

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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ALINORM 81/3

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Fourteenth Session, Geneva, 29 June-10 July 1981

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF
THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Geneva, WHO, 13-17 October 1980

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee held its Twenty-Seventh Session at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, from 13-17 October 1980. The Executive Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Professor Dr. D. Eckert (Federal Republic of Germany) and in the presence of its three Vice-Chairmen, Mr. D.A. Akoh (Nigeria), Mr. E.F. Kimbrell (USA) and Dr. E.R. Mendez (Mexico). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present: for Africa, Mr. J.C. Obel, from Kenya; for Asia, Mr. Dong-bai Lee, from the Republic of Korea; for Europe, Dr. A.M. Zaitsev, from the USSR; for Latin America, Ing. J. Piazzi, from Argentina; from North America, Dr. J. McGowan, from Canada; for the South-West Pacific, Ms. S.P. Cottrell, from New Zealand. The Coordinator for Africa, Dr. T. N'Doye (Senegal) and the Coordinator for Europe, Professor Dr. H. Woidich (Austria) were present. Apologies for absence were received from the Coordinator for Asia, Dr. D.S. Chadha (India) and the Coordinator for Latin America, Dr. A.M. Dovat (Uruguay).

OPENING ADDRESS

2. The Twenty-Seventh Session of the Executive Committee was opened by Dr. D. Tejada-de-Rivero, Assistant Director-General, WHO, on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. Dr. Tejada-de-Rivero drew attention to the interest shown by Member Governments in the reorientation of the Commission's work to meet, to a greater extent, the needs of developing countries. In particular he emphasized the new areas of work concerning cereals, vegetable proteins and the activities of the Regional Coordinating Committees for Africa, Asia and Latin America. Dr. Tejada-de-Rivero stated that WHO and FAO were interested to note that the Executive Committee would, during the Session, be considering ways to streamline the procedures for the elaboration of standards with a view to expediting the work of the Commission. Dr. Tejada-de-Rivero referred briefly to the new International Programme on Chemical Safety and to progress being made on the development of a WHO/UNICEF Code for the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. Finally, he was pleased to announce that it would be possible for the Commission to hold its Fourteenth Session in Geneva in June/July 1981.

3. The Chairman thanked the Assistant Director-General for having opened the Session and indicated the interest in hearing more during the Session about the matters referred to in the opening address. The Chairman further extended a welcome to the new staff members of WHO who would be attending the Session and participating in various aspects of the Commission's activities. He emphasized the important role of the Commission in protecting the health of the consumer and in promoting international trade.

Further, he stressed the importance which the Commission was attaching to the needs of developing countries.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Executive Committee agreed to include, as Item 18 of the Agenda, an item concerning the "Provisional Agenda for the Fourteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission" and two items under "Other Business" concerning food irradiation and the need to coordinate the standardization activities of UN Regional Economic Commissions in the food area.

PROGRESS REPORT ON ACCEPTANCES OF RECOMMENDED CODEX STANDARDS AND ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

5. The Executive Committee had before it a progress report on acceptances since the last Session of the Commission. In the report, Canada, Cyprus, El Salvador, The Gambia, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Jordan, New Zealand, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Tunisia and the USA had indicated their positions concerning several of the standards and the international maximum limits for pesticide residues. The Secretariat indicated that since the preparation of the progress report, communications on this subject had been received from Iran and the United Kingdom. The Executive Committee noted that the information received, which showed steady progress in this area, would be published in detail in the next updating of the Summary of Acceptances. The representative of the Region of Latin America indicated that Argentina had already accepted a large number of standards and that recently it had sent forward its decisions concerning the Recommended International Code for Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Inspection of Slaughter Animals; the Code of Hygienic Practice for Egg Products; the Code of Hygienic Practice for Poultry Processing; the Standard for Raisins and the Fourth and Fifth Series of Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues.

6. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee of a recent circular letter (CL) which it had issued on the topic of acceptances - CL 1980/38. The CL stressed the need for more countries to accept the standards, particularly importing countries, both developing and developed, but especially developed, in order to facilitate international trade. Several other matters were stressed in the CL, including the need for countries which were unable at this time to notify acceptance, to indicate whether products complying with the standards would be allowed entry. Also stressed, was the need for countries to reply, i.e. to indicate what use was being made of the standards or what action was being contemplated concerning them.

7. The subject of acceptances had been and would continue to be placed on the agenda of Coordinating Committees, Commodity Committees and any relevant General Subject Committees.

8. The Executive Committee was pleased to note that more acceptances had been received since the last session of the Commission and endorsed, and complimented the action of the Secretariat in its efforts to stimulate more acceptances and more responses from Member Governments. It was noted that a later agenda item entitled "Consideration of proposals of the Secretariat for the provision of better terminology than 'non-acceptance' for cases where a country, although unable to accept a Codex standard, is prepared to allow entry to products in conformity with Codex standard" was relevant. The representative of the Region of Africa indicated that Kenya was making great use of the Codex standards for its food regulations and that Kenya hoped to formally communicate information on this subject soon.

9. The Committee noted that there had been no change in the membership of the Commission since its last session - 117 Member Countries. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to make further efforts to expand the membership.

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER THERE IS A NEED TO AMEND THE RECOMMENDED
EUROPEAN REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HONEY (CAC/RS 12-1969)

10. This question had been considered by the Coordinating Committee for Europe at its last session and also by the Commission at its Thirteenth session (ALINORM 79/38, paras 302-305). In accordance with the instructions of the Commission, the Secretariat prepared a paper for the current Session of the Executive Committee, analysing the replies which had been received from Governments concerning the acceptance of this standard, and in particular, the deviations which had been notified. The Secretariat indicated that only a few countries had indicated their positions concerning this standard, and even fewer European countries. Of themselves, the deviations notified did not provide a basis for reaching a conclusion on the question of whether there was a need to amend the standard.

11. Several members of the Executive Committee reiterated a view which had been expressed by a number of delegations at the Commission's last session, namely, that as honey was traded on a worldwide basis, the standard should be revised and turned into a worldwide standard.

12. The Executive Committee decided to seek the views of all Member Countries on (i) whether there is a need to amend the standard; (ii) whether the standard should be a worldwide standard rather than a European Regional Standard; and (iii) what would be the most appropriate body to develop a revised standard on a worldwide basis. The Executive Committee also decided that the views of all the Regional Coordinating Committees should be sought on these matters, and that the replies from Member Countries and the views of the Coordinating Committees should be put before the next session of the Commission.

PROPOSED REVISION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR THE ELABORATION OF CODEX STANDARDS

13. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 80/27/4 which had been prepared by the Secretariat putting forward draft proposals for the streamlining of the procedure for the elaboration of standards, in order to expedite their development, as requested by the FAO Conference. The Executive Committee was also informed of the suggestions of the Legal Counsel of FAO to improve the texts of Step 1, the footnote to Step 5 and the subsequent procedure concerning Publication and Acceptance of Codex Standards. The proposals before the Executive Committee were that Steps 1, 2 and 3 be amalgamated, in order to permit government comments on a draft standard prior to a first consideration by the Codex Committee concerned. Step 4 would be unchanged, whilst, in the case of Step 5, it was proposed to add a footnote to permit government comments to be sought prior to consideration of the draft standard at Step 5 by the Commission, if the time factor was such as to require such action. The Commission would, nevertheless, review the draft standard at Step 5 and decide whether to advance the standard. The Secretariat proposals also sought the guidance of the Executive Committee as to whether the Commission, at Step 5, would wish to retain the explicit provision to assign the further development of the standard to a special subsidiary body established under Rule IX. 1(a) through Steps 6, 7 and 8, e.g. as was the case with the FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on Milk and Milk Products. Steps 6 and 7 were unchanged in the proposals, but Step 8 would be modified, in that it was proposed that the Commission adopt a Codex Standard instead of a Recommended Standard. The proposals further contained a suggestion that Steps 9 to 12, which in reality were not part of the Elaboration Procedure, should be reflected in a note to follow the Procedures, entitled "Subsequent Procedure concerning Publication and Acceptance of Codex Standards". Similar proposals for the amendment of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Regional Standards were contained in the Secretariat proposals.

