

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE:

Via delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME: Tel. 57971 Telex: 610181 FAO I. Cables Foodagri

ALINORM 83/4

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Fifteenth Session

Rome, 4-15 July 1983

REPORT OF THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

FAO Headquarters, Rome, 30 June - 1 July 1983

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee held its Thirtieth Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, on 30 June and 1 July 1983. The Executive Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Prof. Dr. D. Eckert (Federal Republic of Germany) and in the presence of two of its Vice-Chairmen, Dr. A.A.M. Hasan (Iraq) and Mr. E. Kimbrell (USA). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present: for Africa, Dr. N.M. Masai from Kenya; for Asia, Dr. Kang-Choo-Lee, from the Republic of Korea; for Europe, Dr. A.N. Zaitsev, from the USSR; for Latin America, Ing. J. Piazzzi, from Argentina; for North America, Dr. N. Tape, from Canada; for the South-West Pacific, Mr. G.H. Boyd, from New Zealand. The Coordinator for Asia, Prof. A. Bhumiratana (Thailand) was also present. The Coordinator for Europe, Prof. H. Woidich, was also present for part of the session.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Prof. A.H. Ibrahim (Sudan), Vice Chairman; Dr. J.K. Misoi, Coordinator for Africa; and Ing. E.M. Brivio, Coordinator for Latin America.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

3. The Executive Committee adopted the provisional agenda as presented with the addition of two items for consideration under 'Other Business'. The two items were: (i) Discussion of the possibility of Codex developing a uniform code for the identification of meat cuts (proposed by the Representative of the Region of North America) and (ii) Consequences of withdrawal of temporary acceptable daily intakes for Codex Maximum Residue Limits (paper prepared by the Secretariat).

REPORT ON FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

(i) FINALIZATION OF ACCOUNTS 1980/81, (ii) BUDGET FOR 1982/83, (iii) BUDGETARY PROPOSALS FOR 1984/85

4. The Executive Committee had before it document ALINORM 83/5. The Committee noted with satisfaction the financial out-turn in the 1980/81 biennium. The Executive Committee also noted with satisfaction the statement of the Secretariat that the budget for 1982/83 would enable the Commission's programme to be fully implemented and that a detailed report on the finalization of accounts for 1982/83 would be presented to the 31st Session of the Executive Committee to be held in Geneva in June 1984. Concerning the budgetary proposals for 1984/85 the Executive Committee was also pleased to note the statement of the Secretariat that on the basis of the likely programme of Codex sessions in 1984/85 and the expected overall workload in the biennium the budgetary proposals for 1984/85 with cost increases to be added would enable the programme to proceed satisfactorily throughout the biennium. The Executive Committee was informed by the Secretariat that it was expected to be able to assist developing countries more materially in the hosting of regional Codex Coordinating Committees.

5. The Executive Committee agreed that there was a need to make the work of the Food Standards Programme better known to the public so that the benefits to be derived from participation in the Programme were better understood. It was also agreed that there was a need to ensure that other UN Agencies were better informed about Codex work in order to avoid any overlap of activities.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO AMEND THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD
(Agenda Item 3)

6. The item was introduced by Dr. Shubber, representing the Office of the Legal Counsel of WHO. He explained briefly the purpose of the paper, i.e. to bring the Codex Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food in line with the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, with respect to promotion and information concerning products covered by both instruments.

7. Vice-Chairman, Mr. Kimbrell, made a statement indicating that each code should stand alone. He thus proposed that paragraph 5.9 of the Code of Ethics should be amended along the following lines:

"5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission".

The rest of paragraph 5.9, i.e. the rest of the introductory part of the provision and sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) should be deleted. As a consequential amendment, paragraph 5.10(b) of the Codex Code of Ethics should read as follows:

"(b) information concerning the nutritional value of food should not mislead" and the rest of the sub-paragraph should be deleted.

8. Dr. Shubber was of the opinion that paragraph 5.9 should read as follows:

"5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. No claims in any form should be permitted that would directly or indirectly encourage a mother not to breast-feed her child, or imply that breast-milk substitutes are superior to breast-milk".

9. Furthermore, the term "the public" should be added after the term "mislead" in paragraph 5.10(b).

10. Vice-Chairman, Dr. Hasan, the Representative of the Region of North America (Dr. Tape, Canada) and the Representative of the Region of the South-West Pacific (Mr. Boyd, New Zealand) agreed with the proposal made by Mr. Kimbrell.

