were manufactured in a traditional manner and thus standardization did not seem called for at this stage.

100. The observer from the International Organization of Consumers Union (IOCU) expressed the view that the Committee should, in identifying areas for priorities, give special attention to contamination, adulteration, lowering of nutrient content, etc. where there could be hazards to health. Some priority areas were suggested by the observer from IOCU, as follows:

- (i) High protein foods and beverages based either on vegetable protein concentrates or isolates (these are being developed in Asia) in view of the high degree of protein malnutrition.
- (ii) Convenience foods, e.g. prepared foods and food mixes such as mixes from cereals and legumes, and composite flours.
- (iii) Frozen foods - standards for bacterial contamination; date marking, particularly expiry date.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

101. The Committee endorsed the suggestion in the paper before it (CX/ASIA 78/8, paras 74-75) concerning the desirability of an exchange of scientists and technologists engaged in different aspects of food control and food standards. The Committee noted the suggestion in the paper that the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) might be able to make arrangements for study tours of 2-3 weeks to various countries in the Region with the assistance of Local Productivity Councils which might bear the local costs. The Committee recommended that countries interested in the above should communicate with the APO.

102. The paper indicated that one of the major constraints to the development of food processing institutions in the Region was the high cost of packaging and the need for alternative cheaper packaging. The Committee held the view that the quality of food on the market would generally benefit by being packaged rather than being sold loose. It recommended that interested countries request the specialized UN agencies to provide technical assistance in this area.

103. During discussions a further reference was made to the small attendance at the present session and the limited participation of Asian countries generally at Codex Committee Sessions. It was suggested that there would be greater attendance at Codex sessions if (a) Codex Committees were rotated as regards their venue, and (b) the Codex Alimentarius Commission were to meet outside of Rome or Geneva and for example in FAO Regional Headquarters. The Secretariat referred to certain financial and organizational difficulties involved.

#### NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR

104. The Secretariat explained to the Committee the Rules governing the appointment of the Coordinator as laid down in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CX/ASIA 78/7). The present Coordinator of the Committee, Dr. K.O. Leong, informed the Committee that because of personal commitments he was not in a position to present himself for a second term of office.

105. The delegation of Malaysia seconded by the delegation of India proposed that Mr. Arsenio M. Regala (Philippines) be appointed as Coordinator to serve from the end of the Twelfth Session to the end of the Thirteenth Session of the Commission as Coordinator for Asia. The delegations present unanimously supported this proposal.

106. In accepting the nomination Mr. Regala expressed the hope that the Region would develop a strong cooperative feeling in relation to solving common problems in the field of food legislation and food control.

OTHER BUSINESS

107. A number of delegations drew attention to the late receipt of documents for Codex sessions. The Secretariat explained some of the difficulties and undertook to do its best to expedite the despatch of the papers.

DATE AND PLACE OF 2ND SESSION OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

108. The Committee was informed that the next session, in all probability, would take place early in 1979. The exact dates and place of venue would be discussed at the forthcoming 12th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

VOTE OF THANKS TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

109. The Committee wished to express to the Government of India its sincere appreciation for having kindly provided host facilities for the Session, for the excellence of its arrangements for the Session and for the very generous hospitality afforded to the delegates during the course of the Session.

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS  
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APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY SHRI RAJ NARAIN, MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the historic city of Delhi on behalf of the Government of India. It is indeed a happy augury that we have amidst us delegates from the neighbouring countries who have common interests in matters relating to food - what we consume, what we import and what we export, what kind of quality control we exercise and how we seek to prevent adulteration.

The Coordinating Committee for Asia has been set up as a result of the persuasive efforts of the delegations present at the Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings held in 1972 and 1974, the Indian delegation having played its modest role in this effort.

The Government of India was very happy, when the Directors-General of FAO and WHO agreed that this session would be held in New Delhi. We attach special significance to this meeting as it will be dealing with matters which have a very important bearing on health, namely, food legislation, food control services and infrastructure needed to implement the regulations.

Adulteration of foods has assumed serious proportions in the recent past and has become a great menace to the health of the people. Shortages and high prices tend to accentuate the problem. All this calls for concerted and determined efforts on the part of Governments to check the evil.