14. The Executive Committee endorsed the need to reconsider the procedures and considered that the Secretariat proposals constituted a good basis for their revision. It was agreed that Steps 1, 2 and 3 should be amalgamated, but that the Commission should retain control over the development of standards by adding to the end of the proposed revised Step 1 "subject to approval by the Commission". The Executive Committee considered that the Legal Counsel's text referring to subsidiary bodies under Rule IX.1 (a) and Rule IX.1 (b) would have the effect of compartmentalizing the procedure by excluding subsidiary bodies under Rule IX.1 (b)2, i.e. Regional Coordinating Committees. The Executive Committee favoured a procedure whereby Coordinating Committees could propose to the Commission the elaboration of worldwide or regional Codex Standards subject to the subsequent approval of the Commission. The Executive Committee noted that Step 1 of the Regional Procedure was unchanged and that this was in accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee at its Twenty-Sixth Session to let the matter of Rule VI.3 and Step 1 of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Regional Codex Standards rest.

15. The Executive Committee agreed, in principle, with the proposed footnote to Step 5 as this would facilitate the elaboration of standards without detracting from the Commission's prerogative to examine and decide on the future of draft standards at Step 5. Sufficient experience had been gained in such action and it was necessary, due to the eighteen-month cycle of Commission sessions compared with the annual sessions of some of its subsidiary bodies. The Executive Committee thought it desirable that the Commission should retain the authority to assign at Step 5 subsequent action on a draft standard to special subsidiary bodies under Rule IX.1(a) and instructed the Secretariat to propose no changes in this respect in any subsequent redraft of the Procedures. The Executive Committee considered the proposed modification of Step 8 and agreed that the Commission should adopt a Codex Standard. The Secretariat was requested to consider whether any special arrangements might be necessary for the adoption of the Codex Standard at Step 8, such as had been made for the omission of Steps 6 and 7 in the Procedures for the Elaboration of Standards and Limits for Pesticide Residues. In general, however, the Executive Committee thought no special arrangements would be necessary.

16. The Executive Committee considered the notes to follow the Procedures as satisfactory, but requested the Secretariat to examine whether or not a Step 9 dealing with the Publication of Government Notifications of Acceptances should be included in the Procedure, rather than be part of the subsequent notes. The Executive Committee concluded that the Secretariat proposals were an improvement of the Procedures; that the Secretariat should, taking into consideration the observations of the Executive Committee, prepare a paper for the next session of the Codex Committee on General Principles putting forward, where appropriate, alternative proposals for review by Members of the Commission. The Codex Committee on General Principles should review the redrafted proposals in the light of government comments and make recommendations to the Fourteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

HYDROLIZED PROTEINS

17. The Commission, at its Thirteenth Session, had agreed that the Executive Committee should examine the question of the need for standards for hydrolyzed proteins in the light of a first draft standard to be prepared by the Swiss Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Soups and Broths in cooperation with the International Hydrolyzed Protein Council. The Executive Committee had before it a draft standard for hydrolyzed vegetable proteins as requested by the Commission, and an offer from the Swiss Authorities to host, if necessary, a Codex session in 1983 to review the standard (document CX/EXEC 80/27/6). The Executive Committee, taking into account the views of the Commission and its discussions on work priorities, requested the Secretariat to send the draft to governments for comments and to place the latter before the Commission's next session.

The Executive Committee noted with appreciation the Swiss Government's willingness to host a meeting, if necessary, in connexion with standards for hydrolised proteins and instructed the Secretariat to bring this to the attention of the Commission when compiling the observations of governments on the draft standard.

GATT AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

18. The Executive Committee had before it documents CX/EXEC 80/27/8 and Add.1 containing information on recent deliberations of the GATT Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade on the need for close collaboration between the GATT and Codex Secretariats to ensure exchange of information, avoidance of duplication, and effective liaison between the GATT Committee and the Commission. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction that close liaison had been established between the heads of the two respective Secretariats, that no duplication existed in the GATT Notification and Codex Acceptance Procedures and that the exchange of information had commenced. The Codex Secretariat was communicating details of government acceptances and information concerning newly adopted Step 9 standards. The GATT Secretariat was, under Article 10.4 of the Agreement, copying notifications from governments to the Codex Secretariat. Two such notifications had been received by the Codex Secretariat concerning, in one case, the proposed acceptance of a Codex Standard and, in the other, the revision of national regulations concerning food additives in accordance with Codex recommendations. The Chief of the FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme was receiving invitations to sessions of the GATT Committee, when Codex matters were involved. With a view to avoiding duplication of work, the Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to seek information on the obligations of Governments to notify GATT of action contemplated in accordance with the Agreement, in cases where Governments have notified the Codex Secretariat of acceptances, in order to acquaint participants at the Commission with these procedures. The Executive Committee endorsed the arrangements which had been made for interagency liaison and considered that these arrangements should strengthen and highlight the international importance of Codex Standards as a means to facilitate trade and reduce possible technical barriers occasioned by differing national regulations. The Executive Committee asked the Secretariat to look further into any questions regarding overlapping with work of other international organizations.

CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION OF A GENERAL PROVISION FOR STYLES

19. The Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, at its Fourteenth Session, drew the attention of the Commission to certain difficulties in including a general provision for styles in the standards it was elaborating and requested guidance in this matter from the Commission (ALINORM 79/20, paras 12-14). The Commission, at its Thirteenth Session, considered that this was a matter which should be examined by the Executive Committee and, if necessary, by the Codex Committee on General Principles (ALINORM 79/38, paras 386-387).

20. The Executive Committee had before it a paper prepared by the Secretariat which traced the history of this topic and which put forward certain conclusions for consideration by the Executive Committee. Some members of the Executive Committee thought that this question should be considered within the context of the broader question of whether Codex standards were generally too detailed, which was a topic listed for consideration by the Codex Committee on General Principles. In the circumstances, the Executive Committee decided to refer the matter to the next session of the Codex Committee on General Principles for consideration. The Secretariat was requested to make whatever adjustments it thought appropriate to the paper which had been presented to the Executive Committee and to ensure that the paper to be considered by the Codex Committee on General Principles was issued in good time for consideration by governments.

CONSIDERATION OF SCOPE OF WORK OF PROPOSED CODEX CONSULTANT TO BE ENGAGED TO STUDY THE NUTRITIONAL IMPACT OF THE WORK OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COMMISSION

21. The Commission, at its Thirteenth Session, had given consideration to certain proposals aimed at placing increased emphasis on nutritional considerations in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies (ALINORM 79/38, paras 81-93). The Commission had agreed with the recommendation of its Executive Committee that it would be appropriate to include a review of the nutritional aspects of the Food Standards Programme as a standing item on the agenda of sessions of the Commission. The Commission also decided that a consultant should be recruited to carry out a study of the nutritional impact of the work of its subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat now sought the views of the Executive Committee as to what should be the main points to be covered by the study to be carried out by the consultant, i.e. what should be the scope of work and possible terms of reference of the consultant. The Secretariat drew the Executive Committee's attention to the fact that the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses had concluded, at its recent session, that it would be desirable for it to look into the nutritional aspects of the work and that Committee had suggested, therefore, that its terms of reference be expanded to cover this.