11. The Representatives of the Regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America stated that they had no instructions from their respective regions. However, the Representative of the Region of Latin America (Ing. Piazzini, Argentina) informed the Executive Committee that Argentina, as a member of the region, agreed with Mr. Kimbrell's proposal. The Representative of the Region of Africa (Dr. Masai, Kenya) and the Representative of Asia, Dr. Kang-Choo-Lee (Republic of Korea) speaking on behalf of their respective countries, stated that they supported the proposal of Dr. Shubber.

12. There was agreement to add the term "the public" in paragraph 5.10(b). The Committee also agreed to delete footnotes 1 and 2 on page 3 of the Codex Code of Ethics.

13. The Representative of the Region of North America proposed that a new paragraph (g) be inserted in the Preamble of the Codex Code of Ethics.

14. The Committee accepted a new preambular paragraph (g), proposed by Dr. Shubber, which reads as follows: "(g) The WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes sets forth principles for the protection and promotion of breast-feeding, which is an important aspect of primary health care".

15. The Executive Committee while recognizing the importance of breast-feeding to the healthy growth and developments of infants agreed that it was not necessary to repeat in one international code what was already clearly stated in another.

16. Finally, the Executive Committee agreed to refer the question to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for its consideration in the light of the discussion that took place in the session of the Executive Committee.

DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING ARRANGEMENTS TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF EFFORT BETWEEN CODEX WORK AND UNECE WORK ON STANDARDIZATION (Agenda Item 4.1)

17. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee of developments at the May 1983 meeting of the UNECE Group of Experts on Standardization of Dried and Dry Produce (Fruit). The Executive Committee was informed that the differences between the Codex draft standard for dates and the UNECE draft standard for dates had been narrowed considerably and the rapporteur for this commodity in the UNECE Working Group (France) would await developments on the draft Codex Standard for Dates at the 15th Session of the Commission before proceeding to revise the UNECE Draft Standard. Concerning dried apricots the differences between the Codex standard and the UNECE standard had been narrowed and the UNECE rapporteur for this product (Spain) would be re-drafting the UNECE text on the basis of the Codex standard. The Executive Committee was informed that some substantial differences still exist between the Codex standard for unshelled pistachios and the UNECE draft standard.

18. The Executive Committee was also informed that the UNECE Secretariat had developed revised proposals for the coordination of the work of the UNECE Working Party with that of the Commission. These proposals would be looked at by the Codex Secretariat. It was hoped that an agreed solution would be reached at the next session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce to be held in Geneva from 17-21 October 1983.

19. The Executive Committee welcomed the above developments and expressed the hope that satisfactory working arrangements would be reached between the Codex and the UNECE. The Executive Committee stressed the importance of coordination at the national level in resolving problems of this kind.

DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE NEED FOR A CODEX STANDARD FOR MILLED RICE (Agenda Item 4(ii))

20. The 29th Session of this Committee had noted that the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes was giving consideration to the need for a Codex Standard for Milled Rice while TC 34 of ISO was also elaborating an ISO Specification for rice including milled rice. The Committee had been concerned about duplication of work in this field and had requested to be kept informed of further developments on this matter (paragraphs 51-53 of ALINORM 83/29).

21. The Committee was informed of the following:

(a) The 3rd Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia had recommended that CC/CPL should not embark on a standard for milled rice before countries of the Asian Region had had an opportunity to examine the ISO specification for rice when finalized (paragraph 145 of ALINORM 83/29).

(b) At the 3rd Session of CC/CPL (October 1982) the observer from ISO had stated that ISO's work on a specification for rice was in compliance with the ISO policy statement concerning working arrangements with the Codex Alimentarius Commission which had been accepted by the latter, since it was complementary to the work of the Commission and its Committees, at the time when work was commenced in 1976. In the case of rice, it had been impossible to dissociate the agricultural commodity from the product intended for the consumer (paragraphs 23-24 of ALINORM 83/29).

(c) The 3rd Session of CC/CPL had noted the views of the Coordinating Committee for Asia and the statement of ISO. It had also noted that the format of a Codex standard differed considerably from an ISO specification and the existence of an ISO specification did, therefore, not necessarily preclude the development of a Codex standard. CC/CPL had decided not to develop at present a Codex Standard for Milled Rice.

