

# 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 Facsimile: 6799563

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ALINORM 89/36

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
18th Session  
Geneva, 3-12 July 1989

REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE  
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
San José, Costa Rica, 20-24 February 1989

NOTE: This document incorporates Codex Circular Letter CL 1989/18-LAC

W/Z4279

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CX 3/15

CL 1989/18-LAC  
April 1989

TO: - Codex Contact Points  
- Participants at the 6th Session of the Codex Coordinating  
Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean  
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: Report of the Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for  
Latin America and the Caribbean

The Report of the 6th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean will be considered by the 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which will be held in Geneva from 3 to 12 July 1989.

B. REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM AND MATTERS OF INTEREST TO  
GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1. Proposed Guidelines for Setting-Up National Codex Committees (ALINORM 89/36, paras 20-23; CX/LAC 89/2-Add.1).
2. Import/Export Food Control and Consumer Protection Programmes (ALINORM 89/36, paras 75, 86, 88).
3. Questionnaire on Monitoring National Policies, Programmes, Services and Institutions related to Food Safety (ALINORM 89/36, para. 75; CL 1988/48-LAC).
4. Food Standardization and Health (ALINORM 89/36, para. 90 and Appendix IV).
5. First Draft of a World-wide Standard for Raw Sugar (ALINORM 89/36, para. 104; CL 1988/36-LAC).
6. Proposed Regional Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sales of Street-Foods (ALINORM 89/36, para. 108 and Appendix III).
7. Harmonization of Regional Food Standards and Codex Standards (ALINORM 89/36, paras 112, 115).
8. Identification of Products of Regional Interest with a View to the Elaboration of World-wide Codex Standards (ALINORM 89/36, paras 143-144).

Latest Date for the Receipt of Comments/Information

Comments and information on Items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, should be sent to the Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, as follows: Items 1, 5, 6 - By 30 October 1989; Items 2, 8 - By 30 December 1989.

Comments and information on Items 3, 4, 7, should be sent to Dr. F. Quevedo, Regional Advisor, (HDV/FOS), Pan-American Health Organization, 525, 23rd N.W. Washington D.C. 20037, USA, with a copy to this Office, by 30 December 1989.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The 6th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (20-24 February 1989, San José, Costa Rica) reached the following conclusions:

1. Proposed Guidelines for Setting-Up National Codex Committees (Para. 23)

The Committee expressed support for the paper and requested the Government of Cuba and the Secretariat to prepare a draft taking into consideration situations specific for the Region. The Draft should be circulated for comments and discussed at the next session of the Coordinating Committee.

2. International Standard Specification for Rice (Para. 31)

The Committee supported the need for a separate Codex Standard for Milled Rice.

3. Acceptances of Codex Standards and Maximum Residue Limits (Para. 38)

The Committee noted a trend towards increasing acceptances in the Region. The Committee considered the inclusion of Codex Standards in GATT agreements to be of considerable importance to the overall acceptance of the standards as instruments to reduce technical barriers to trade.

4. Food Control and Consumer Protection Activities (Para. 73)

The Committee drew attention to the need for governments to recognize the importance of food control and consumer protection programmes when establishing their priorities for technical assistance within the framework of national development plans.

5. Export/Import Food Control and Food Protection Programmes (Para. 86)

The Committee adopted the recommendations of a workshop on that topic, which urge adoption of policies aimed at strengthening food quality control, regular contacts and training networks, at regional level, promotion of further utilization of Codex Standards, avoidance of technical barriers in trade. Another workshop was recommended in conjunction with the next Coordinating Session.

6. Food Standardization and Health (Para. 90)

The Committee approved the recommendations adopted by the Workshop on that subject. The Recommendations covered microbiological criteria for foods typical for the Region, food-borne diseases and pesticide residues in food (Appendix IV).

7. First Draft of a World Standard for Raw Sugar (Para. 104)

The Committee agreed to retain the draft at Step 3 and to have a new draft prepared by the Government of Cuba and the Codex Committee on Sugars for comments at Step 3.

8. Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Street-Vended Foods (Para. 108)

The Committee agreed to circulate the Revised Regional Draft Code for comments at Step 3 (Appendix III).

9. Harmonization of Regional Food Standards and Codex Standards (Para. 115)

The Committee concluded that work on the harmonization of standards should continue by the Regional Coordinator, COPANT, ICAITI and the Government of Cuba. The Committee agreed to request PAHO to assist in organizing a Meeting of Experts before the next session to review and evaluate measures on standards harmonization.

10. Communication Among Codex Contact Points/National Codex Committees in the Region (Para. 138)

The Committee welcomed the Coordinator's initiative in sending out a detailed questionnaire allowing improved communication and a better understanding of the activities and responsibilities of the Codex institutions in the countries of the Region.

11. Study Group on Food Protection Information (Paras 139-141)

The Committee expressed support for the work of this group organized by PAHO.

12. Products of Regional Interest Proposed for Codex World-wide Standards (Para. 144)

The Committee agreed to bring to the attention of the corresponding Codex Committees the following products to be considered for the elaboration of world-wide Codex Standards: a) live lobsters/langoustines; b) fresh-frozen gonads of the sea-urchin; c) sausages, cooked and uncooked; d) review of maximum residue limits for pesticides in tropical products; e) establishment of microbiological specifications and sampling plans for non-stable meat products thermally treated before packaging.

13. Future Work and Work Assignments

The Committee agreed on the main lines on its future work outlined in paras 146-147: (a) Follow-up on the Proposed Standard for Raw Sugar (Step 3); (b) Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Foods (Step 3); (c) Guidelines for the Establishment of National Codex Committees; (d) Report/Expert Meeting on Progress on Harmonization of Regional Food Standards and Codex Standards.

14. Nomination of Coordinator (Para. 150)

Licenciada María Eugenia Chacón Mórux of Costa Rica was nominated for appointment by the Commission at its 18th Session.

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8. The speech the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, outlined the efforts of the Governments of Central America toward a lasting peace, for overcoming the long standing strife in the Region. The President underlined the crucial importance the new spirit of friendship, confidence and democracy for the success of the struggle of the peoples of Central America to overcome their "traditional" poverty and economic dependence.

9. Dr. Arias Sánchez pointed out that this new atmosphere is promoting mutual understanding and a wide range of possibilities for cooperation and interaction among the countries of Latin America. He pointed out that Codex has an important role to play as an instrument of communication and cooperation between countries and welcomed the efforts of the Commission in this regard. (The Speech of the President is reproduced in full in Appendix II to this report).

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 2)

10. The Coordinating Committee had for its consideration the Provisional Agenda for the meeting CX/LAC 89/1. On the proposal of the Chairperson, it was agreed to change the order of discussion of the items, and the Committee agreed to discuss Items 8 and 9 immediately after Item 3. The Committee also agreed, on the proposal of the Delegation of Ecuador, to change the title of agenda Item 8 to read: "Report of the Joint FAO/PAHO Workshop on Export/Import Food Control and Food Protection Programmes" which reflected more accurately the nature of the material to be discussed.

11. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda with these changes as the agenda for the session.

#### ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN (Agenda Item 3)

12. The Coordinating Committee unanimously elected M.S. Manuel Antonio Caceres Pineda, Director General de Alimentacion y Nutricion, Ministerio de Salud Publica of Honduras as Vice-Chairman of the session.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 4)

13. Under this agenda item, the Committee had for consideration three documents:

- a) CX/LAC 89/2 covering matters of interest to the Committee arising from the 17th session of the Commission, and other Codex Committees.
- b) CX/LAC 89/2 Add. 1, a paper on guidelines for the setting up of national Codex Committees prepared originally, for presentation at the Coordinating Committee for Africa.
- c) CX/LAC 89/2 Add. 2, ISO International Standard Specification for Rice.

#### The Improvement of the Working Mechanisms of the Codex Commission

14. The Cuban Delegation, referring to document CX/LAC 89/2, stated that the decision of the Commission at its 17th Session (ALINORM 89/39, para. 113) concerning the elaboration of a programme that would permit improvement in the work of the Commission, had not been fulfilled and that the adopted alternatives deviated from the decision taken.

15. The Secretariat pointed out a number measures outlined in CL 1989/1-GEN aimed at improving the work of the Commission, such as table of status of work and a summary of decision which are now regularly included in each Committee report. The Secretariat stated that collecting these tables in a separate volume and distributing it to contact points would seem a duplication of work in a period of reduction of volume and number of documents.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CC/LAC) was held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 20-24 February 1989 under the Chairmanship of the Coordinator for the Region, Licda. María Eugenia Chacón Mórux.

2. The Session was attended by delegates from the following countries of the Region:

Antigua & Barbuda	Argentina	Barbados
Brazil	Colombia	Cuba
Costa Rica	Ecuador	Guatemala
Honduras	Jamaica	Mexico
Nicaragua	Panama	Peru
Dominican Republic	Trinidad & Tobago	

Observers were present from Spain, CARICOM, ICAITI and ILSI.

A complete list of participants, including FAO, WHO and PAHO officers, is attached as Appendix I to this report.