22. The view was expressed that the consultant should look into the question of nutrients lost during processing and handling and their possible replacement. It was also stated that it would be necessary for the consultant to examine the work on food labelling to determine whether it was adequate, in terms of informing purchasers concerning the nutrient content of the food. The opinion was expressed that such considerations seemed to be already taken care of reasonably well in the work of the various Commodity Committees and the Committee on Food Labelling but that, nevertheless, it would be interesting and useful to see what the views of the consultant would be on these matters and what changes, if any, might, in the opinion of the consultant, be desirable in the way the Commodity Committees and the Food Labelling Committee were dealing with them.

23. The point was made that the consultant should not look at the commodities themselves for their nutrient content, because, as had been pointed out at the Commission's Thirteenth Session, many products moving in international trade were not necessarily of nutritional importance in themselves, but were of great economic importance to developing and developed countries and of significance from the standpoint of trade barriers that needed to be removed.

24. Another point made was that the consultant might look into the question of the need for standards for products of importance in the diet of the peoples of developing countries. It was noted that nutritional considerations would be an important aspect of the work of the Codex Committees on Vegetable Proteins and Cereals and Cereal Products.

25. It was stated that the consultant should review the work done and in progress, with a view to determining whether adequate consideration and attention had been, and was being given, to the safeguarding of the nutritional properties of the foods being standardised.

26. Another view expressed was that the report of the consultant should cover the impact which the standards have on the health and nutritional status of people, especially people in developing countries. In this connexion, however, the point was also made that it would be virtually impossible for the consultant to measure such impact and that rather the consultant should keep in mind the need for the development of standards for staple foods (and others) considered to be of importance in developing

countries from the nutritional point of view. In this connexion, the consultant could obtain the views of the Codex Regional Coordinators.

27. Another point that emerged during the discussions, was that it was important not to duplicate the other work of FAO or WHO in the area of nutritional surveys; that is to say, the consultant should not get into this area of activity as such, although he would be free to make use of material contained in such surveys and could even recommend further surveys and other activities for the two Organizations, if necessary.

28. The Executive Committee stressed that the consultant must be a person with extensive experience of food standards work. The consultant would not necessarily have to be a nutritionist - for example, he/she could be a food technologist - but should have a sufficiently good knowledge of the subject of nutrition to perform the task.

29. The Executive Committee agreed on the following terms of reference for the consultant:

"To examine and report on the past, present and planned work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in order to determine whether nutritional considerations are being adequately taken care of in the development of its international standards and other recommendations, bearing in mind the basic aims of the Commission's work and the new orientation of the Commission's activities; to make recommendations to the Commission concerning any changes that might be desirable in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and in any other activities of the FAO and WHO which would support, or complement, the role of the Commission in this area".

WHO/UNICEF INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MARKETING OF BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES AND RELATED PRODUCTS

30. The Assistant Director-General of WHO, Dr. D. Tejada-de-Rivero, outlined the history of the proposed Draft International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. In October 1979, WHO and UNICEF held a meeting at WHO Headquarters of representatives from all governments and organizations who were interested in the feeding of infants and young children. The meeting unanimously recommended that an international Code of marketing of infant formula and products used as breastmilk supplements should be developed by WHO/UNICEF. A first draft of the Code of Practice was considered at a series of five consultations convened by WHO and UNICEF of interested parties. A second draft was examined by the World Health Assembly in May 1980 and a Resolution was adopted by the Assembly in which the Director-General of WHO was requested to prepare a further draft Code in consultation with other interested parties for review by the WHO Executive Board and Assembly in 1981. This third draft was reviewed at two recent consultation meetings. The first consultation was attended by experts in infant feeding and by representatives of UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and industry. The second consultation was attended by representatives of 28 Member Governments of WHO. In addition, some 42 Governments had sent observations on this draft to WHO. The Assistant Director-General informed the Executive Committee that a fourth version of the Code was being currently prepared for submission to the Executive Board of WHO in January 1981 and that the draft, together with the recommendations of the Executive Board, would be considered at the World Health Assembly in May 1981. In reply to questions from several members of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee was informed that the time schedule for completion of the Code would not permit a further round of consultations with interested parties prior to its submission to the Executive Board. However, the summary reports of the last two consultations had been sent to all Members of WHO and the fourth draft would be sent out in advance of the WHO Executive Board meeting in January 1981, and the Executive Board's recommendations and the draft would be placed before the WHO Assembly.

31. The question would be put to the Assembly as to whether the Code should be a regulation under Article 21 of the WHO Constitution, or a recommendation under Article 23. The Code, if adopted as presently drafted, would result in responsibilities being placed upon Agencies of the UN System, upon Governments to implement the Code and upon Industry to ensure observation and compliance with the various measures contained in the Code. The Code was primarily concerned with breastmilk substitutes and other related products, which were not breastmilk substitutes, but which were marketed or represented as such. The Code had drawn heavily upon the work of the Codex for the development of suitable definitions for the purposes of the Code and would be promoting the need for products covered by the Code to be in conformity with the quality, nutritional, hygienic and labelling requirements of Codex Standards and Codes of Practice concerning Infant Foods. Several members of the Executive Committee drew attention to certain aspects of the Code which might be considered as being exceptional, in the field of food legislation for instance, a complete ban on the advertising of breastmilk substitutes. This proposal would call for a re-examination of more than food legislation for many countries.

32. The Executive Committee expressed its satisfaction with the expeditious manner in which WHO and UNICEF had been able to undertake so many consultations with interested parties and to bring the Code to its present state of development. The Executive Committee concurred with the view that the Code was of exceptional importance and should be viewed as a positive and major contribution towards the WHO strategy and programme of "Health for All by the Year 2000". The Executive Committee reiterated the Commission's great interest in the Code and noted the Codex Committee on Food for Special Dietary Uses' intention to review its programme of work and activities in the light of the finally adopted Code. The Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses had considered that the related products aspect of the Code would have implications for its activities concerning supplementary or complementary infant foods and would be elaborating standards for these products and others which might fall within the scope of application of the Code. In view of the great interest of developing countries in the need for inexpensive satisfactorily nutritious weaning foods based upon locally available materials, the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses had decided to review the almost ten year old PAG Guideline No.8 and to update it in the light of recent scientific information. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to place before the Commission, at its next session, the Code of Marketing for Breastmilk Substitutes in order that the implications of the Code for the Commission's work and that of subsidiary bodies such as the Codex Committees for Foods for Special Dietary Uses and Food Labelling might be considered.

33. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation to the Assistant Director-General for having kept the appropriate Codex Committees, the Executive Committee and Secretariat fully informed of developments concerning the Code and for making available to the Executive Committee, as Conference Room Documents, the full documentation concerning the Code.

DEVELOPMENT AND ELABORATION OF MICROBIOLOGICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FOOD AND CODES OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE

Microbiological Specifications

34. Dr. Koulikovskii (WHO) informed the members of the Executive Committee about the development and elaboration of microbiological criteria for food and of codes of hygienic practice. He outlined the recommendations of the last meeting of an FAO/WHO Working Group on Microbiological Specifications for Food, 1979, Geneva, and in particular, drew the attention of the members of the Committee to the need for further elaboration of microbiological criteria for some commodities. He thought that it would be desirable for the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene to review the priority list of foods in the light of the recommendations of the last Working Group on Microbiological

Specifications for Foods. He also indicated that these criteria should only be established where there was a definite need and where they could be effective and practical. He underlined that a microbiological end-product specification applied to a product at the point of importation was intended to provide greater assurance that the provisions of hygienic significance in a Code had been met.

35. These microbiological criteria also could serve as a guideline to the manufacturer at a specified point during or after processing, for the purpose of monitoring hygiene and were not intended to be used for official control purposes.

36. The Executive Committee was also informed that the next Working Group meeting on this subject would be dealing with microbiological specifications for natural mineral water and dried milk and would be held in November 1980.