22. However, one delegation had felt that ISO should not have embarked on the elaboration of a specification for rice which included milled rice under the agreement of working arrangements with the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Committee (CC/CPL) decided to bring this matter to the attention of the Commission (paragraphs 147-151 of ALINORM 83/29).

23. The Executive Committee:

(a) noted with satisfaction that in the case of milled rice there was no duplication of work between ISO and the Commission;

(b) agreed that the ISO specification for rice was being developed in accordance with the ISO policy statement recognized by the Commission, and that the Commission should be advised accordingly;

(c) recommended that, in view of the different format and scope of ISO Specifications and Codex Standards, the Commission should advise that the ISO Specification for rice when finalized: (i) be sent to all Member Countries of the Commission for comments; (ii) be discussed in the light of these comments by the Regional Coordinating Committees; and (iii) together with the views of the Coordinating Committees be referred to CC/CPL for further consideration of the need to elaborate a standard for milled rice in the Codex format.

HOSTING OF CODEX SESSIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (Agenda Item 5)

24. The Executive Committee had before it ALINORM 83/8 and ALINORM 83/8 Add.1 containing replies by Thailand, Zambia and Cuba to circular letters which had been issued by the Secretariat inviting developing countries to indicate whether they would be interested in hosting a Codex committee session. The Representative of the Region of North America indicated that because of the cost involved it had not been possible to come to an arrangement with the Thai authorities for the holding of the 3rd Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins in Thailand. Zambia had indicated its interest in hosting either a session of a Codex Committee on Food Hygiene or a session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues. Mr. E. Kimbrell, Vice-Chairman, indicated that it would not be possible at present to arrange for a meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (host government: USA) to be hosted outside the USA. Mr. Kimbrell added that if, however, enough countries were interested in the holding of a session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene outside the USA and if such a request to the USA were received from the Secretariat the matter would receive serious consideration. The Coordinator for Asia, Prof. A. Bhumiratana, thought that expenses might be reduced by holding sessions in FAO or WHO Regional Offices. The Coordinator for Asia indicated that Thailand would be very interested in hosting a meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Pesticide Residue Problems in Developing Countries in Bangkok linked with the 4th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia to be held in Bangkok from 28 February to 5 March 1984.

25. The Representative of the Region of Latin America indicated that Argentina would be interested in hosting sessions of the Codex Committee on Food Additives or the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, or the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes,

without forgetting other Codex Committees. As the Representative of the Region of Latin America, he referred to the arrangements to hold the next session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America in Santiago, Chile in December 1983. He, as Representative of the Region of Latin America, expressed concern that he had not been consulted concerning the arrangements for holding the next session of the Coordinating Committee. The Secretariat explained that it had felt it necessary to proceed quickly with arrangements for holding the meeting, as otherwise it might not have been possible to hold the meeting at all in 1983. The Secretariat indicated that arrangements for holding the meeting had been made with the FAO Regional Office in Santiago and that the meeting would be held on the premises of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America in that city. The meeting would be a Codex meeting hosted by FAO and WHO. It was agreed that better communication should be established in the future to overcome similar problems. The Executive Committee expressed satisfaction that arrangements had in fact been made to ensure that the meeting would be held in 1983.

STATUS AND SAFETY ASPECTS OF FOOD ADDITIVE SPECIFICATIONS (Agenda Item 6(i))

26. The Executive Committee noted that it had discussed the status and safety aspects of food additive specifications at its last session (ALINORM 83/3, paras 105-116) and agreed with the views of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) and the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) on the subject. The Committee, however, before taking a definitive position had sought the opinion of Governments on the views of CCFA and JECFA by CL 1982/42-FA issued in November 1982.

27. An analysis of the replies received from Australia, Spain, United Kingdom and the European Economic Community, documented in ALINORM 83/11 and ALINORM 83/11-Addenda 1 and 2, had shown that they were in complete agreement with the views of CCFA and JECFA on the status and safety aspects of Codex specifications.

28. The Executive Committee reaffirmed its agreement with the views of CCFA and JECFA that Codex specifications are advisory and not subject to Government acceptance and that food grade quality is achieved by compliance with the specifications as a whole and not merely with the individual criteria in terms of safety and agreed to bring this to the attention of the Commission.

