

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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

Agenda Item 9

**CX/LAC 06/15/11
October 2006**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

15th Session

Mar del Plata, Argentina, 13-17 November 2006

OTHER ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION

This document is intended to identify a set of issues of special interest to the Region which have been suggested by CCLAC Members in order to facilitate the exchange of viewpoints and/or to develop a regional position.

RISK ANALYSIS PRINCIPLES FOR APPLICATION BY GOVERNMENTS

1. At the 14th Session of the CCLAC, the Members of the Committee – except one Member State – expressed their opposition to the development of a text on Risk Analysis for Governments. The main reason for this position was that Codex had enough documents to provide guidance to countries, even though they might not be directly aimed at governments, and also that FAO/WHO Manuals were much more practical to guide governments. They also highlighted their disagreement with the establishment of a “precautionary principle”, as they understood that “precaution” should be considered a qualified exception.
2. At its 23rd Session, the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) agreed to create a working group with an open agenda, which would not have to work on a specific text in order to discuss basic questions.
3. The document developed on that occasion is based on the document on Risk Analysis Principles for Codex. Although the document discusses Risk Analysis with its three stages, two new sections have been included: one on the “implementation of decisions” and another on the “review of decisions”.
4. Taking into account the background of the CCLAC position in this regard, it would be important for CCLAC Members to state their position on this issue.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD

5. At the 14th Session of the CCLAC, the Members of the Region did not support the revision of the current Code of Ethics.
6. As a matter of fact, many Members stated that as from the establishment of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization, the Principles of the Code were contained in these Agreements, and the rest, in other Codex documents.
7. However, at the 22nd Session of the CCGP, it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) to see whether the issues addressed in the Code were contained in other existing Codex documents.

8. In order to address this question, the CCFICS agreed to create an electronic working group to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at the 15th Session of the Committee. This paper will address the following aspects:

- Review of the terms of reference of the CCFICS to decide whether the request by the CCGP is included in its terms of reference.
- Consideration of CCFICS existing texts and identification of gaps where further guidance is needed.
- Determination of whether existing CCFICS texts respond to the problems facing countries with insufficient capacity for imported food control; indication of whether other organizations or agencies would be better qualified to address the issue.
- Identification of other relevant related matters.

9. Given the importance of this issue for CCLAC Members, the Region could exchange information and opinions in order to define its position on the matter.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION (ISO) AND OVERLAP OF WORK WITH CODEX

10. The overlap of activities between Codex and ISO has been a concern of the countries of the Region as such duplication of tasks is neither productive nor beneficial; rather, it can sometimes lead to misunderstanding or affect governments when defining issues in Codex Alimentarius.

11. Taking into account the information provided by some CCLAC Members on the new work the ISO might undertake in connection with fisheries and fishery products, CCLAC Members may wish to refer to this issue.

TRUST FUND

12. The CCLAC has been a staunch supporter of the creation of the FAO/WHO Trust Fund as developing countries have consistently expressed the need for financial support to attend Codex meetings.

13. Indeed, the work developed by the Trust Fund since its creation in 2003 has showed that providing the possibility to participate in Codex meetings helps many developing and least developed countries to become more involved in Codex work; and therefore, more commitment to the development of Codex work is expected from them.

14. However, considering the interest of this issue to CCLAC countries, it may be important to review the document “FAO/WHO Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex”, prepared by the WHO Trust Fund Secretariat in order to evaluate the distribution of funds, particularly those for CCLAC countries, so as to express our views or make suggestions.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

15. At the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, a Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance was created, which will be chaired by Korea. At several sessions of the Commission, CCLAC Members expressed their concern over the development of the work that this new task force might undertake. As a result, considering the documents previously circulated and the terms of reference that the CAC established for this Task Force, it may be appropriate for CCLAC countries to comment on the scope the future work should have or CCLAC countries’ needs in order to adequately respond to future requests for data generation or other relevant issues.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF CODEX COMMITTEES

16. At the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, several Codex Alimentarius Committees were relocated.

17. The Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, the division of which was agreed at the 28th Session of the CAC (2005), was divided into the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods, which is still chaired by the Netherlands, and the Codex Committee on Food Additives, which will be chaired by China.

18. The Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, which used to be chaired by the Netherlands, will now be chaired by China.

19. Further, the new Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance will be chaired by Korea.

20. As stated at the last session of the Commission, this location reorientation of Committees reveals an imbalance in the geographic distribution of Committees, which may affect some regions.

21. Although it is true that the distribution of Committees does not depend on Codex as much as on the will of its Members to chair them, Members may wish to reflect on this.

OTHER ISSUES OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

22. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean may decide whether any of the issues that may be raised under item Other Business and Future Work is so important that the regional position may be considered necessary to be reported.