Codes of Hygienic Practice

37. The WHO representative also gave the Executive Committee some details regarding the development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Processed Meat and Poultry which is to be revised according to the decision of the last session of the Codex Committee on Processed Meat and Poultry Products (September 1980, Copenhagen). He further brought to the attention of the Executive Committee that the use of codes of practice was, in particular, for the purpose of minimizing microbiological contamination of foods, and informed the Executive Committee about the suggestion of the FAO/WHO Working Group on Microbiological Specifications for Food (1979, Geneva) that a code of hygienic practice for a commodity should be developed and applied, before consideration of the need for microbiological criteria.

38. The representative of the Region of Africa stated that as far as developing countries were concerned, the elaboration of microbiological standards would be of little value unless this was complemented by measures to improve the basic environmental sanitation facilities, water quality and personal hygiene. The food items listed for developing microbiological standards were animal and dairy products, including poultry and their products, and also shrimps - in the main, foods consumed by the more prosperous people of the world population. He added that the main causes of microbiological contamination were basically bad or inadequate sanitation at the environmental level and the personal level. He considered that, in this area, the input should be first to improve basic environmental sanitation, water supply and knowledge of personal hygiene. Also, it would be desirable to improve knowledge and awareness of proper methods of food production, transportation, storage, processing, sale, cooking etc. These were, in the opinion of the representative of the Region of Africa, the priority areas.

39. The representative of WHO, referring to his introductory statement, pointed out the importance of microbiological specifications for those developing countries which were exporters, for example, of shrimp. He mentioned that this work should be of interest to importing countries also.

40. The Coordinator for Africa stated that, in his opinion, the priorities should be as follows:-

- (i) the overriding interest in good hygienic practices for certain products;
- (ii) code of practice for water;
- (iii) revision of certain codes of practice already elaborated;
- (iv) the aspects of pollution, contaminants and protection of food products (public health).

41. The Coordinator for Africa considered that the measures which should be taken were as follows:-

- (i) as proposed by the representative of WHO, the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene should be requested to review its priority list of foods in the light of the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Working Group on Microbiological Specifications for Foods;
- (ii) the Secretariat should be asked to draw up a country questionnaire and to elaborate, in collaboration with the representative of IUNS, a text to be submitted to the Executive Committee before the next session of the Commission;
- (iii) the WHO representative, in consultation with the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, should be requested to draw up a written statement on the situation and the orientation that he envisages should be given to future activities in this area;
- (iv) the Secretariat should be asked to study the possibility of instituting, on a new basis, joint UNDP/WHO/FAO activity aimed at developing countries.

42. In the absence of a written paper on this subject, which would need to be considered in advance of the session, the Executive Committee took no position on this matter, other than to recommend that it be referred to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene following which a paper could, if necessary, be placed before the next session of the Executive Committee.

PULSES AND LEGUMES

43. The Commission, at its Thirteenth Session, had requested the Secretariat to examine further the question of standards for pulses and legumes. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee of its intention to engage a consultant to prepare a paper on this matter for consideration by the Commission at its next session. The Secretariat would appreciate, therefore, receiving advice and guidance from members of the Executive Committee, in particular, the Regional Representatives of Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as the Coordinators for those Regions, on what products should be covered by the consultant's review.

44. In the developing regions of the world, several members of the Executive Committee stressed the importance of pulses as often the major or sole source of protein for the poorer socio-economic groups. Traditional methods of processing were especially important and research for their improvement was a priority to reduce spoilage, waste, and in some cases, to eliminate naturally occurring toxic factors. In some population groups, consumption of beans, for instance, could be as high as 700 grammes per day, per caput. Pulses were being used as an important component in manufactured and locally prepared weaning foods. Legumes were very important in supplementing diets based on pulses with certain nutrients. Groundnut and soya protein, meals and flours were of growing importance.

45. The extent of intra-regional trade in Latin America should be investigated, as many countries of the region had very important production of pulses, in particular beans, and there was widespread consumption of the products. Their importance was often equal to that of cereals and, therefore, the question of which Codex Committee should undertake work on standards, if this was agreed to by the Commission, should be examined by the consultant. Questions relating to production, storage and handling with special emphasis on traditional methods in developing countries should be covered by the paper, bearing in mind the need to produce an end product of good quality and with satisfactory keeping qualities. Several members of the Executive Committee referred to the large worldwide trade in pulses and legumes, as well as the high levels of production and consumption.

46. The Executive Committee suggested that the consultant should have extensive experience of food standardization, with specialist knowledge of processing techniques, storage and trade requirements. The consultant should also review the work of existing bodies concerned with pulses and legumes and any relevant published material. Concerning possible future work in this area, it was suggested that it might not be necessary to establish a new Codex Committee for this purpose, as the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products, or possibly the Codex Committee on Processed Fruit and Vegetables, might be suitable for this, assisted, as appropriate, by the Regional Coordinating Committees for Africa, Asia and Latin America concerning technical inputs to the development of standards.

CODEX SESSIONS FOR 1981

47. The Executive Committee had before it the proposed schedule of Codex sessions for 1981 (Document CX/EXEC 27/10 Corrigendum). The Executive Committee noted that the Coordinating Committee for Africa would meet in Dakar, Senegal, 25 to 29 May 1981. Confirmation of the dates and location for the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia was still awaited from the Government of India. The dates of the Codex Committee on General Principles were still subject to confirmation by the Government of France. The other sessions referred to in the schedule were now confirmed.

48. The Executive Committee enquired as to the reasons why it had been necessary to schedule the next session of the Commission in early July 1981. The question of rent for the meeting facilities in Geneva, at either the Palais des Nations or ILO Headquarters, had precluded the holding of the session in a UN Centre. The Secretariat had, therefore, accepted a generous offer of the International Conference Centre of the Canton of Geneva to use their conference accommodation, without charge. These facilities were, however, already booked for the months of September, October and November. The Secretariat had, therefore, accepted the dates indicated in the schedule. The Conference Centre was located in the vicinity of the Palais des Nations and offered modern facilities suitable for a meeting of the size of the Commission.

49. The Executive Committee noted that it was not intended to place the report of the Thirteenth Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues before the next session of the Commission for action. Concerning the Commission's wish that the Codex Committees on Food Additives and Pesticide Residues should meet annually, it noted, with appreciation, that the Netherlands authorities had been able to meet this wish in the case of Pesticide Residues in the biennium 1980/81, and had the intention to do likewise in respect of Food Additives in the future. The next session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives would be in the first quarter of 1982. The representative of North America advised the Executive Committee that the Government of Canada was prepared, if necessary, to hold the Second Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins in 1981. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation of this offer and suggested that this matter should be reviewed in the light of the outcome of the Committee's First Session, in November 1980. The subject matter was of such importance and widespread interest to all members of the Commission that countries might wish to have more time than usual to develop their positions regarding the new work and, therefore, might prefer to have a meeting in 1982. In view of the proximity of the Fourteenth Session of the Commission to a number of other Codex sessions, in particular General Principles, the Secretariat was requested to ensure the distribution of the session's working documents to governments as soon as possible.

REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE JOINT ILO/UNEP/WHO
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON CHEMICAL SAFETY (IPCS)

50. Dr. Dieterich, Director, Environmental Health Division (EHE/WHO), indicated that he was going to concentrate on the more recent developments, since a very exhaustive report on this Programme had been given by Dr. Vouk to the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its Thirteenth Session in December 1979 (ALINORM 79/38, paras 62-73). On 1 April 1980, ILO and UNEP had joined the Programme through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. In this way, the Programme had been given a new dimension, since it was now not only the health sector which was represented, but also the labour and environmental sector. WHO hoped that FAO would also join the Programme, at least in the field of food chemicals. The Central Unit had been established and was at present headed by Dr. Somers, Director-General of Environmental Health Directorate, Health Protection Branch, Ottawa, who had been seconded for six months by the Canadian Government. It was expected to fill this post permanently, in January 1981. The Governments of Canada, Finland, Japan and the USA had already signed Memoranda of Understanding and financial contributions had already been made by them, since the Programme depended largely on extra-budgetary funds. The Central Unit was in negotiation with the Governments of the UK, Italy, USSR, Federal Republic of Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and others. The main aims of these negotiations were:

- (a) identification of national institutes which can collaborate in the Programme;
- (b) obtaining further financial support.