29. The Committee expressed the opinion that since CCFA reviews and elaborates specifications they were subject to endorsement even if they were advisory and not subject to acceptance. This it did not agree with the CCFA's proposal to amend the format for Codex Commodity Standards as contained in the Procedural Manual of the Codex (see ALINORM 83/12, Appendix X, para 8).

PROCEDURE FOR ELABORATION OF CODEX SPECIFICATIONS (Agenda Item 6(ii))

30. The Executive Committee:

- (i) noted that the countries which had responded to the CL 1982/42-FA were in complete agreement with the modified procedure proposed by CCFA for the elaboration of Codex specifications (ALINORM 83/12, Appendix X, Annex 1);
- (ii) recognized the principle that CCFA was the final authority to recommend specifications to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for adoption; and
- (iii) recommended the modified procedure to the Commission for adoption.

The Committee, however, did not agree to drop the word "Advisory" from the title, since unlike Codex codes of practice it was not sufficiently understood that Codex specifications are advisory.

RESIDUES IN FOOD OF CHEMICALS USED IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND VETERINARY MEDICINE (Agenda Item 7)

31. The Chairman introduced this topic. The Executive Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Food Additives, Meat Hygiene and Pesticide Residues had discussed the need to consider the question of residues in food of various chemicals arising from their use in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine. It considered the need for Codex taking action in this field and possible mechanism for handling the subject on the basis of a paper prepared by the Secretariat.

32. The Executive Committee was of the opinion that, in view of the complex scientific and technological aspects, the subject should be examined by a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation. The recommendations of the experts could then be submitted for consideration either by a newly established Codex Committee or by an existing Committee. The Executive Committee was informed by the Chairman and the Representative of the South-West Pacific Region that the Federal Republic of Germany and Australia, respectively, would give favourable consideration to hosting such a new Codex Committee. The opinion was expressed by Mr. Kimbrell (Vice-Chairman), that, as consumer protection was involved, the well established system of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees or consultations should be followed to ensure independent technical advice to any Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs.

33. The Executive Committee concluded that the subject was important and timely and urged the Secretariat and the Commission to find an early means to deal with this matter. The proposal of the Codex Committee on Food Additives to engage a consultant to prepare a paper on the subject was not considered necessary for initiating work on the chemicals in question.

CONSIDERATION OF NEED TO AMEND THE CODEX STANDARD FOR TABLE OLIVES (Agenda Item 8)

34. The Executive Committee had before it documents ALINORM 83/40 and Add.1 and LIM. 14 containing the comments of Argentina, Australia, Chile, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Greece, Norway, Pakistan and Syria. The Executive Committee noted the positions of the countries listed but decided that this was a matter which was best left to the Commission for consideration. The Representative of the Region of Latin America referring to the comments of Argentina stated that Argentina was not in favour of the amendment of the Codex standard. The Representative of the Region of North America indicated that Canada was flexible on this matter.

JOINT FAO/WHO EXPERT COMMITTEE ON FOOD SAFETY, GENEVA, 30 MAY TO 6 JUNE 1983 (Agenda Item 9)

35. The Executive Committee had before it document LIM. 1 (Food Safety) containing a Summary Report and some recommendations made by the Expert Committee on Food Safety.

36. The Expert Committee which included world leading specialists in food science, nutrition, pediatrics, veterinary public health, chemistry, anthropology, agriculture, public health administration and economics, was charged with three main objectives:

- (i) definition and quantification of the health, economic and social consequences of contaminated, unsafe food;
- (ii) assessment of impact of measures taken to improve the safety of food;
- (iii) outlining strategies for the improvement of food safety.

37. The Expert Committee had stated that the impact on health of foodborne diseases associated with contamination of the food supply had not been well recognized by national governments or effectively approached by international organizations. Indeed, the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care in 1978 implicitly considered food safety as an essential component of primary health care rather than addressing it explicitly as a major component contributing significantly to disease prevention and health promotion.

38. The Expert Committee had emphasized certain points in the strategy for the improvement of food safety. First, the solution to food contamination problems had to be based on knowledge of culture and economic practices in Member States. Further, that both national and local interventions were needed and that food safety had to be an integral part of primary health care and the total food system. To achieve this, appropriate education and information for the public in general and mothers in particular was needed and all relevant sectors of society, including food industry and consumer unions, had to contribute towards this end.