3. The opening session took place on 20 February 1989 in the presence of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, Government Ministers and Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps.

4. The Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Ing. Eduardo Mendez, gave a brief outline of the history of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and its development to the present status of the internationally recognized food standards institution. He described the achievements of the Commission in preparing more than 200 internationally recognized food standards, 2000 maximum limits for pesticide residues and 45 codes of good manufacturing and hygienic practice. He noted the importance for the Region of the successful Joint Workshops on Food Standards and Health and Food Control for Food Export and Import held previous to the Session.

5. Dr. Fernando Quevedo spoke on behalf of the Panamerican Health Organization. He noted the contribution of the American Continent to the rest of the world in the introduction or processing of major food crops and products such as maize, potato, coffee, cocoa and chocolate. He stressed the traditional concern over the safety of foods expressed in the PAHO Regional Programme of Food Protection. He also stressed the concern with the problems of hunger and health in the Region, and expressed appreciation to the Government of the host country Costa Rica and noted the importance it attached to hosting the Coordinating Committee.

6. Ing. Osvaldo Babini, FAO Representative in Costa Rica, greeted the participants on behalf of the Director General of FAO. He pointed out the role Codex plays in uniting the efforts of a wide range of experts in developing agriculture and helping overcome the huge external debts of the countries of the Region. He stressed the role FAO could play in assisting the countries in setting and strengthening import and export food control systems. He also underlined that in its objective to eliminate barriers to international trade, GATT attached increasing importance to Codex as one of the basic organizations working to eliminate Technical Barriers to Trade.

7. In his address the Minister of Economy and Trade, Lic. Antonio Burgues Terán, paid tribute to the work of Codex since its establishment in 1962. He pointed out the positive response of importing countries to trade based on Codex Standards and rules. He underlined that the new strategy of the Government of Costa Rica is aimed at improving competitiveness and productivity in food production and trade. The Minister stressed that this would require intensive technological development, institutional development, clearly defined quality control policy, standardization, continuous training. He also noted the growing beneficial interaction between the private and public sectors, the inputs from different sources such as nutrition, food handling and hygiene and consumer rights.

16. The Delegation of Cuba reiterated its position by pointing out that the alternatives presented by the Secretariat not only did not meet the decision of the Commission but in addition did not contribute to facilitating the participation of developing countries in the work of Codex. It also noted that from a financial point of view, this did not involve additional expenses, since it would be more economical to summarize the work of the Commission in one single document of 3-4 pages rather than include that in the report of each Committee (more than 20 Committees). Finally the delegation pointed out that no precedent should be created of modifying the decisions of the Commission by alternative provisions and that only the Commission can change its own decisions. The Delegation of Argentina agreed with the statement of the Cuban Delegation.

17. The Committee agreed that the publication of a summary table of decisions at the end of each Codex Committee Meeting did not meet entirely the decisions and recommendations of the Commission and did not satisfy the needs expressed in the original request for such a document. The Committee agreed that the decisions of the Commission should be carried out through the elaboration of a programme of the status of work of the Commission, and that it should be updated and distributed to the Member Countries following each Commission Session. The Committee decided to follow the instructions of the CAC.

#### Methods of Analysis

18. In reference to the work of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CC/MAS), the Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee about the monitoring of residues of veterinary drugs, pesticides and metallic contaminants in meat, fishery and dairy products. The Delegation strongly stressed the need for approved, validated and internationally recognized methods of analysis. The publication of such methods in full was also recommended. The Committee agreed to refer that request to the relevant Committees.

19. The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CC/MAS) considered a document exploring ways of assisting developing countries in the selection of simple methods of analysis.

The Delegation of Argentina expressed strong reservations about usefulness of "simple" methods for the control and monitoring of residues and contaminants in food products. The limits of determination of the "simple" methods were inadequate for control, particularly for export purposes, where maximum limits are constantly being lowered. The Delegation of Ecuador fully supported the statement of Argentina. "Simpler" methods in the opinion of the Delegate could be considered for screening purposes at national level provided the sensitivity of such methods was adequate to protect the consumer.

#### Proposed Guidelines for Setting-up National Codex Committees

20. The Secretariat introduced document CX/LAC 89/2 Add. 1 which had been prepared by a consultant (Mr. G. Baptist) for the Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. At the suggestion of the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission it was decided to make the paper available to delegates and participants at the Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.

21. The paper outlined problems which many countries faced due to lack of coordination at the national level, between ministries, standards boards or bureaux, and other institutions, when dealing with Codex matters. It analysed the functions of a National Codex Committee, as well as its possible location within government structure and its composition. The paper described possible modes of operation and other activities which the Committee could carry out, such as:

- providing relevant data on food standards;
- establishing a data bank;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the national food control system;
- organizing seminars and workshops;

- acting as a focal point for technical cooperation and assistance in matters related to food control;
- promoting primary health care.

22. The delegations of Colombia, Cuba, Barbados, Ecuador, Argentina, Costa Rica, and the representatives of CARICOM and ICAITI congratulated the Secretariat for this excellent paper and stated that much of it was very relevant to the countries of the Region, especially those which had no National Codex Committees established at present.

23. The Delegation of Cuba noted that the paper complemented a number of guidelines and recommendations already prepared by the Committee, and proposed that the draft guidelines should be re-drafted to take into account the situations existing in the countries of the Region, and distributed with the previous recommendations in a single document. The Committee agreed to request the Delegation of Cuba to re-draft the document accordingly, in cooperation with the Secretariat, and that the document would be distributed for comments to the member countries of the Region prior to discussion at the next session of the Committee.

24. The Representative of CARICOM referred to the proposal to establish a national data base of Codex Standards and recommended that a global data base should be established by the Codex Secretariat, which could then be made available to National Codex Committees.

25. In the course of the discussion of the paper, the Delegations of Ecuador, Colombia, and Barbados provided the Committee with information concerning the operations of their National Codex Committees.

#### International Standard Specification for Rice

26. The Committee had before it document CX/LAC 89/2 Add. 2 to which was attached the Draft Specification for Milled Rice (ISO/DIS 7301) prepared by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

27. The Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 17th Session in 1987 was informed that the ISO was in the process of finalizing the specification for rice which included milled rice. The Commission requested the Secretariat to submit the ISO Specification to the Coordinating Committees for comments, so that the Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes could examine the specification together with the views of the Coordinating Committees and recommend to the Commission whether a Codex Standards for Milled Rice should be elaborated (ALINORM 87/39 para 463).

28. The Coordinating Committee for Asia, at its 6th Session in January 1988, expressed the view that the ISO Specifications for Rice should be carefully reviewed before a decision could be taken for the elaboration of a Codex Standard for Rice. It held the view that the ISO Specification on Milled Rice should be adopted by Codex and that there was no need for elaboration of a separate Codex Standards for Milled Rice by the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes.

29. The Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes, at its 6th Session, in October 1988, had examined the ISO Draft Specification and had concluded that a wider standard was needed to cover all aspects normally covered by Codex Standards.

30. The Brazilian Delegation stated that at the 6th Session of the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes, which they consider as the appropriate forum for considering the ISO Specifications for Rice, they had not agreed with the position of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia that the ISO Standard should be adopted by Codex. Consequently the Brazilian Delegation supported the decision of the CC/CPL to request the approval of the Commission to proceed with the elaboration of a Codex Standard, and that the Delegation of the United States, assisted by the Delegations of France and Netherlands, should prepare a first draft for discussion at the next meeting of the CC/CPL (ALINORM 89/29, para. 115).

31. The Delegations of Colombia and Jamaica firmly stated their opinion that the Codex Alimentarius Commission was the appropriate forum for the elaboration of a

world-wide Standard for Rice. The Delegation of Colombia offered its assistance in the preparation of the standard based on its national standards for rice. The Delegation of Jamaica stated that it would like to have standards developed for other commodities as well.

32. The Committee concluded that a worldwide Codex Standard for Rice should be prepared, using the ISO Specification as a base, and agreed to inform the Commission accordingly.

REVIEW OF ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND CODEX MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE (Agenda Item 5)

33. The Secretariat introduced paper CX/LAC 89/3 which contained a summary of acceptances of Codex Standards and Codex of Practice by the countries of the region.

34. The Delegation of Argentina informed about the following acceptances in 1988: 6 milk standards, 18 cheese standards, standards for irradiated food and code of practice for food irradiation facilities. So far, a total of 127 Codex Standards or Codes of Practice have been accepted by Argentina. The Delegation stated that the acceptance of Codex Standards by GATT would be welcomed, since present requirements of importing countries concerning chemical residues, biological and radionuclide contaminants could be used as non tariff barriers.

35. The Delegation of Mexico informed that they are in a position to accept fully the following Codex Standards:

Canned Tuna and Bonito in Water or Oil (CODEX STAN 70-1981);  
Quick-Frozen Shrimps or Prawns (CODEX STAN 92-1981);  
Quick-Frozen Lobsters (CODEX STAN 95-1981).