51. The first meeting of the Programme Advisory Committee had taken place in April and the first meeting of the Technical Committee had taken place in July 1980. The Programme Advisory Committee had considered the following groups of chemicals to be of high importance for the Programme: household products, pesticides, food additives and industrial chemicals. It had emphasized the role of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, as well as that of the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues, which would, in future, be operating from the WHO side within the framework of the IPCS. Funding for annual meetings of the Joint Expert Committees would, however, be provided as a separate item in the WHO budget for the 1982/83 biennium. With increased resources from extra-budgetary funds, these Expert Groups may be able to meet more frequently thus resulting in more toxicological evaluations. The Programme also expected the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Committees on Food Additives and Pesticide Residues to continue to provide guidance and suggestions with regard to chemicals and priorities.

52. FAO had under consideration its possible participation in the IPCS, especially concerning the Joint FAO/WHO activities concerned with food additives, contaminants and pesticide residues and the related Codex aspects of these matters. FAO was concerned that extra-budgetary funds and other resources would be necessary to support any increased workload in these areas. Discussions were to be held shortly by FAO and WHO staff with representatives of the Government of the Netherlands to determine how to deal with an increased through-put of ADIs and recommended limits for additives and pesticides for consideration by the Codex Committees concerned. The Chairmen of these Codex Committees and the FAO Secretariats of the Joint Expert Meetings were anxious to avoid the development of 'bottlenecks' in the handling of the increased activities arising from the IPCS and would be looking to the funds and Central Unit of the IPCS for assistance.

53. In the very extensive discussion, the Executive Committee, while fully supporting the aims of the Programme, expressed concern particularly regarding adequate funding of the Programme. The Committee recognized the need for extra-budgetary funding to keep the Programme operational and noted that full information regarding the Programme could be obtained from the new Central Unit in WHO.

54. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation to the Director of EHE/WHO for the information supplied and requested that, at regular intervals, the Commission be kept informed of developments.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

55. The Executive Committee had before it Document CX/EXEC 80/27/11 containing a draft provisional agenda for the Fourteenth Session of the Commission. The Executive Committee recommended that the timetable of Codex Sessions for 1982/83 form part of item 9 of the Agenda concerned with the review of the current work programme of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and direction of future activities. The Executive Committee further recommended, due to the financial situation regarding documents, that item 6 of the Agenda contain references to work of other International Organizations and that these Organizations be requested to supply an adequate number of copies of their reports for participants to collect at the Commission's session. Item 38 would, therefore, be deleted as a separate item. The Executive Committee decided to add to the provisional agenda an item concerning the "Hosting of Codex sessions in Developing Countries" and further requested the Secretariat to make any other adjustments to the Provisional Agenda which were necessary as a result of the Executive Committee's current Session.

REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF CODEX SESSIONS BEING HELD IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN HOST COUNTRIES

56. At the Thirteenth Session of the Commission, several delegations had spoken on the need for increased participation by developing countries at Codex sessions. One of the suggested possible ways of achieving this was through the holding of more Codex sessions in the developing regions of the world. In this connexion, the suggestion had been put forward at the Commission's Session that the Secretariat should get in touch with those Member Governments which hosted Codex Committees, in order to ascertain whether they would be willing to hold meetings of their Committees in a developing country, and if so, under what conditions.

57. The Secretariat indicated that it had put this item on the Agenda of the Executive Committee because of its importance to developing countries and in order to obtain the views of the Executive Committee as to possible broad guidelines which might cover arrangements in this matter.

58. The Executive Committee was informed that the Secretariat had written to Host Governments on this matter. So far, replies had been received from Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Canada had indicated that it supported the proposal, in principle, but that specific details would be needed for approval. The reply of the Netherlands, which referred only to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, indicated that the Netherlands acknowledged the importance of increased participation by developing countries in the work of the Commission and was prepared to cooperate in attempts to promote such increased participation. However, the Netherlands considered that the holding of a session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues in a developing region would not be an adequate means to achieve this aim. The Netherlands felt unable to guarantee the smooth running of a meeting of the size of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues in the absence of the usual support from its own governmental institutions. In addition, the Netherlands wondered whether and why a meeting in a developing region would result in increased participation by developing countries. For these reasons, the Netherlands was not in favour of holding a meeting of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues outside the Netherlands.

59. New Zealand had indicated that the developing countries which had shown most interest in the work of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene were in Africa and South

America. To date, New Zealand had only one fully staffed diplomatic mission in South America and none in Africa. Without such assistance, the New Zealand authorities would find it extremely difficult to host a session of the Committee on either Continent. New Zealand drew attention to the fact that it already hosts sessions of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene in London rather than in New Zealand. The location had been chosen primarily because many countries interested in the work of the Committee would not have been able to participate if the session had been held in New Zealand. New Zealand was prepared, therefore, to continue to host sessions of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene in London. The reply of the United Kingdom indicated that whilst the United Kingdom sympathized with the aims of the proposal, previous experience had demonstrated the logistical difficulties involved. The United Kingdom felt, therefore, that the work of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils might be handicapped if the meetings were held away from base. The Executive Committee was also informed that the Chairman of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products had indicated verbally to the Secretariat that Norway was currently examining the proposal.

60. Various observations were made by different members of the Executive Committee on this topic. One member stressed that there was a clear need to help developing countries to participate in more Codex sessions and that, in the case of the poorest countries, travel assistance should be made available. Another member of the Executive Committee, representing a developing region, agreed with the view that there was no guarantee that the holding of a meeting in a developing country would result in increased participation by developing countries. The point was made that some developing countries had the necessary facilities for the holding of international meetings, whilst others were not so well equipped. The point was also made that the holding of a meeting in one developing region might make it more difficult for countries in a developing region in another part of the world to attend.

61. Another member stated that Member Countries contribute substantial sums of money to FAO and WHO, of which only a tiny fraction was spent by the two Organizations on Codex work. It was suggested, therefore, that perhaps FAO and WHO could look into the question of financing Codex meetings in developing countries. In this connexion, it was stated by a member that it was up to the developing countries to make known their priorities to the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO. Another member stressed, in this connexion, that the transfer of funds from one government to another might not be as desirable as transferring funds to FAO which should then make the necessary arrangements with the new host country. Financial constraints presently in operation in many countries were also alluded to.

62. It was also stated by a Coordinator, from a developing region, that the Codex Alimentarius Commission, with its new work orientation, should be seen as part of the process of establishing a new Economic Order, with the objective of removing non-tariff barriers to food exports from developing countries and promoting food safety domestically.

63. The Executive Committee agreed to consider this subject further, at its next session, in the light of a paper collating all the responses from Host Governments.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE PROVISION OF BETTER TERMINOLOGY THAN "NON-ACCEPTANCE" FOR CASES WHERE A COUNTRY, THOUGH UNABLE TO ACCEPT A CODEX STANDARD, IS PREPARED TO ALLOW ENTRY TO PRODUCTS IN CONFORMITY WITH A CODEX STANDARD

64. The Executive Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on General Principles, at its Sixth Session, had requested the Secretariat to provide better terminology than "non-acceptance" for the cases referred to above. The Executive Committee had before it proposals of the Secretariat contained in Document CX/EXEC 80/27/9.