39. The Expert Committee had made it abundantly clear that no conflict existed between the efforts to provide enough food for populations and the effort to provide safe food.

40. The Executive Committee commended WHO and FAO for convening this Expert Committee on Food Safety. It expressed the view that food had conventionally been viewed as an FAO responsibility and disease as falling within the WHO terms of reference. There were many problems with foodborne diseases throughout the world as indicated by the report of the Expert Committee, and sometimes neither international organization addressed the issue fully. The Executive Committee hoped that FAO and WHO could address the problems by making greater use of the standards and codes developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission since they addressed many of the issues related to food safety. Such efforts by FAO and WHO would be welcomed by the Executive Committee which offered its full support to improve food safety throughout the world.

LENGTH AND CONTENT OF CODEX REPORTS (Agenda Item 10)

41. The Representative of the Region of North America (Dr. N. Tape, Canada), introduced the topic of the possibility of reducing the length and improving the structure of Codex Committee reports. He pointed out the following advantages of such reports: (a) They would be of great assistance to all interested parties by making Committee decisions more readily apparent, (b) They would effect savings in translation and printing costs, (c) They would reduce the bulk of Codex documentation, (d) Their simplified structure would lead to greater understanding of their contents and increased participation at Codex meetings and preparatory meetings at the national level.

42. A suggested model report, reducing the narrative section from 17 to 5 pages of the 2nd Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins was distributed to the Members of the Executive Committee. The model report, which had been prepared by the Canadian Secretariat, listed the decisions made and the reservations or other comments made by the countries.

43. The Members of the Codex Secretariat were invited to give their views. They expressed appreciation of the initiative of the Canadian Secretariat on the preparation of the model report and agreed with the idea of shorter reports provided this was acceptable to Member Countries. At the same time the Members of the Codex Secretariat outlined some difficulties which there might be with such short reports. It was pointed out that, to a great extent, the subject matter and participation at Codex Committees governed the type of report required. Examples were given of Committees, such as the Codex Committees on Food Labelling, Fish and Fishery Products, and Meat Hygiene where it would be difficult to give background to important Committee decisions on the text of even one provision in a standard, without adequately reflecting the discussions and the interventions of delegates.

44. Several of the Members of the Executive Committee agreed with this point of view and also thought that the traditional Codex report gave insight into the development of standards and codes which was necessary in the preparation of documentation for future Committee sessions. It was also pointed out that this type of report was of great value to those who had not attended the meeting concerned and that in addition adequate reporting of delegates' opinions might influence governments when deciding on participation in Codex sessions.

45. There was general agreement throughout the Executive Committee that Codex Committee reports should be as brief and as concise as possible, without sacrificing essential details on important points. The Executive Committee agreed that the Secretariat should bring the view of the Executive Committee to the attention of individual Codex Committees and leave it to the individual Committees to decide on the kind of reports they favoured.

FREQUENCY OF SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda Item 11(i))

46. The Executive Committee had before it document ALINORM 83/28. Mr. E. Kimbrell, Vice-Chairman, drew attention to the fact that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provide that "The Commission shall in principle hold one regular session each year ...". He considered two years to be too long a period between Commission sessions. The Representative of the South-West Pacific Region (Mr. G. Boyd, New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, stated that because of the costs involved, those two countries would not favour annual sessions and favoured sessions every eighteen months to two years. Dr. Hasan, Vice-Chairman, stated that he thought it would be better to have yearly sessions of the Commission, but that there were problems in this. He favoured, therefore, the Commission meeting every two years. The Representative of the Region of North America (Dr. N. Tape, Canada) suggested that 18 months might be an acceptable compromise. The Chairman of the Commission stated that he favoured holding sessions as at present every two years.

47. The Representative of the Region of Latin America indicated that, for financial reasons and for reasons connected with the availability of technical personnel, several countries in the region favoured an interval of two years between Commission sessions. These countries maintained that to solve the problem of rapidly obtaining the results of the work of the Commission, mechanisms based on the experience of other international organizations should be used. These mechanisms, without affecting the participation of developing countries, would help to achieve the aims of making the Commission's activities more effective and speedy.