36. The Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee about the acceptance of over 40 MRL's for pesticides, the International Code of Practice for Canned Fish. Other Standards and Codes of Practice, including those for fish and fishery products, are being studied with a view to acceptance. The Delegate stated that the Brazilian private industry was capable of meeting any requirements by the food importing countries.

37. The Delegate of Costa Rica pointed out that up to the end of 1988, full acceptance was granted to three Codex Standards (55-1981; 56-1981; 57-1981) and five standards were accepted with specified deviations. (58-1981; 59-1981; 60-1981; 61-1981, 62-1981). Another 32 standards and 28 Codes of practice are being considered for acceptance.

38. The Committee noted that the trend towards accepting Codex Standards in the countries of the Region was increasing, but drew attention to the fact that the acceptance of Codex Standards by the industrialized countries would be essential if the impact of the Codex programme was to be meaningful. The inclusion of Codex Standards in the agreements to be reached by GATT in relation to agricultural trade was considered to be of considerable importance to the overall acceptance of the standards as instruments to reduce technical barriers to trade.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE ARISING FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 6)

Report on Joint FAO and WHO/PAHO Activities related to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

39. The Coordinating Committee had before it an information document CX/LAC 89/4-Part I, which was a report on these activities. The report was introduced by members of the Secretariat and the Representatives of FAO, WHO and PAHO.

40. The Committee was informed of the joint FAO/WHO activities related to its work; in particular, the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) which had held four sessions since the last session of the Coordinating

Committee. Two of these meetings had been devoted to the evaluation of food additives and contaminants, particularly heavy metal contaminants, mycotoxins including aflatoxins, several food flavouring and coloring agents, and the salts of glutamic acid including MSG. The other two meetings had been devoted to the evaluation of residues of veterinary drugs in foods, and these sessions had examined the antibiotic chloramphenicol; three natural hormones and two synthetic growth promotion agents: two trypanosides commonly used in tropical countries; three anthelmintics and two sulfa drugs. The reports of these meetings were available from WHO, or else were in preparation. Specifications of identity and purity for the food additives studied and detailed monographs on the occurrence of residues were available from FAO.

41. The outcome of recent meetings of the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment (JMFR) and a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Guidelines for Predicting Dietary Intake of Pesticide Residues, was provided to the Committee. It was noted that the report of the Expert Consultation had been translated into Spanish and was available from PAHO. Copies were distributed to delegates.

42. The Committee was informed of recent activities in relation to food irradiation. A joint FAO/WHO/IAEA International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation has examined several aspects of the use of this technology as a means of ensuring the hygienic quality of food as a quarantine treatment, and to extend shelf-life. A Joint FAO/WHO/IAEA/ITC (UNCTAD-GATT) International Conference on the Acceptance, Control of, and Trade in Irradiated Food was held in Geneva in December 1988. The Committee was apprised of the outcome of the Conference, and in particular that the acceptance of irradiated foods by the consumer depended greatly on the use of adequate and informative labelling.

43. Within the framework of the UNEP Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS), FAO and WHO have responsibility for the Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme. Eight countries of the Region currently participate in this Programme. The Committee was informed of recent activities, including the final stages of the preparation of the Programme's report and summary of data for 1983-1985. The Programme has also initiated a system of quality assurance of analytical data so as to ensure that the results of the participating laboratories are truly comparable. The last report of these studies was issued in 1988. The Programme has also issued Guidelines for the Study of Dietary Intakes of Chemical Contaminants which have been endorsed by both the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, which recommended that they be used by governments for the purpose of estimating health risks to consumers.

44. A report was also made on the Second Joint FAO/WHO/UNEP International Conference on Mycotoxins, held in Bangkok (Thailand) in 1987. The priority areas identified by the Conference for the control of mycotoxin contamination of foods were listed in the document before the Committee (CX/LAC 89/4-Part I), and in addition the Conference adopted 16 recommendations. The report of the Conference, in English, French and Spanish, was being distributed to Codex Contact Points.

45. A Joint FAO/PAHO Regional Workshop on Food Legislation and Standardization for Latin American and Caribbean Countries was held in Mexico City in April 1988. The report of this meeting was available to member countries of the region, and included a Model Food Law, based on the FAO/WHO Model Food Law. The Model Food Law has been adapted for use in Guatemala and Honduras. The recommendations of the Workshop have been brought to the attention of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by the Representative of the Region.

46. A Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Recommended Allowances of Nutrients for Food Labelling Purposes was held in Helsinki (Finland) in September 1988. The report of the Consultation was being distributed to Codex Contact Points, and would be discussed by the forthcoming session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (April 1989).

Report on FAO Activities

47. The FAO Representative informed the Committee that FAO continued to attach great importance to its national and regional activities regarding the strengthening of food control systems in the area and referred to a booklet reviewing the main features of the FAO programme in this field, which was circulated among the participants. FAO technical cooperation comprises assistance in the review of national food quality control strategies on infrastructures and the preparation of project proposals in order to strengthening national capabilities.

48. The Committee was informed of several types of projects for which FAO has offered support in matters related to food control, food contamination monitoring, etc. During the period under analysis, technical cooperation had been provided to the following Latin American and Caribbean countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago.

49. In the field of Food Legislation, the FAO/WHO Food Law was adapted by a FAO Consultant to the Latin American circumstances and after its review and endorsement by the participants of a Regional FAO/PAHO Regional Workshop on Food Legislation and Standardization held in Mexico in April 1988, it is being used in the Region in the updating of the food legislation of some countries.

50. The Committee was informed of the different training activities held in the countries of the region, an example being the Food Inspector Workshop in Food Samples Techniques, held in Guatemala in May 1988. In this respect, the Delegation of Cuba, informed the Committee about a Regional course on Chemical Contaminants Analysis (Aflatoxins) carried out in 1987 with the collaboration of FAO and PAHO. The two FAO projects on mycotoxins and metallic contaminants in food, together with the PAHO consultancies on microbiological contaminants have greatly assisted the National Surveillance Programme on Chemical and Microbiological Contaminants established in Cuba.

51. A Workshop on Mycotoxins Analysis would be held in Trinidad & Tobago from 3-8 April 1989 for the English speaking countries of the Caribbean and the preparation of a series of Regional Workshops on Methods of Analysis of Foods for Radionuclide contamination to be held one in Barbados and other in Mexico.

52. The Committee was informed about the efforts that have been made in order to assist countries from the Region in the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct in the Distribution and use of Pesticides prepared with the assistance of several international organizations.

53. FAO-supported activities had been initiated in Colombia and Peru following recommendations of the Joint FAO/PAHO Workshop on Street Vended Foods. In this regard the Committee was informed that the modules developed in those countries for the education of producers, vendors, control officials and consumers of street vended foods will be published for distribution and use in the Region and the interchange of experience between countries of the area, will be facilitated.

54. The Committee was also informed that due to the great social, sanitary and economic importance street vended foods have in this and other regions, FAO held an Expert Consultation on Street Vended Foods in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in December 1988. The Consultation very strongly recommended that national authorities take early steps to recognize and assist the street food industry in order to be able to initiate actions to upgrade its performance, and through training and development measures, ultimately absorb street food vendors and hawkers in the urban food supply system. The Committee was informed that FAO will continue coordinating and assisting countries in their efforts to improve the food handling practices.

55. Several publications on food control and of food contamination monitoring had been prepared and were available to member countries. An example was the Food Quality Manual No. 6 "Food for Exports" which is available in English and Spanish. A publication on Food Sampling Techniques, another on Food Analysis for Mycotoxins, and a Manual of Quality Assurance for the Food Control Laboratory are in preparation.

56. FAO continued to provide some reference materials for pesticides and aflatoxins for use in laboratory analysis. These materials were available to national authorities at their request.

57. In response to a question from the Delegation of Jamaica, the Committee was informed that FAO was preparing a comprehensive publication on "The Utilization of Tropical Foods" which would contain information on the preparation of traditional foods from around the world. The first volumes of this publication should be available in 1989.

#### Report on WHO Activities

58. The WHO Representative in summarizing the WHO Global and Inter-Regional Food Safety Activities, informed the Committee of the work sponsored by WHO, food and related industries and other donors to undertake studies using the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach as a means to integrate food safety into Primary Health Care.

59. The key role of information and education in raising public awareness of food safety issues was stressed. In this connexion, reference was made to a WHO Consultation on Health Education in Food Safety, Geneva, 27 April-1 May 1987.

60. As a result of concern expressed by public health authorities over recent outbreaks of foodborne listeriosis, WHO had convened two consultations in 1986 and 1988. The latter consultation had provided recommendations to both public health authorities and the food industry on how to ensure the safeguarding of the consumer. The findings of a WHO Expert Committee on Salmonellosis Control, Geneva, September 1987, aimed at preventing the spread of animal-borne salmonella infection on the farm had recently been published by WHO in its Technical Report Series.

61. A WHO Consultation on Health Surveillance and Management Procedures for Food Handling Personnel, Geneva, April 1988, had concluded that while food handlers can be the cause of food contamination leading to disease outbreaks, routine medical examinations were of no practical value in preventing disease transmission. This is one of a number of conclusions reached by international experts commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of current procedures for protecting the public from disease outbreaks caused by food handlers. The Committee was informed that the findings are shortly to be published by WHO in its Technical Report Series.