Development of bigger cities and fast modes of transport has thrown up two new situations - (i) need for wider sources of supply and (ii) better methods of food preservation. In this context the possibility of adulteration has increased significantly. The need for protecting the consumers against the menace is obvious. Governments must come to the rescue of the consumers and protect their health. I am happy that various countries have enacted appropriate food legislations for this purpose.

The protection of the consumer against food adulteration can be made possible not merely through legislation but also by educating him about the composition of nutritional components of the food he is purchasing so that he can buy a product which suits his needs, taste and pocket. It is, however, not enough that a country should protect only its own citizens against any risks on account of using contaminated foods produced in domestic markets or brought into the country through imports. In these days of international living, it is equally essential that we must ensure that products exported to other countries do not carry any risks to the health of the importing nations.

The need to disallow imports or exports of adulterated, substandard or other undesirable food is of particular relevance to the developing countries, in which the nutritional levels are low. It is thus important that developing countries should update their food laws. They should also have at their disposal the machinery to enforce these laws.

Many countries in the Asian Region export some important items of primary foods and even processed foods, such as meat products, nuts, plantation products like tea, coffee and other commodities to many of the advanced countries. It is likely that some of the food standards recommended by the Commission may not be attainable by the developing countries. The problems of the Asian countries, in which food habits are very divergent, may not be the same as in the Western countries. I am sure the developed countries will understand and appreciate this situation in its proper perspective.

The Government of India has made it compulsory that all foods for export should be inspected by a government agency before shipment so that every consignment carries a certified product and gives surety of its quality to the importing countries. The necessity for the maintenance of an efficient system of supervision and control of public food supply for domestic consumption is also well recognised by our Government. We are determined to wipe out this social evil of food adulteration at the earliest. In this task no effort will be spared.

The Government of India has already enacted a legislation called "Prevention of Food Adulteration Act", which takes care of the safety of foods for human consumption. This law has been amended recently, providing for very stringent and deterrent punishment against adulterators.

In order to enforce the Act more vigorously, the Government has given its greatest attention to the important requirements of the States who are the implementing agencies and have provided financial assistance for the development of food laboratories. The Government proposes to allocate more funds in the next Plan for developing the existing laboratory facilities for food analysis in addition to the establishment of Food and Drugs laboratories at suitable locations. However, keeping in view the vastness of the country, it may take us some time before we can fully achieve our objective of providing one food laboratory in every district. I find from the agenda that your Conference will discuss the ways and means whereby the developing countries can be assisted in the development of their resources for providing an effective infrastructure in food control services. While we do not lack technical know-how on the subject which can be lent to the other countries in the Region or elsewhere, whenever required, there is need for sophisticated instruments which have to be initially imported from the developed countries.

I am happy to learn that the FAO and UNEP have established a training centre at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, where analysts from different Asian or other developing countries are already undergoing a six months' training course on "Food Contamination Monitoring Programme". We are pledged to undertake such a monitoring and surveillance programme in respect of the food contaminants in our country in a planned and phased manner, for which the necessary technical laboratory facilities are being augmented. International organizations can assist the developing countries in this effort. The monitoring and survey of such contaminants like pesticides, heavy metals, mycotoxins, shall create the necessary data for proper surveillance which will provide safety to a nation against any health hazards.

Our Government is also considering for organization of a training course for Food Inspectors. It is designed to change the objective and the functions of the Food Inspectors from policing to education. A pilot project has already been started in Delhi. A Food Inspector is now given intensive technical training in different topics of food technology so that he is not considered as an alien to the food trade but a friend of the industry. There may be need to start similar training courses at international level.

The Food legislation in India is a very comprehensive and embodies all the principles contained in the "Model Food Law" recommended by FAO/WHO.

The reports of the Commission and the Regional Committees indicate thin attendance of the countries in the Region. The countries in the Region could not take active part in good numbers at the Commission's meetings since they are held at far off places, viz. at Geneva or Rome. The Commission may consider holding of such meetings at places within a region or alternatively like the WHO, which arranges similar seminars, conferences or workshops in the various regions or at Geneva; the travelling charges may be defrayed to the delegates. This will encourage better and active participation of the developing countries. I hope this Conference will give serious thought to these problems and create awareness amongst the developing countries for better and effective food legislation and food control services.

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to welcome you to this important conference and be in your midst today. I wish you all success in your deliberations and a very pleasant stay in Delhi.