48. Opinion was divided on this issue in the Executive Committee, but more members spoke in favour of retaining the present interval of two years between sessions of the Commission than against.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE OF CODEX MEETINGS 1984-1985 (Agenda Item 11(ii))

49. The Executive Committee had before it ALINORM 83/31 and took note of the planned meetings. The Representative of the Region of South-West Pacific (Mr. G. Boyd, New Zealand) expressed the hope that, if it was decided to hold a meeting of the Codex Committee on General Principles in 1985, the meeting could take place before the end of March, as the financial year in many countries ended on 31 March, and Codex Contact Points, who would probably wish to attend, would also wish to attend the 16th Session of the Commission in the following financial year.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AMENDMENT OF CODEX STANDARDS ELABORATED BY CODEX COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE ADJOURNED SINE DIE (Agenda Item 12)

50. The above working paper (CX/EXEC 83/30/2) had been prepared by the Secretariat, in view of the concern expressed at sessions of several Codex Committees about a satisfactory procedure to up-date and amend Codex standards which had been elaborated by Committees which had adjourned sine die.

51. In paragraph 1, the paper enumerated the different types of amendments which were either of an editorial or substantive nature, consequential to decisions made by the Commission.

52. It was indicated that the Procedural Manual provided a Guide for a satisfactory procedure for the amendment of standards which had been elaborated by still active Committees (Procedural Manual, 5th Ed., page 45). However, adjourned Committees lacked a forum for considering proposals for amendments and for following up decisions of the Commission.

53. It was therefore proposed that the role of the Secretariat, as outlined in Section 1 of the Guide, should be enlarged, in that the Secretariat should be instructed to examine Codex standards elaborated by adjourned Committees and to determine, if necessary in cooperation with the Chairman and national Secretariat of the adjourned Committees, the need to propose an amendment to a standard and take appropriate action as outlined in paragraph 3 of the working paper.

54. The Executive Committee agreed with the enlargement of the role of the Secretariat as regards amending Codex standards elaborated by Committees which had adjourned sine die. The Executive Committee also agreed that it was not necessary to amend the Guide to the Procedure for the Revision of Codex Standards in the Procedural Manual. However, Member Countries should be informed in detail of the new administrative arrangements. The Executive Committee decided, therefore, that the paper be attached as an Appendix to its Report.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 13)

Uniform International Code for the Identification of Meat Cuts (Agenda Item 13)

55. The Representative of the Region of North America (Dr. N. Tape, Canada), speaking on behalf of Canada, informed the Committee that at least three countries (Australia, Ireland and New Zealand) were using identification codes on boxes containing meat cuts. This code was usually an abbreviated letter system indicating the kind of meat packed in approximately 25 kg boxes and Canada was enquiring whether the Codex Alimentarius Commission might develop a uniform international code for the identification of such meat cuts.

56. The Executive Committee noted that this was a subject on which it had little information both as to the nature of the identification codes already in use and on the extent of international trade in this type of product. There was also a question of whether this kind of activity fell within the terms of reference of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, a principal aim of which was to protect the health of the consumer.

57. It was decided to defer further discussion until the next session of the Executive Committee when Canada would prepare a paper giving more information on current coding system, the countries using them and the extent of international trade in boxed meat cuts.

CODEX MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS: CONSEQUENCES OF WITHDRAWAL OF TEMPORARY ACCEPTABLE DAILY INTAKES (Agenda Item 13)

58. The Executive Committee noted that the Commission would consider an amendment, proposed by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, to Codex Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for coumaphos (see para 2, Agenda Item 14(f), ALINORM 83/21). The proposal of the Committee was the conversion of the Codex temporary MRLs for coumaphos into 'Guideline Levels', as the temporary ADI of coumaphos had been withdrawn by the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues. This poses a general problem as to the status of temporary ADIs.

59. The Executive Committee considered a paper prepared by the Secretariat setting out the various reasons for the withdrawal of ADIs and including proposals for possible handling of the Codex maximum residue limits affected (CX/EXEC 83/30/3). For example, temporary ADIs were being withdrawn because data considered necessary by the experts were not available by a stated deadline rather than on the grounds of any change in evidence of toxicity. This could result in the withdrawal of Codex MRLs involving extensive action by governments within the context of the Codex acceptance procedures.