62. In outlining the activities of the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) the WHO Representative informed the Committee that to date Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with 19 actively participating countries, which now have a network of 41 IPCS participating institutions. The International Programme was a collaborative activity between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

63. The WHO Representative informed the Committee that WHO had produced a report on accidental radionuclide contamination of food and guideline values based on health considerations. The guidelines provided a methodology to be used in calculated intervention levels and gives general guideline values for food and drinking water which may have been contaminated by radionuclides following an accident. WHO continued to cooperate with FAO to develop joint recommendations to the Codex Alimentarius Commission on Contamination levels of food moving in international trade.

64. The Committee was also informed of several WHO recent and forthcoming publications on various aspects of food safety, including the intention to publish selected countries case studies/experiences on the street vending of food.

#### Report of PAHO Activities

65. The representative of PAHO reported that the activities of PAHO are carried out within the framework of the Regional Technical Cooperation Program in Food Safety, approved by the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference in 1986, and strongly supported by the V Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas (RIMSA V). In accordance

with the specific objectives of the PAHO program, emphasis was placed on cooperating with the countries so that they could develop national food safety programs. The activities centered on providing technical cooperation in the various technical aspects and elements of those programs. A description of the programs was given in full in document CX/LAC 89/4-Part II.

66. The activities covered aspects of resource mobilization, dissemination of information; training; the promotion of policies, plans and standardization; research promotion; and direct technical cooperation. The Representative of PAHO explained that since the main purpose behind the PAHO Plan of Action is to promote activities so that by 1990 more than half of the countries in the Region will have adopted policies, strategies, and technologies that will help to improve the situation of food safety, especially through the formulation and development of integrated national programs, this strategic component received priority attention. During the time period covered by the present report, various activities were carried out, which are listed in CX/LAC 89/4-Part II. As a matter of special interest, it was noted that research on topics related to food safety continued to be encouraged and sponsored. Special emphasis was placed on sponsoring and carrying out studies on applying the HACCP concept. In the Dominican Republic a study of various aspects of ciguatera was promoted.

67. Direct cooperation was given to various countries in the Region, including Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. In Argentina and Bolivia, PAHO provided advisory services for the programming or execution of activities within the framework of an important loan granted by the World Bank to the Office of the Mayor of the City of La Paz, for organization of the PRONAPAL laboratory network.

68. In addition, the Committee was informed of the following activities of special interest to the Region:

First National Food Safety Week. Peru, 16-22 October 1988. Organized by the Food Protection Program of the Ministry of Health, and PAHO. In addition to presentations for schoolchildren, handlers, and professionals, a parade was held in which more than one thousand schoolchildren took part. When they heard of the success of that event, the participants in the Andean Workshop held in Trujillo, Peru, November 1988, agreed to recommend that in 1989, a Food Safety Week be organized simultaneously in all the countries of that subregion.

Direct intensive and long-term education courses of food safety, aimed at primary school teachers. Numerous courses were given at various locations in Peru. They have had an impact on more than 300,000 schoolchildren. Based on the ideas and drawings of the children, a brightly colored calendar on food safety was printed and distributed in the primary schools in 1987, and another in 1988. These activities were part of a joint effort between the Ministries of Public Health and Education, with PAHO technical cooperation.

69. The Delegation of Peru commended the work of FAO, WHO and PAHO in the area of food control and stated that the recommendations of the workshops and expert meetings should be considered for inclusion into national programmes. The Delegation noted that FAO, WHO and PAHO sponsored workshops should be replicated at the national level as this would have a multiplier effect on disseminating the information and conclusions arising from the workshops. The Delegation specifically welcomed the multisectorial approach of FAO to the control and development of the street foods industry, and the educational programmes of PAHO directed at the changing of behavioural patterns in food preparation which led to health problems.

70. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic commended the work of PAHO in the country and mentioned some of the activities on food safety carried out in cooperation with this organization.

71. The Delegation of Argentina referred to the necessity of following up technical assistance in the countries of the region and suggested that, in future, delegations might be requested to report on this. The Delegation referred to a successful project

within the Technical Cooperation Programme of FAO for the strengthening of food monitoring laboratories which had been successfully followed up with strongly motivated support from the private sector in Argentina. The Delegation also referred to FAO's training programmes in the control of radionuclides and offered the support of Argentina's long experience in this area.

72. The Delegation of Ecuador drew attention to the need for technical assistance to take into account the levels of existing infrastructure in different countries of the Region. The Guidelines on Infrastructures (see paras 20-25) would be of use in this regard. The Delegation also drew attention to the fact that national experts seemed to be underutilized in the technical assistance provided to countries of the Region, and proposed that national experts would be well placed to ensure the follow up of the project activities.

Several delegations, including those of Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Peru gave further details of FAO, WHO and PAHO sponsored activities in their countries.

73. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO, WHO and PAHO for the extensive activities carried out in the Region. It drew attention to the need for governments to recognize the importance of food control and consumer protection programmes when establishing their priorities for technical assistance. FAO, WHO and PAHO had an important role to play in sensitizing governments and donors to the benefits of these programmes within the framework of national development plans. Project documents needed to be prepared in a comprehensive manner, and presented competitively, if adequate funding for these activities was to be provided.

#### Matters of Interest to the Committee arising from the Activities of other International Organizations

74. Document CX/LAC 89/4-Part III was introduced by the Secretariat and gave a brief summary of the work of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture of interest to the Region.

#### FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD CONTROL IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (Agenda Item 7)

75. The WHO Secretariat pointed out that the Codex Secretariat had circulated to the contact points in the Region the CL 1988/48-LAC requesting countries to reply to the attached questionnaire on monitoring national policies, programmes, services and institutions related to food safety. As only three countries had sent their replies to PAHO, consequently no document had been prepared. The Committee decided that copies of the CL 1988/48-LAC and the questionnaire be distributed to the delegates and that subsequent country responses be sent to PAHO, Washington by the end of May 1989. Based on these replies PAHO would prepare a document for possible presentation at the CAC in July.

76. The PAHO Secretariat then introduced document CX/LAC 89/5-Add. 2 surveillance programmes for the prevention and control of food-borne diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean.

77. The Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that their Ministry of Health had carried out an operative decentralization of the sanitary food surveillance covering the hygiene and sanitary control which involves the areas of food regulation for analysis, sanitary education and epidemiological studies. More specific programmes had been implemented by the Health Secretariats of the states jointly with PAHO. The Ministry was responsible for the food registry and standardization, as well as for providing consultancies and supervising these programmes.

78. The Delegation of Peru informed that a vast epidemiological study was carried out with the assistance of PAHO on parasitosis transmitted through fish consumption. A similar epidemiological study on botulism is being planned.

79. The Delegation of Colombia pointed out that due to budgetary constraints and blocking of personnel posts, serious difficulties have been encountered in the

realization of the epidemiological studies, which is being resolved by working jointly with the epidemiology staff of the Ministry of Health.

80. The Delegation of Cuba informed that a system for the study and control of food-borne diseases had been established in the country by a Ministerial Resolution. The system has been presented at the 4th Workshop together with the results of a survey of outbreaks during the last 12 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST FAO/PAHO WORKSHOP ON EXPORT/IMPORT FOOD CONTROL AND FOOD PROTECTION PROGRAMMES FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (Agenda Item 8)

81. The Committee recalled that the title of this Item had been amended to reflect more adequately the subject matter under discussion (see para. 10, above).

82. The Workshop was held at San Jose, Costa Rica on 17 and 18 February 1989, with the participation of delegates from the following countries: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Trinidad & Tobago. Thirty-six participants, 17 observers and 14 representatives from FAO, PAHO, WHO, ICAITI and the Commission of Codex Alimentarius attended the Workshop.

83. Representatives of each of the participating countries reported on the current status of import/export controls, the systems in place, problems confronted by their Governments and the needs for future development. The reports were most comprehensive and demonstrated that the degree of emphasis and the control of food imports and exports varied from country to country with some focussing on exports and others on imports. It was clear, however that there was an increasing awareness of the importance of the control of food exports to meet foreign market requirements if foreign exchange earning were to be maximized. Governments of the region were therefore receptive to guidance and information exchange about how their food export performances might be improved.

84. Reports, prepared by FAO Consultants, were presented to the Workshop on the following topics:

- Strengthening Quality Control and Pre-shipment Inspection of Foods for Export
- Food Import Control in U.S.A.
- Recommended Infrastructure for a National Programme to Ensure Safety and Quality of Foods for Export
- Problems faced by Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the Import and Export of Food Products
- Problems with Imported Products as Recorded by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in its Fiscal Year 1988.

85. The Workshop had concluded that its deliberations had provided a valuable insight into the export/import control systems of the participating countries, and that the Workshop itself had presented an invaluable forum for information exchange as well as providing the opportunity to discuss regional problems, considering prospects for the future and focus on the essentials of both export and import control systems for foods.