65. Up to now, replies from Governments indicating non-acceptance of recommended Codex standards, but adding that products in conformity with the standards would be permitted to be distributed freely within the country's territorial jurisdiction, had been classified in the "Summary of Acceptances of Recommended Worldwide and Regional Codex Standards and Recommended Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues" under the heading "Non-Acceptance", following the provisions of paragraph 4B(i) of the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius. It was now proposed by the Secretariat that the heading "Method of Acceptance" be sub-divided into three columns, i.e. Full, Target, and Specified Deviations, and that "Non-Acceptance", presently the fourth column, be deleted. It was proposed that a new heading be introduced immediately after the heading "Method of Acceptance" and that the new heading be entitled "Other Information". The heading "Other Information" would be sub-divided into two columns, one reading "Products conforming to Codex Standard may be freely distributed within territorial jurisdiction" and the other reading, "Non-Acceptance". The column presently headed "May products fully conforming to Codex Standard be freely distributed within territorial jurisdiction" would be deleted. Under this new arrangement, a country which indicated that it could not accept a Codex Standard, but which was prepared to permit entry of products in conformity with the Codex Standard, would not have its response classified as Non-Acceptance.

66. One member of the Executive Committee expressed some fears that the proposals of the Secretariat might have the effect of detracting from the value of true acceptance, since the aim was to encourage as many acceptances as possible, according to one of the methods of acceptance laid down in the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the particular type of situation under consideration went some way towards meeting the aims of the Commission, in that, it permitted products in conformity with a Codex Standard to gain entry into a country and thus was facilitating international trade. As against this, a country prepared, in this way, to permit entry of products in conformity with Codex standards did not thereby necessarily commit itself to prohibiting entry of products not in conformity with Codex standards. To this extent, it was not a true acceptance. The Executive Committee agreed that it was important that Member Countries should not circumvent the objectives of the Commission's work by also permitting the entry and circulation, under the name and description laid down in the standard, of products not in conformity with the standards.

67. The representative of the Region of Latin America, referred to certain requirements of the Argentine Food Code which differed from the Codex position on these matters, although, in general, the Argentine Code was in harmony with most of the Codex recommendations. In Argentina, the declaration of country of origin was mandatory and not optional. The Secretariat indicated that a deviation on a matter such as this would be marked in the appropriate column of the publication "Summary of Acceptances" and would be supplemented by an explanatory note.

68. After the above exchange of views, the Executive Committee decided to accept the proposals of the Secretariat.

NATURE OF CODES OF PRACTICE

69. In response to a query from the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, at its Sixteenth Session, held in July 1979, concerning the nature of Codex Codes of Practice, the Executive Committee reaffirmed that codes of practice were, as indicated in the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius, advisory. The Introduction in the publications containing codes of practice made it clear that the codes were issued to governments as recommendations and not as standards for acceptance. The Executive Committee also reaffirmed that parts of a code (usually end product specifications) - or even an entire code if the Commodity Committee concerned thought it necessary - could become

mandatory by being included or referred to in a mandatory way in a Codex standard. It was also established practice to use the word "shall" to indicate that a requirement was mandatory and to use the word "should" to indicate that it was a recommendation only, but not mandatory.

REPORT ON FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS
PROGRAMME FOR 1980/81 AND PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR 1982/83

70. The Executive Committee had before it Document CX/EXEC 80/27/3 on the above subject. The document was introduced by the Secretariat. Concerning the financial situation of the Programme for 1980/81, the Secretariat drew the particular attention of the Executive Committee to the deficit of the order of \$250,000 which had been incurred in 1979 in meeting the needs of the Programme in the matter of documentation in the three languages of the Commission (English, French and Spanish).

71. It was explained to the Executive Committee that the main reason for the deficit was the inadequacy of the allotment for documents (internal and external translation and printing) in relation to the growing needs of the Programme. In real terms (i.e. words of translation and page impressions) the allocation for translation and printing had not been increased since the 1972/73 biennium. The allocation had, therefore, been falling short of actual requirements in recent years. Moreover, the allocation for one biennium tended to be the base figure for the following biennium. The Commission had much expanded its activities in recent years, more especially to take greater account of the needs of developing countries. The main increases in activities of the Commission were attributable to the work of the Regional Codex Coordinating Committees; the establishment of the two Codex Committees on: (i) Cereals and Cereal Products; and (ii) Vegetable Products; the development by Codex Committees of more standards and codes of practice, including those of more interest to developing countries; the adoption at sessions of the Commission of much greater numbers of standards and codes of practice than in the past; the wider use of consultants for the preparation of reports on particular subject matters of interest to the Regional and other Codex Committees, as well as to the Commission.

72. These increased activities had resulted in very much increased expenditures on translation and printing. Furthermore, in a biennium in which two sessions of the Commission had been held, as was the case in 1978/79, the documentation costs were normally much higher than in a biennium in which only one session of the Commission was held. However, the foregoing statement was subject to some qualification, in respect of the current 1980/81 biennium, in which only one session of the Commission would be held. The number of standards, codes of practice and other texts adopted by the Commission at its Thirteenth Session in 1979 for publication and issue to Governments in 1980/81, was 36 compared with 17 standards and codes of practice adopted at the Twelfth Session. In addition, the Fifth Edition of the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was being prepared for issue in the current biennium. Other publications of considerable interest to Members of the Commission, such as the "Guide to the Safe Use of Food Additives", the "Guide to Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues" and the "Summary of Acceptances of Recommended Worldwide and Regional Codex Standards and Recommended Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues", which had been prepared by the Codex Secretariat in recent years, had made further inroads into the allocation.

73. The Secretariat explained that, in accordance with Trust Fund procedures under which the Programme was administered, the deficit incurred under Documents would have to be absorbed by the Programme over the next few years. Therefore, unless additional funds could be made available in future biennia for translation and printing to meet the actual needs of the Programme, it would be necessary for the Secretariat, Executive Committee and Commission to take steps to reduce, substantially, the output of Codex

documents. A very close control was being exercised currently, by the Secretariat, over documents and the proposed revision of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Standards was in part aimed at achieving further economies.

74. The Secretariat added that already there were indications of further problems in the matter of documentation in the current 1980/81 biennium, and this was foreseen as the main problem affecting the Programme so far as the 1980/81 budget was concerned. The size of this problem and its implications for the Programme would be determined as soon as possible.

75. The Secretariat indicated that the budget for 1980/81 had been presented to the Commission at its Thirteenth Session in December 1979. The 1980/81 budget figures in the document now before the Executive Committee were adjusted figures to cover the cost of the revised exchange rate of the lire/dollar (lira 820 = 1US\$) approved by the FAO Conference in November 1979. In addition, a further cost increase relating to General Service Salaries in Rome and estimated to be of the order of \$50,000 had been notified to WHO. The total of the joint budget of the Programme for 1980/81 would, assuming no further cost increases, be US\$1,590,900 of which US\$1,193,200 would fall to be paid by FAO and US\$397,700 by WHO. The Secretariat indicated that WHO had communicated that it would cover its share of this latest cost increase.

76. The Secretariat also drew attention to the financial contribution which FAO, as the administering agency, would be making to the Programme in 1980/81 over and above its contribution to the joint budget, namely, US\$662,600 in respect of internal translation, printing and contractual services.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR 1982/83

77. The Secretariat indicated that Document CX/EXEC 80/27/3 had had to be prepared before FAO had determined its budgetary allocations to the various units in FAO, for 1982/83. Therefore, at the time of writing the paper, it was not known what the FAO allocation to the Programme for 1982/83 would be. It had been stated in the paper that if the pattern of recent biennia was followed, the allocation for 1982/83 would be more or less the same as that for 1980/81 in real terms, plus cost increases to be provided for separately. It had also been stated in the paper that WHO had requested a projection of the WHO share of the Programme for 1982/83, since WHO would be finalizing its budgetary estimates for 1982/83 in August/September 1980.