60. It was agreed that the problems posed by the withdrawal in such circumstances of temporary ADIs supporting existing Codex maximum residue limits represented a very important issue which should be discussed in greater detail by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, in the light of the conclusions of the Commission in relation to the amendment of the maximum residue limits for coumaphos. The Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues should also be invited to consider the question of the withdrawal of temporary ADIs in relation to the effects of such action on maximum residue limits adopted by the Commission. The Executive Committee agreed that the views of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues should be placed before its next session so that the question of the withdrawal of ADIs could be discussed by the 16th Session of the Commission as a general issue. FAO and WHO should also examine the policy aspects of temporary ADIs and endeavour to establish some guidance for their Expert Committees and Secretariats.

VALEDICTION

61. The Executive Committee wished to place on record its appreciation of the leadership shown by the Chairman of the Committee, Prof. Dr. D. Eckert (Federal Republic of Germany) during his term of office which was now ending, and of his contribution to the progress of the work of the Committee as a member and Chairman over a long period of years.

APPENDIX

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AMENDMENT OF CODEX STANDARDS
ELABORATED BY CODEX COMMITTEES
WHICH HAVE ADJOURNED SINE DIE

1. The need to consider amending or revising adopted Codex standards arises from time to time for a variety of reasons amongst which can be:

- (a) changes in the evaluation of food additives, pesticides and contaminants;
- (b) finalization of methods of analysis;
- (c) editorial amendments of guidelines or other texts adopted by the Commission and related to all or a group of Codex standards e.g. "Guidelines on Date Marking", "Guidelines on Labelling of Non-retail Containers", "Carry-over Principle";
- (d) consequential amendments to earlier Codex standards arising from Commission decisions on currently adopted standards of the same type of products;
- (e) consequential and other amendments arising from either revised or newly elaborated Codex standards and other texts of general applicability which have been referenced in other Codex standards (Revision of General Principles of Food Hygiene, Codex Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods);
- (f) technological developments or economic considerations e.g. provisions concerning styles, packaging media or other factors related to composition and essential quality criteria and consequential changes in labelling provisions;
- (g) modifications of standards being proposed following an examination of government notifications of acceptances and specified deviations by the Secretariat as required in accordance with the Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex standards i.e. "Subsequent Procedure concerning Publication and Acceptance of Codex Standards" Procedural Manual 5th Edition, pages 35, 38 and 39.

2. The Commission has already established a Guide to the Procedure for the Revision and Amendment of Codex Standards (Procedural Manual, 5th Ed., page 45). This procedure covers sufficiently amendments to Codex standards which have been elaborated by still active Codex Committees and those mentioned under paragraph 1(g) above. In the case of amendments proposed to Codex standards elaborated by Codex Committees which have adjourned sine die, the procedure places an obligation on the Commission to "determine how best to deal with the proposed amendment". In order to facilitate consideration of such amendments, in particular, those of the type mentioned in para. 1 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f), it is felt that the Commission could establish some more detailed guidance within the existing procedure for the amendment and revision of Codex standards. This could be achieved by giving a wider interpretation to sections 1 and 2 of the Guide.

3. It is therefore proposed for consideration by the Executive Committee that:

- (i) The Secretariat keep under review all Codex standards originating from Codex Committees adjourned sine die and to determine the need for any amendments arising from decisions of the Commission, in particular amendments of type mentioned in para. 1(a), (b), (c), (d) and those of (e) if of an editorial nature. If a need to amend the standard appears appropriate then the Secretariat should prepare a text for adoption in the Commission.
- (ii) In the case of amendments of the type in paras (f) and those of (e) of a substantive nature, the Secretariat in cooperation with the national secretariat of the adjourned Committee and, if possible, the Chairman of that Committee, should agree on the need for such an amendment and prepare a working paper containing the wording of a proposed amendment and the reasons for proposing such amendment, and request comments from Member Governments: (a) on the need to proceed with such an amendment and (b) on the proposed amendment itself. If the majority of the replies received from Member Governments is affirmative on both the need to amend the standard and the suitability of the proposed wording for the amendment or an alternative proposed wording, the proposal should be submitted to the Commission with a request to approve the amendment of the standard concerned. In cases where replies do not appear to offer an uncontroversial solution then the Commission should be informed accordingly and it would be for the Commission to determine how best to proceed.