86. On the basis of the oral report, and following a study of the conclusions of the Workshop by a small group composed of the Delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador and Dr. E. Morales (FAO Consultant), the Coordinating Committee endorsed the following recommendations:

1. To request the governments of the Region to adopt as a priority, policies and national programmes oriented to strengthening the quality of food for export and improve the control of quality of imported foods.

2. To request countries to carry out, with the technical assistance of FAO and PAHO, an exhaustive review of their national programmes of food control for import and exports, in order to develop strategies and programmes to improve and consolidate the existing infrastructures.

3. That the countries of the Region meet regularly in order to discuss matters of common interest related to the control of food imports and exports and to examine the strategies developed to improve the global action related to food exports in the Region.

4. That the countries of the Region develop a system of information exchange and consultation (TCDC) with the object of facilitating rapid solutions for rejections and make the appropriate recommendations related to common problems on control of food imports and exports.

5. Request the industrialized countries importing food products to give equal treatment to imported and domestically produced foods, so as to avoid the establishment of technical, political, economical and protectionist barriers to trade in foods as well to apply special or deferential treatment to imported foods and integrate this effort into the process of improving food quality in the Region.

6. Request the countries represented at the Workshop to promote the organization of national Workshops on this matter in order to activate the strengthening of control systems for exported and imported foods and that in doing this, special attention be paid to educational aspects at consumer and producer levels.

7. To request the Codex Alimentarius Commission to recommend to the food importing and exporting industrialized countries the adoption of Codex standards and their application to commercial relationships with the countries of this Region.

8. To organize other Workshops in the Region to:

a) Consider and discuss with importing countries the problems related to the export and import of foods in the Region.

b) Discuss specialized matters, such as food laws and regulations, management of food control programmes, certification, standards for individual and groups of products, and inspection and laboratory programmes.

c) Establish a training programme in the Region to strengthen the technical and administrative infrastructure required for the efficient operation of a food control system for imports and exports. The programme should include training for laboratory and inspection personnel, and establish rules for the operation and accreditation of laboratories, in order to make the best use of available resources.

87. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO and PAHO for organizing the Workshop and to the FAO Consultants: Mr. W.C.K. Hammer, Dr. D. Heaton, and Dr. E. Morales for their work and the excellent presentation of the subject matter. The Committee was informed that copies of the papers presented to the Workshop would be available upon request from FAO.

88. The Committee recommended that a future subject for a Workshop to be held in conjunction with its next meeting should be related to the management of food control programmes for import and export in the countries of the Region. Other subjects which were proposed for future FAO/PAHO Workshops in the Region included:

- an analysis of national legislation/regulations for food labelling and packaging;
- inspection and analysis procedures for mycotoxins, heavy metals, residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs in imported and exported food commodities;
- specific Workshops on commodities of special interest to the Region such as cocoa, coffee, shrimp, and basic commodities such as wheat and rice.

**PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IIIITH WORKSHOP AND THE RESULTS OF THE IVTH WORKSHOP ON FOOD STANDARDIZATION AND HEALTH (Agenda Item 9)**

89. The Committee considered document CX/LAC 89/7 prepared by the PAHO Secretariat and introduced by Dr. F. Quevedo. Dr. Quevedo gave a background to the preparation of the IIIth Workshop and then outlined the implementation of some of the recommendations issuing from the three main items of the workshop:

1. Current situation in Latin America and the Caribbean of veterinary drug residues in food.
2. Importance and utilization of foods based on vegetable protein obtained from native plants in the region.
3. Application of HACCP in the improvement of food quality and safety.

90. The Committee was also informed about the main results of the IVth Workshop which covered the following topics:

1. Microbiological criteria for foods typical for the region.
2. Food borne diseases and their control.
3. Pesticide residues in food.

The detailed recommendations from each of the topics of the workshop are presented in Appendix IV to this report. The Committee approved these recommendations and urged the member countries to consider their implementation.

91. The Delegation of Cuba expressed its gratitude to PAHO for organizing the Workshop, and its satisfaction with the implementation of the recommendations of the IIIth Workshop and the results of the IVth. They proposed that a new workshop be organized prior to the 7th Session of CC/LAC and suggested that the following tentative topics be included in the Workshop, surveillance system for food borne diseases, mycotoxins, heavy metals, tourism and nutrition.

**ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON MYCOTOXINS (Agenda Item 10)**

92. The Committee had before it document CX/LAC 89/8, prepared by the Secretariat, which provided a comprehensive review of activities within the Codex Alimentarius Commission related to mycotoxins, radionuclides, heavy metals, pesticide residues, and residues of veterinary drugs in foods. The Secretariat also gave a brief report on the procedures used by the Joint FAO/WHO Experts Committees in arriving at their evaluations, and indicated where the reports, toxicological evaluations, monographs on the occurrence of residues, and specifications of identify and purity of food additives could be obtained.

93. The Delegations of Argentina and Brazil expressed their opinions that the proposed FAO/WHO levels for radionuclide contamination of foods, to be considered by the 21st. Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants were too high and were not in agreement with the levels recommended by the FAO Expert Consultation of December 1986. In Brazil the maximum level for Cesium 134/137 was 600 Bq/kg and 3700 Bq/kg for powdered milk. The Delegation of Argentina reported that a level of 370 Bq/kg was applied to imports of dairy products to Argentina. The exported dairy products are within the limit of detection of the method 2-5 Bq/kg. The Secretariat indicated that these comments would be brought to the attention of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants.

94. The Delegation of Argentina also drew the Committee's attention to work of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues on a study of the residues of fumigants in foods and referred to document CX/PR 88/10 which had been discussed by the 20th Session of that Committee. The documents listed 31 fumigants and conditions for their application, but drew attention to the need to establish guideline on maximum levels for residues which might remain in food after their use. The document was distributed to delegations for their information.

95. The Delegation of Cuba stated that Cuban Standards had been established for levels of use of food additives and for maximum levels for residues of pesticides, antibiotics, veterinary medicines, mycotoxins, and heavy metal contaminants. These standards had been based on monitoring programmes in the different regions of the country and for the most part were applied by the Ministry of Health. Information of the monitoring programmes and standards was available from the Cuban Codex Contact Point.

96. The Delegation of Mexico stated that the official position of the Government of Mexico was that it was not in agreement with the proposals of the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants as regards Guideline Levels for Aflatoxins in foods, especially as no methods of analysis and no sampling plans were given to confirm the Guideline Levels. The Delegation stated that Mexico used a level below 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  based on a well-defined sampling plan and analytical procedure. The proposed level of 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  could not be achieved by most producing countries, because, in practice, this would mean that they would have to apply a level below 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ , which was impossible. The Secretariat stated that these comments would be brought to the attention of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants.

97. The Committee was informed, as the result of an enquiry from the Delegation of Jamaica, that the Plant Protection Division of FAO provided assistance in the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, including the application of the provisions relating to the Prior Informed Consent of the countries importing pesticides to ensure the safety in-use, efficacy and safety of the residues arising from their use.

#### CONSIDERATION OF A FIRST DRAFT OF A WORLD STANDARD FOR RAW SUGAR (Agenda Item 11)

98. The Secretariat introduced two papers CX/LAC 89/9 and CX/LAC 89/9 Add. 1. The Commission had agreed at its 17th Session that Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the elaboration of a World-Wide Standard for Raw Sugar would commence under the auspices of the Coordinating Committee for Latin American and the Caribbean, and that the Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Sugars would continue working on the proposed draft standard at Step 4 of the procedure. A circular letter CL 1988/36-LAC (August 1988) together with the Draft World-Wide Codex Standard for Raw Sugar had been distributed to Governments and interested International Organizations for comments at Step 3.

99. Document CX/LAC 89/9-Add. 1 was based on information received from the Codex Committee on Sugars and contained the comments of German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, Italy, Thailand, Turkey, U.K. and U.S.A.

100. The Delegation of Cuba informed the Committee that at the 16th Meeting of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling important changes were introduced in the methods of analysis of sugar which made obsolete some of the provisions of the first draft. Considering also that many countries of the region had not received the CL 1988/36-LAC and the first draft, the Delegation proposed:

- a) that the draft should not be moved to Step 4;
- b) that Cuba prepare a new updated draft;
- c) that this draft be circulated for comments at Step 3.

101. The Delegation of Colombia stressed that the Draft Standard for Raw Sugar should not be moved to Step 4 since the sugar industry of their country had not agreed with some of the requirements of the Draft and had requested more time to present its comments. The delegate also added that since the methods of analysis had been changed, they should be reviewed and commented on.

102. The Delegation of Brazil stated that the definition of a World-wide Standard for Raw Sugar is of great importance because at present the product is commercialized under quality parameters unilaterally imposed by the importers. The American market requires in its contracts limits for dextran, while the ICUMSA (International Commission for Unified Methods of Sugar Analysis), the international organization

responsible for methods of analysis for sugars has not yet officially established an accurate and reproducible method that could reliably be used for the determination of this parameter.