78. The paper mentioned that the FAO Programme Committee, the Executive Committee and the Commission had requested that WHO assume a higher share of the joint budget of the Programme for 1982/83 (ALINORM 79/3, paras 55-58; ALINORM 79/4, para 5 and ALINORM 79/38, para 32). It was suggested in the paper that the WHO contribution to the joint budget of the Programme for 1982/83 be increased from 25% to 37.5% and from 37.5% to 50% in respect of the 1984/85 biennium. On the basis of the assumption in para 77 above, this would mean a WHO contribution of the order of US\$597,000 for 1982/83, exclusive of cost increases in that biennium which would need to be provided for separately.

79. Subsequent to the preparation of the paper, WHO had communicated to the Secretariat that the WHO contribution of US\$397,700 for 1980/81 would be taken as the base for 1982/83 to which would be added the cost increases which had been estimated by FAO to be of the order of 30-40% for 1982/83.

80. Following the introduction of the paper, the Secretariat indicated that it had been instructed by higher authority in FAO to convey the following to the Executive Committee:

- (a) there would be no increase in FAO's contribution to the Programme for the 1982/83 biennium;
- (b) FAO was not in a position to give any further assistance in the matter of documentation for the Programme; and
- (c) FAO was thinking in terms of reducing its contribution to the joint budget of the Programme from 75% to 62½%, involving a sum of the order of US\$200,000.

81. Dr. Tejada-de-Rivero, Assistant Director-General, WHO, stated that whilst he was appreciative of the advance information which had been conveyed orally by the Secretariat concerning FAO's thinking as regards a reduction in FAO's contribution to the proposed joint budget of the Programme for 1982/83, he noted that no official communication concerning this matter had been sent by the Director-General of FAO to the Director-General of WHO. He stated that the problem which would be posed if FAO implemented its thinking might have to go before the WHO Executive Board. It would be necessary to clarify the possible implications of such a reduction in FAO's contribution to the joint budget, which would constitute unilateral action on FAO's part. The Assistant Director-General expressed the hope that FAO would not implement its thinking in this matter.

82. Dr. B. Dieterich, Director of the Environmental Health Division, WHO, explained that WHO was under instructions from its Assembly to increase budget allocations to technical cooperation programmes operated, in the main, by the WHO Regional Offices. Codex was not defined as part of technical cooperation programmes and, therefore, was excluded from any programme increase. Moreover, other activities in WHO had undergone cuts up to 20%, but the Codex Programme had not been included among these cuts, in the light of the Organizations commitment to the Joint Programme.

83. Dr. Dieterich stated that consideration had been given to the suggestion of the Commission and its Executive Committee that WHO should increase its percentage share of the joint budget in 1982/83. However, in the light of the above (para 82) WHO was not in a position, at present, to make any change in the existing cost sharing arrangements. Dr. Dieterich added that if FAO were to reduce the dollar value of its contribution, WHO would have to think of reducing the dollar value of its contribution, in order to maintain the present cost sharing arrangements.

84. Dr. A. Imbruglia, Chief of Budget, WHO, confirmed that WHO's contribution to the joint budget, 1980/81, would be US\$397,700, i.e. including WHO's share of the latest cost increases. Concerning the preparation of the proposed WHO Programme of Work and Budget for 1982/83, which had already been finalized and would be published in December 1980, WHO would be maintaining the figures in the 1980/81 budget as the base for the 1982/83 budget, plus cost increases. He explained that WHO had been obliged to abolish some 300 posts, curtail activities, transfer resources from Headquarters to Regional Offices and operate with a budget which could not be increased by more than 2%, in real terms, per annum.

85. Dr. Imbruglia stressed the joint aspect of the cost sharing agreement and stated that WHO, in planning its contribution to the Programme in 1982/83, continues to consider the present cost sharing arrangements as valid. He added that if FAO were to reduce its contribution to the joint budget of the Programme in 1982/83, WHO would have to do likewise.

86. The Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme stated that the information now before the Executive Committee gave cause for concern about the future of the Food Standards Programme. The Secretariat had made known in both Organizations the views of the FAO Programme Committee, the Commission and the Executive Committee,

concerning the need for a more equitable apportionment of costs and the matter had been the subject of correspondence and discussions by the Secretariat with the responsible officers in WHO. There was clearly a strong feeling within FAO that the present cost sharing arrangement was not equitable and that there should be a move on WHO's part towards parity. He also referred to the fact that many Member Governments which host Codex Committees had made organizational and financial arrangements on the assumption that the Programme would continue to operate at least at the level of recent biennia.

87.^{1/} The Chairman of the Executive Committee recalled that the Executive Committee, at its Twenty-Fifth Session in July 1979, as well as the Commission, at its Thirteenth Session in December 1979, had strongly urged WHO to assume a higher share of the joint budget of the Programme and that the WHO representative at the Thirteenth Session of the Commission, had indicated that this request would be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities of WHO.

88. Mr. D. Akoh (Nigeria), a Vice-Chairman of the Commission, stated that the Chairman of the Executive Committee had probably reflected the views of the majority when he stated that the information received about possible cuts in the budget of the Programme was the worst news received for a long time. He stated that, in view of the objectives of the Food Standards Programme, which were to protect the consumer and to facilitate international trade, he could see no real basis for hesitation on the part of either Organization to place more funds at the disposal of the Programme. He thought that the present arrangement, whereby FAO contributed 75% and WHO 25% was inequitable, but that the proper procedure should be followed in seeking to change the arrangements.

89. Dr. E. Mendez (Mexico), a Vice-Chairman of the Commission, stated that it appeared to him that the Food Standards Programme was being "torpedoed". The question of the proper procedure to be followed in seeking to alter the existing arrangements was a matter for both Organizations, but the substantive problem was much more important. He stated that he had seen the benefits of the Food Standards Programme in developing countries and expressed concern about the future of the Programme. He stated that it was essential to find a solution to the problems now facing the Programme.

90. The representative of the Region of North America (Dr. J. McGowan, Canada), indicated that an examination of the financial problem that Codex is faced with should be conducted at the highest level in FAO and WHO, and that following this examination FAO and WHO officials should present, if necessary, recommendations for the resolution of the problem to their respective governing bodies for appropriate action.

91. The Coordinator for Africa (Dr. T. N'Doye, Senegal), stated that the Food Standards Programme had produced great benefits and that there was every reason to think that it would continue to do so. The problem now brought to the attention of the Executive Committee was such that it required an extraordinary solution. He considered the work of the Food Standards Programme, as related to developing countries, to be part of the process of moving towards establishing a new Economic Order. He thought that this aspect of the work of the Programme should be made known more widely and should be brought to the attention of the Commission at its next session. He expressed his opposition to any cuts in financial support to the Programme.

92. The representative of the Region of Africa (Mr. J.C. Obel, Kenya), thought that the Executive Committee should take a clear stand on the problem. He stressed the importance of the consumer protection aspect of the work of the Programme and the fact that, at its last Session, the Commission had reoriented its work in order to

^{1/} This paragraph, which was included in the French and Spanish versions of the draft report submitted to the Executive Committee for adoption, was inadvertently omitted from the English version of the draft report.

place more emphasis on the needs and concerns of the developing countries. He thought it incompatible with these developments that there should now be talk of reducing the budget of the Programme. He wondered whether the situation was that the decision-makers in FAO and WHO were not greatly interested in and concerned about the Programme, or whether they were simply not properly informed about it. Speaking as representative of the Region of Africa, he wished to place on record that the Food Standards Programme was considered to be very important, and any cuts in the budget of the Programme should be opposed. In this connexion, he recommended that Member Governments be informed of the situation and that their representatives in the governing bodies of FAO and WHO request additional funds for the Programme. He indicated that he would take this matter up with his own authorities in Kenya.