103. The delegate of Honduras drew attention to the usefulness of raw sugar for direct consumption as a vehicle for the introduction of vitamin A in the diet in conformity with national nutrition goals and the UN programme for the elimination of vitamin A deficiency.

104. Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the Cuba's and the Secretariat's proposal that the Draft Standard should be retained at Step 3, and that a new draft be prepared by Cuba in consultation with the Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Sugars. The new Draft would be circulated for comments at Step 3. It was agreed to request the Commission's endorsement of this procedure.

**CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR STREET-VENDED FOODS**  
**(Agenda Item 12)**

105. The Delegation of Peru introduced document CX/LAC 89/10 (Conference Room Document) which had been prepared in lieu of the document containing government comments on Appendix V of ALINORM 87/36. The Delegation stated that only one country, Ireland, had commented on the previous draft code. However, on the basis of discussions which took place at a world-wide FAO Expert Consultation on Street Foods, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in December 1988, the Delegation of Peru had been able to make extensive changes to the document, making it more general and more accessible to street food vendors by the inclusion of explanatory notes to most of the provisions of the Code. The Delegation of Peru then gave an outline of the contents of the Draft Code.

106. The Committee expressed its warm appreciation for the work of the Delegation of Peru and for the detailed and comprehensive nature of the revised Draft Code. Nevertheless, it was agreed the document required further in-depth study. Many delegations provided comments on the Draft Code, including comments on the definitions, which were thought to need expansion; the possibility of registering street vendors and/or determining approved sites for their activities; attention to the use of utensils and the handling of money; and the possibilities of establishing sampling systems or the establishment of microbiological criteria. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic made several comments on the document and proposed that it be circulated among the member countries for further comments.

107. Attention was drawn to the need for effective education programmes for street vendors and the people preparing food for sale. The Committee was informed that the Family Welfare Institute of Colombia, the Health Service of Bogotá, the National Apprenticeship Service SENA, with the support of FAO, had instituted a programme for effective training of vendors and establishment of vending sites that can be easily supervised.

**Status of the Draft Code of Practice**

108. The Committee agreed to circulate the revised Proposed Regional Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods for comments at Step 3 of the Codex Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Codes of Practice. The revised draft is contained in Appendix III to the present report.

**PROGRESS REPORT CONCERNING MEASURES TO ELABORATE AND HARMONIZE REGIONAL FOOD STANDARDS AND CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 13)**

109. The Delegation of Cuba in introducing document CX/LAC 89/11 gave a background to the comparative study of CODEX-COPANT-ICAITI Standards.

110. The Mexican Delegation in its capacity of representative of COPANT before the CCLAC informed briefly the Committee about the activities of this organization concerning the Programme of Harmonization of COPANT-Codex Standards. Eleven Technical Committees have been created to work on specific food products. These Committees have

initiated a programme to prepare 210 harmonized Codex-COPANT Standards. COPANT has declared complete agreement between the following COPANT Standards and the corresponding Codex and ICAITI Standards: COPANT 570-1979: Vegetable oils and fats method of determination of specific density (Codex RM 9:69 ICAITI 34072h8:73); COPANT 931-1978 processed fruit and vegetable products: method of determination of drained weight (Codex RM 36:70 and 37:70 ICAITI 34003h4:74); COPANT 1305-1980 processed fruit and vegetable products - peaches in syrup (CODEX STAN 14:81 ICAITI 34110:82). ICAITI has made the first revision of 11 COPANT Standards as compared with the corresponding Codex Standards.

111. The Representative of ICAITI presented a brief summary of activities of this organization in the field of harmonization of ICAITI and COPANT Standards with those of Codex. Following the 5th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, ICAITI prepared a tentative time schedule for the harmonization of regional and subregional standards with those of Codex. This schedule was approved at the meeting of the Council of COPANT, held 6-9 April 1987 in Caracas. In accordance with this schedule, the Standards Division of ICAITI prepared new ICAITI as well as COPANT documents harmonized with the corresponding Codex Standards. These documents were sent to the member countries of ICAITI and COPANT.

112. The Representative of ICAITI pointed out that the request for comments from the countries of the region on their report on standards harmonization was answered only by Ecuador and Costa Rica. He proposed that the countries review the document and send their comments by the end of March 1989.

113. The Secretariat of the Coordinating Committee presented paper CX/LAC 89/11 (Room Document) which contained the results of a comparative study of Panamerican Sanitation Standards with those of Codex. It was proposed that the following recommendations of the study be accepted by the Committee:

- a) that PAHO should be requested to revise the Panamerican Sanitation Standards in order to bring them in line with those of Codex;
- b) that an expert meeting be convened to review the results of the study group.

114. The Delegation of Cuba pointed out that since the start of this work, all data have been entered into a computer and that all recent results should be provided to Cuba in order to complete the first stage of the comparative study. The second stage, the harmonization proper could then be undertaken. The Cuban Delegation supported the proposal to convene an expert consultation after the first stage. The Delegation of Ecuador expressed its interest in participating in the harmonization work and supported the request to PAHO to organize a consultation meeting to review the final document of the comparative study.

115. The Committee agreed with the above proposal to request PAHO to assist in organizing an expert meeting on the harmonization of standards.

116. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered some other topics related to food legislation in the region. The FAO Representative introduced the paper CX/LAC 89/11 Add. 1 which briefly described the follow-up in regard the Model Food Law for Latin American countries. This law was reviewed at the FAO/PAHO Workshop on Food Legislation and Standardization held in Mexico on 25-29 April 1988 (see para. 49).

117. The Committee was informed that several countries of the Region such as Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, were using this model in their efforts to up-dating their Food Law Legislation.

118. The Representative of Spain expressed the appreciation of his Government at being invited to the session. He then introduced the conclusions and recommendations of the Central American Seminar on Food Legislation held in Guatemala on 12-23 September 1988, carried out in the framework of the cooperation between the Government of Spain through the Institute of Iberoamerican Cooperation (ICI) and PAHO. The

Seminar was held at the INCAP with the participation of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

119. The Seminar had proposed a number of areas to future assistance within the framework of the cooperation programme between the Institute of Iberoamerican Cooperation and PAHO, including:

- a) Financial assistance for the implementation of food protection programmes in the subregion.
- b) Training of personnel involved in food protection programmes and fellowships on food legislation.
- c) Holding of a new Seminar for evaluation of follow-up activities.
- d) To bring the recommendation of the Seminar to the attention of governments from the Region, PAHO and WHO.

120. The Delegation of Guatemala made the following comments on the importance and usefulness of the Model Food Law for the countries of Latin America:

- a) It will help to resolve the problem common to all countries of the Region arising from the variety of food protection regulations appearing under different forms.
- b) It will help to resolve the duplication of functions by the many organizations involved in food protection.
- c) It is also necessary that provisions for a Sanitary Register should be included in the Model.

121. The delegation also requested more information on the organization and functioning of the Interministerial Commission for Food Administration (CIOA). The delegate of Spain gave an outline of CIOA and stressed the usefulness of this Commission to coordinate the food control activities in Spain.

122. The Guatemalan Delegation expressed its appreciation to FAO, PAHO and ICI for their cooperation with the countries of the Region in matters of food legislation and suggested that the Model of Food Law for Latin American Countries should include a paragraph on the need for establishing an interministerial body to coordinate food control activities at national level.

123. The Delegation of Colombia informed the Committee about the important developments in food legislation in the country, and stressed the cooperation PAHO provided.

124. The Delegation of Cuba pointed out that the Basic Food Law for Latin American Countries could be used as a guide for the countries in the region and thanked FAO, PAHO and WHO for their assistance in this field. The Delegation of Argentina informed the Committee that the Model of Basic Food Law, had been circulated in Argentina and that the comments obtained would be available soon.

125. Several delegations expressed their appreciation of the participation of Spain in the present session and for the cooperation between Spain and member countries of the Region with regard to food control.

**REPORTS OF CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND/OR NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES ON OTHER ACTIVITIES**  
**(Agenda Item 14)**

126. Delegations were invited to inform the Committee of significant developments which had taken place since the last session, in relation to the work of national Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees.

127. The Delegation of Argentina reported on the structure and functions of the National Codex Contact Point which, although located in the Secretariat of Industry and Foreign Trade worked together with the Secretariats of Public Health, Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the National Grain Board, the National Meat Board, the National Atomic Energy Commission, the National Sugar Directorate and representatives of industry. The Contact Point provided coordinated briefs for all delegations attending Codex meetings and coordinated replies to Codex Circular Letters. In the period since the last session of the Committee, the Contact Point had devoted a considerable amount of effort to the Argentinian input to the Joint FAO/WHO/IAEA/ITC (UNCTAD-GATT) Conference on the Acceptance, Control of, and Trade in Irradiated Food, held in Geneva, December 1988. As a consequence of the preparation for this meeting, Argentina had been able to pass the necessary legislation to allow it to accept the Codex General Standard for the Operation of Food Irradiation Facilities.

128. The Delegation of Barbados described the structure and functions of the National Codex Contact Point, which was located in the National Standards Institution. Barbados had resolved the problem caused by the existence of a National Coordinating Committee for Codex Matters and the Food and Food Products Division Council of the National Standards Institution which existed before the Coordinating Committee. The delegation stated that the Codex standards were being incorporated into the existing national standards system as mandatory or voluntary standards, depending on the case. The National Coordinating Committee had recommended the acceptance of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods, a number of maximum limits for pesticide residues and the Codex Standards for Edible Fats and Oils. The delegation also reported on the formation and functioning of four additional subject Committees for the studying of and advising on the Codex Standards and Codes of Practice of interest to Barbados.

129. The Brazilian Delegation gave a brief description of the structure and operations of the National Codex Committee, which brought together representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Agriculture and Commerce as well as representatives of industry and consumers. The Delegation reported that a major National Seminar would be held in May 1989, which would be aimed at high level personnel in the public and private sectors. About 200 persons were expected to attend, and invitations had been sent to selected foreign participants including the Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, and the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

130. The Delegation of Mexico stated that in most countries Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees were inter-disciplinary committees which were the principle points of communication with the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Delegation expressed the view that the status of the Contact Point should be strengthened, if necessary by amending appropriate sections of the Procedural Manual, to ensure that only the comments from Contact Points would be submitted for the consideration of the Commission and its Committees.

131. The Delegation of Ecuador stated that Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees may require assistance from FAO/WHO and PAHO to establish their programmes of work and their infrastructures in the country, and requested information on how such assistance could be obtained and what form it would take.

132. The Delegation of Nicaragua reported that they had joined CAC only in 1986 and that despite the difficult conditions in the country, they have been able to establish a National Codex Committee with Sub-Committees on specific subjects as Fishery, Pesticides, Meat Products, Food Hygiene. There is a strong government commitment to organize Codex activities but financial support is scarce and scientific and technical assistance from Codex would be required.

133. A National Codex Committee was set up in Costa Rica in 1986 as a result of an FAO-sponsored "National Seminar on Integrated Food Control". The Committee includes representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Health, National Council of Science and Technology Research, Center for Food Technology, the Private Industry. Subcommittees on specific subjects such as Meat Products, Dairy Products, Methods of Analysis and Labelling, had also been created. These

Sub-Committees study local conditions, compare and evaluate Codex standards with the aim of facilitating their acceptance. The National Committee also distributes standards and other documents to appropriate organizations in the country.

134. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic reported that their Codex Contact Point is located in the Secretariat of Public Health and Social Assistance. The Contact Point is not coordinated with other state institutions, Codex information is not circulated to them and, as a consequence, the Dominican Republic often does not supply comments on Codex documents. The delegation also informed that a National Codex Committee had been formed and that they intend to request assistance and advice from member countries with well coordinated Codex activities.

135. The Delegation of Panama stated that its first experience in the Coordinating Committee would be useful in integrating and organizing work in the country. The National Codex Contact Point had been established in 1987 in the General Directorate for Standards and Industrial Technology of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and included Representatives from the Directorate of Standards, Directorate of Marine Resources, Directorate of Industry, Institute of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Public Health. In 1989 the Committee discussed some internal documents, regulating procedures and responsibilities within the Committee. The delegation stressed the importance of the National Codex Committee under conditions of productive crisis and a rather heterogenous national economy in harmonizing criteria and parameters as well as in promoting the export of national non-traditional products.

136. The Codex Contact Point in Colombia is established in the Ministry of Health. Documents are shared with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Institute of Technical Standards and some Industry Organizations. A National Codex Committee had been established in 1974. It includes Representatives of the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Development, the Institute of Foreign Trade, the Institute of Export Promotion and the Institute of Technical Standards. Due to lack of headquarters, the Committee had not been able to meet, but following the visits of a FAO Staff Member, more assistance had been received from the new FAO Representative and the Committee would be able to meet more regularly. No Codex Standards had been approved but they had been used as a basis for the new sanitary law and regulations, which would speed up acceptances in the coming year.

137. The Cuban National Codex Committee had been created in 1981 under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Standards and integrates Representatives from other Ministries and Institutions. National Sub-Committees have also been created as counterparts to the corresponding Codex Technical Committees. The organization and work of these Sub-Committees and their participation in the activities of the Commission are regulated by 3 state standards. Well over 120 Codex Standards and other documents had been accepted up until 1989. More than 80% of Codex Standards and documents are applicable under conditions in the country and 70% of Cuban State Standards are in agreement with the related Codex Standards and other documents.

138. The Coordinator for the Region drew attention to a detailed questionnaire which had been sent to all national Contact Points in the Region. So far, only a few countries had replied, but it was evident that the information, once received and compiled, would be very useful to member countries, allowing improved communication between Contact Points and a better understanding of the activities and responsibilities of each Contact Point. The Committee welcomed the Coordinator's initiative and encouraged Contact Points in the Region to return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible.

139. The Representative of CARICOM stated that there had been only limited Codex activity in many of the countries due to the factors outlined in document CX/LAC 89/2-Add. 1 "Proposed Guidelines for Setting-Up National Codex Committees". However, in Trinidad and Tobago, a significant activity was the promulgation of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Act, which would permit the acceptance of Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides. The CARICOM Standards Council had not received the questionnaire previously, but would now endeavour to obtain a copy and would return the completed questionnaire shortly.

**REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE STUDY GROUP ON FOOD PROTECTION INFORMATION (Agenda Item 15)**

140. The Committee had before it document CX/LAC 89/13, entitled "Food Information Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean" which had been prepared by PAHO. The document was introduced briefly by Dr. F. Quevedo. The document described the following data bases available to the countries of the Region:

- a) LILACS: Latin American Data Base on Health. Administered by BIREME, the Latin American Information Center on Health Sciences of PAHO, located in Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- b) REPIDISCA: The data base administered by CEPIS, Pan American Center for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences, of PAHO, located in Lima, Peru. This data base includes conventional and unconventional documents on sanitary engineering and environmental sciences. Associated with this data base is the REPIDISCA Thesaurus.
- c) ECO-LINE: Data Base administered by ECO, a Pan American Center of Human Ecology and Health of PAHO, located in Metepec, Mexico. The topics encompassed by the data base are toxicology, epidemiology, environmental engineering, environmental pollution, ecology, and occupational health.

141. It also described the outcome of the first Meeting of the Working Group on Food Safety Information System, held in Porlamar, Venezuela, in 1988. The Committee supported this activity.

**FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 16)**

142. There was no document available for this item. The Committee was informed that a document (CX/GP 86/10) with the same title had been considered by the Eight Session of the Committee on General Principles in 1986, and by the Seventeenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1987. The Commission, on the basis of this document, had decided to strengthen its activities in the general aspects of the Codex Programme (additives, contaminants, residues, labelling, hygiene, etc.). At the same time, it had agreed to the establishment of the new Codex Committee on Tropical Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

143. The Coordinating Committee was also informed that the 35th Session of the Executive Committee (July 1988), in an analysis of the status of Codex Regional Standards and their application had recommended that the role of Coordinating Committees in identifying products of interest to the region for which world-wide standards could be elaborated, be re-endorsed and more vigorously applied. The Executive Committee was strongly of the opinion that regional standards should not be developed for products moving in international trade (ALINORM 89/3, para. 23).

144. On this basis, the following proposals were made by the countries indicated:

- live lobsters/langoustines (Mexico)
- fresh-frozen gonads of the sea-urchin (Mexico)
- sausages, cooked and uncooked (Mexico)
- review of maximum residue limits for pesticides in tropical products (Dominican Republic)
- establishment of microbiological specifications and sampling plans for non-stable meat products thermally treated before packaging (Mexico).

The Delegation of Mexico stated that it would be able to provide the required data to show that the criteria for the elaboration of Codex Standards were met for the products indicated and some of these data were handed to the Secretariat. The Committee agreed that these proposals should be brought to the attention of the relevant Codex Committees.

145. The Representative of ICAITI indicated that ICAITI had established standards for bulk and canned sausages.

**FUTURE WORK AND WORK ASSIGNMENTS (Agenda Item 17)**

146. The Committee noted that its future work would include:

- Follow-up on the Proposed Standard for Raw Sugar at Step 3 (Cuba in consultation with the U.K. Secretariat for the Codex Committee on Sugars).
- Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Street Foods at Step 3 (Peru).
- Guidelines for the Establishment of National Codex Committees (Cuba in cooperation with the Secretariat).
- Report on the Progress of Measures taken to Harmonize Regional Food Standards and Codex Standards (Cuba, COPANT, ICAITI, and the Regional Coordinator).

147. The Committee also would be kept informed of all matters of interest from the activities of other Codex Committees FAO, WHO, PAHO, and other international organizations. It also requested to be kept informed of the outcome of Regional Workshops and to receive a report of the proposed Joint FAO/PAHO Workshop on the theme of "Administration of Food Control Programmes for Import and Export". The Delegation of Brazil emphasized the need for such workshops to be organized with the participation of consultants from the Region.