93. Mr. E. Kimbrell, USA, a Vice-Chairman of the Commission, stated that he agreed with the importance attached to this subject by previous speakers. There had been a meeting, at an early stage, at which time representatives of the two Organizations had agreed to the 75%/25% formula, and FAO/WHO representatives at an equivalent level should get together again. Such discussions should occur in time for Member Governments to be informed of the results, prior to the up-coming 1981 sessions of the Governing Bodies, including the WHO Executive Board and FAO Council. The FAO/WHO funds devoted to Codex work represented a tiny fraction of the budget of both Organizations. Mr. Kimbrell recalled that Member Governments themselves absorbed much of the cost of the Programme by hosting and financing Codex Committee Sessions and in promoting Codex work at the national level. He agreed with the representative of the Region of Africa and the Coordinator for Africa that there might not be a true understanding of the ramifications and value of Codex work at the FAO/WHO decision-making level. He also thought that the positive values of the Food Standards Programme on other programmes in FAO and WHO had been underestimated.

94. Mr. Kimbrell stressed that Member Governments were obviously supporters of the Food Standards Programme. He asked for continuous support - not continuous increases. He emphasized that the Codex Alimentarius Commission was a body with recognized international status which had made steady progress. He thought that the Executive Committee should recommend that the decision-making authorities in FAO and WHO should, with the Chairman of the Commission, resolve this problem with the view in mind that the overall value of the Programme was of utmost importance, rather than whether health aspects or international trade aspects warranted the greater contribution. He stressed that Codex work was part of the whole food safety question.

95. The representative of the Region of South West Pacific (Ms. S. Cottrell, New Zealand) expressed agreement with the views of the representative of the Region of North America and those of Mr. Kimbrell, and considered that the Governing Bodies of the two Organizations should re-examine the cost sharing arrangements. She stressed the importance of ensuring that Member Governments were made aware of the problems facing the Food Standards Programme and that the decision-makers in FAO and WHO were also made aware of this. The proposed cuts in the Food Standards Programme would "kill" the Programme. The budget of the Food Standards Programme represented a tiny proportion of the budget of FAO and WHO.

96. The representative of the Region of Asia (Mr. Dong-bai-Lee, Republic of Korea), stated that, in general, he agreed with the views that had been expressed by Vice-Chairman Mr. Akoh, Nigeria. He stated that speaking on behalf of not only the Republic of Korea but also on behalf of 25 Member Countries of Asia and the Near East, he felt sure that they would support the views which had been expressed by the members of the Executive Committee. He considered that, taking into account the ideals and objectives of the Programme, the costs should be shared on a more or less equal basis between the two Organizations. He stated that it surprised him that WHO thought that the present cost sharing arrangements could be maintained. He considered that the WHO contribution

was much too small, in relation to the noble objectives of WHO in connexion with the protection of health. The problem had to be solved.

97. The representative of the Region of Latin America (Ing. J. Piazzzi, Argentina), stated that there was a need to increase the budget for translating and printing of documents in the Spanish language. He agreed with the views of Vice-Chairman Mr. Kimbrell and the representative of the Region of the South West Pacific.

98. The representative of the Region of Europe (Dr. A.N. Zaitsev, USSR), stressed the importance of the work of the Programme in the protection of health and the promotion of international trade. He considered that the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was very important, and that, in fact, there should be some increase in its budget. He stated that the work of the Commission was complementary to the work of WHO in the area of health protection. He supported many of the views which had been expressed by the members of the Executive Commission, especially those of Vice-Chairman Mr. Kimbrell.

99. The Coordinator for Europe (Dr. H. Woidich, Austria) recalled that he had been working for more than twenty years in support of the Codex idea. He considered the work to be of great importance and he urged WHO to reflect on its position in relation to the Food Standards Programme.

100. Mr. Imbruglia, Chief of Budget, WHO, indicated that WHO was a very decentralized Organization, and that funds from cutbacks at Headquarters had been placed at the disposal of the Regional Directors for application in the Organization's technical cooperation programmes. He stated that there seemed to be a general agreement that the matter of cost sharing is the responsibility of the Directors-General of the two Organizations and their respective Governing Bodies. He expressed the view that FAO should not take unilateral action which would be detrimental to the Programme, and that such view be conveyed to FAO.

101. The Executive Committee concluded as follows:

- (i) the Executive Committee wished to express its appreciation of the support of the Programme by the two parent Organizations;
- (ii) the continuation of the present level of financial support by the two Organizations was absolutely necessary in order not to jeopardize the Programme;
- (iii) the Executive Committee wished to stress the importance of the Programme, especially for developing countries, and its importance for related FAO and WHO programmes and activities for these countries;
- (iv) the Executive Committee appealed to the Directors-General of FAO and WHO to discuss, as soon as possible, ways to maintain, at least, the existing level of support to the Programme. If thought appropriate, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, who was also Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, should be invited to attend;
- (v) consideration appropriate to its importance should be given to the health aspects of the Programme, in determining the cost sharing aspect between FAO and WHO;
- (vi) the Executive Committee expressed the wish that Member Governments be informed of any discussions, as soon as possible.

102. The Executive Committee considered what practical measures could be taken to deal with the documents problem and to reduce costs. The Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme indicated that the Programme had a big mailing list. He

thought that probably the number of documents being sent to the different ministries in each country could be reduced and the number sent to Codex Contact Points increased. Invitations to Codex Committee sessions, as well as agendas, would, as heretofore, continue to be sent to the different ministries. It might be possible to introduce further economies. The Executive Committee agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a paper on this subject for consideration at its next session.

OTHER BUSINESS

Food Irradiation

103. The Executive Committee had before it a Conference Room Document LIM.1 which contained details of recent discussions regarding the utilization of funds arising from the completion of an International Project concerning the Wholesomeness Testing of Irradiated Foods. The participants to these discussions, whilst not wanting to create any new body to utilize the funds, considered that a body such as the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission might supervise and guide further activities in the area of food irradiation of interest to the members of the Commission, especially in view of the code of practice for food irradiation and the standards for irradiated foods that had been adopted by the Commission. Some members of the Executive Committee questioned the desirability of the Executive Committee becoming involved in this matter which could be very technical and on which some degree of controversy exists, whilst others questioned whether it could be regarded as an activity within the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee recalled that the Codex Committee on Food Additives had elaborated standards and a code adopted by the Commission concerned with food irradiation. A WHO/FAO/IAEA Expert Meeting on Irradiated Foods would be meeting shortly at WHO Headquarters and more matters would be referred eventually to the Codex Committee on Food Additives and the Commission. The Executive Committee concluded that the Secretariat should examine further the proposals and if it considers it appropriate, obtain the views of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and report to the next session of the Commission.

UN Economic Commission for Europe

104. The representative of the South West Pacific raised on behalf of Australia a question concerning duplication of Codex activities by the UN/ECE Working Party on the Standardization of Perishable Produce, especially concerning products of worldwide interest, such as dried fruits, mainly produced outside Europe. This duplication presented subsequent problems of harmonization with Codex Standards. The UN/ECE was a regional body and it was questionable whether the standards it developed could be regarded as international in terms of the GATT Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. Australia was further of the opinion that the UN/ECE should observe similar criteria to that of the Codex Regional Coordinating Committees when contemplating work on regional standards. Furthermore, the Secretariat of the UN/ECE Group should consult with the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission regarding proposals for new work, in view of the Commission's responsibility within the UN System under Article 1(b), (c) and (d) of its Statutes.

105. The Executive Committee recalled that the Secretariat of the UN/ECE Group did report on its activities at each session of the Commission and that to avoid duplication, the Joint Codex/UN/ECE Groups of Experts on Fruit Juices and Quick Frozen Foods had operated very satisfactorily in accordance with Codex Procedures. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that close liaison and harmonious relations existed with the Secretary of the UN/ECE Group and that every effort was being made by both Secretariats to avoid duplication and to rationalize activities. Those countries which were members of both bodies could greatly assist in ensuring the avoidance of overlap and the selection of items for standardization on a regional basis by coordination at the national level. The Secretariat was requested to bring this matter to the attention of the UN/ECE and report on the matter to the next session of the Commission.