148. The Delegation of Argentina pointed out that it considered excessive the time devoted to the presentations by the International Agencies, which reduced the time assigned to the country delegations. The delegate suggested that in future meetings the countries should participate more in the discussions and that the proposals for both the topics for the Codex Meeting and the Workshops preceding them, should be considered during the formulation of the corresponding programmes.

149. The Cuban Delegation thanked the Regional Coordinator for giving them the opportunity to inform the Committee about some forthcoming international events due to take place in Havana:

- a) Meeting of the ISO Technical Committee on "Tobacco and its Products" (ISO/TC 126), 21-25 November 1989.
- b) ISO Regional Seminary for Latin America and the Caribbean, 4-9 December 1989.
- c) International Symposium on Metrological Back-up for the Machine-Building, Electronic and Metallurgical Industries, 12-14 February 1990.

The Delegation suggested that the participants should transmit this information to the interested institutions in their countries.

**NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 18)**

150. The Delegation of Brazil proposed that Licda. María Eugenia Chacón Mórux (Costa Rica) be nominated by the Committee for appointment by the Commission at its 18th Session as Coordinator for the Region. This proposal was approved by acclamation by the Committee, on the proposal of the Delegation of Honduras.

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 19)**

151. The Committee was informed that its next session would most likely be held in Costa Rica in March 1991.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

RECOMMENDATION/SUBJECT	STEP	FOR ACTION BY	DOCUMENT REF.
1. Proposed Guidelines for Setting-up National Codex Committees		- Government of Cuba - Secretariat	ALINORM 89/36, para. 23 CX/LAC 89/2- Add. 1
2. International Standard Specification for Rice		CAC, CC/CPL (Information)	ALINORM 89/36, para. 32 CX/LAC 89/2-Add.2
3. Export/Import, Food Control and Consumer Protection Programmes		FAO/WHO/PAHO, Countries of the Region	ALINORM 89/36, paras. 73, 86, 88
4. Questionnaire on Monitoring National Policies related to Food Safety		Countries of the Region, PAHO	ALINORM 89/36, para. 75 CL 1988/48-LAC
5. Food Standardization and Health		Countries of the Region, PAHO	ALINORM 89/36, para. 90 and Appendix IV
6. First Draft of a World-wide Standard for Raw Sugar	3	Commission 18th S., Cuba, Secretariat of CC on Sugars, Countries of the Region	ALINORM 89/36, para. 104
7. Proposed Regional Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods	3	Commission 18th S., Secretariat, Peru, Countries of the Region, 7th Session of CC/LAC	ALINORM 89/36, para. 108 and Appendix III
8. Harmonization of Regional Food Standards and Codex Standards		CC/LAC, Cuba, PAHO, ICAITI/COPANT	ALINORM 89/36, paras. 112, 115
9. Future Orientation of Work of the CAC; Elaboration of World-wide Standards		CC/FFP CC/PR CC/PMPP	ALINORM 89/36, para. 144

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ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

DR. OSCAR ARIAS SÁNCHEZ, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER

Delivered at the Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee  
for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Hotel Herradura, San José, Costa Rica, 20 February 1989

Welcome to Costa Rica! Welcome to Central America!

It is a pleasure to have you as our guests in this land, where today a new note of hope is sounding. Welcome to this corner of our America where five sister countries have just renewed our commitment to life, development, democracy and freedom.

In August 1987, we five Presidents signed a protocol to establish a strong and lasting peace. In the first few months after signature, events appeared to be bearing out the confidence and optimism with which Central America had received the message of peace. Things happened which only weeks before would have seemed impossible. Long-held positions suddenly became more flexible. Stone walls crumbled, leading to new openings. Intransigence in Central America seemed to be dead.

There has been no lack of obstacles on the road we have chosen. One and a half years later, only a few days ago, some people were willing to give a simplistic interpretation of what happened with the agreement of Esquipulas II. Powerful forces were irritated by the year and a half under the Peace Plan. They are the same forces that have always tried to use every squabble to justify war.

We achieved in this period more than they ever achieved with many years of war. There was a drop in the number of those who believed in violence as a way of solving Central American problems. No one has yet suggested that an international war could break out in Central America. The system of dialogue between Governments has its own accepted procedures and fixed mechanisms.

Before setting out for the meeting in El Salvador, we said that the Plan had not made as much progress as we would have liked. Our region is still living with the daily tragedy of conflict. There is civil war in El Salvador, a fragile and unstable cease-fire in Nicaragua, and reduced guerrilla activities in Guatemala.

If the wounds we are trying to staunch in Central America had been inflicted recently, if the memory of rancour were still fresh and the repression and poverty that has divided Central American peoples were merely superficial, we could say that enough time had passed in eighteen months for us all to embrace one another in brotherly reconciliation and open up new horizons for democracy.

It must, however, be remembered that guerrilla warfare has been raging in Guatemala for a quarter of a century, that El Salvador has been running with innocent blood for nearly 10 years, and that Nicaragua was the scene of appalling tyranny since the 1930s.

I ask you, with so much time devoted to war, can we not give peace a chance?

Seeking this chance, we Central Americans went back to the negotiating table, to dialogue and to hope. This month there have been technical sessions, meetings of Ministers of Foreign Relations, and, finally, the summit of the five Presidents. Convinced of the viability of the system created in Esquipulas, we Presidents felt the need for continued struggle to put it into practice.

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A week ago we sat down in Costa del Sol, El Salvador, to continue along the path to peace, the path to democracy, the path to freedom. Today Central America breathes again. The sons of violence are taking refuge behind their rusty weapons and the sons of hope are devoting themselves to honest work and the fields are flowering beneath their feet.

The hope that is reborn today in Central America is the hope of all Latin America.

If our people are to find the road to development once more, the first requirement is guaranteed peace and democracy. We all know that there can be no economic growth while the threat of war remains.

Efforts to achieve peace must, however, be accompanied by much action in various fields. Not only must every country make its own endeavours to achieve its development, but there must also be more and more cooperation among democracies to support each another.

Cooperation between developed countries and our America, if it is to embark on the road to democratization, must have all the instruments needed to facilitate exchanges in every field.

The Codex Alimentarius is a mechanism for cooperation that could bear fruit in the development that Latin America needs in order to live in democracy. It is also the result of the efforts all of you have been making to find ways for inter-relation and better understanding among our countries.

The Code will protect the consumer by ensuring that the products he purchases will be of standard quality. It will also enable us to demand the best quality from our producers, which will lead to expansion of our food industry. To this end, the Codex Alimentarius should be a means of communication and cooperation, facilitating international trade and thus promoting the economic growth needed for the development of our peoples in democracy.

We live in a world where we have to justify our efforts to attain peace, whereas the intolerance that leads to violence is accepted without explanation. It is sad to see how cut-throat competition among nations makes any attempt at cooperation look like weakness, and presents it as some kind of special treatment. The poorest country in the world has serious difficulties when it comes to financing wells that will give it water or seed that will provide it with bread, but it manages to obtain all the arms it wants. The truth is that this world is based on one big swindle. We must not relapse into cynicism or accept that things are irreversible, that nothing we can do will change our destiny.

If the present rules of the game continue in force, if we renounce the struggle to change them, we shall be accepting the spread of hunger among our peoples and the proliferation of wars in the Third World. The right to development and the right to eliminate poverty and ignorance must be fully recovered by Latin America.

For so many decades it has been thought that development for Latin American nations was just around the corner. There were those industrialization processes that were going to bring us swiftly up to the level of the industrialized countries. Awakening from this illusion, we have found a Latin America with enormous trails of poverty, and deep scars in the peoples' soul. We have also found a dependent and indebted Latin America, which is now a net exporter of capital to the developed nations.

The world is not solving its problems; it is heightening its conflicts. The world is not seeking justice in international behaviour; it is increasing injustices. I know just how frustrating it can be to ask for economic aid on behalf of the poor.

The so-called world crisis highlighted the weakness of the ideals and principles shared by rich and poor nations. The powerful ones favour competition as a

way of tackling this crisis, whereas we are seeking cooperation. The powerful rely on their economic strength, their technology and their weapons. We want to live in freedom and democracy, we call for our sacrifices to be shared and we seek opportunities for our economies to recover.

As a direct result of this disparity between poor and rich countries, the return to democracy in the Americas has not been accompanied by equitable international treatment.

We Latin Americans now know that debtor countries should first be given a chance to grow so that they can pay, instead of being forced to pay, without a care for their impoverishment or the future of democracy.

Development efforts must take centre stage in the struggle for peace. Latin America grows poorer every day while talk of peace and democracy continues. The reversal of these trends is an urgent task.

No one can be unaware that international economic conditions are unfavourable for Latin America. Not only are our countries unable to obtain assistance quickly and on good terms, but also, when preferential arrangements are made with large countries, the weakness of the smaller country means that it is not offered the same treatment.

I feel that we can and must reach a better international understanding of the democratizing forces in Latin America. Social harmony and public freedom are considerably reinforced when the economy is successful. Experience has also shown that all democracies, even those with a very strong civic tradition, feel threatened and collapse when they face economic crises in conditions of underdevelopment, hunger, ignorance and marginality. It is not easy for democracy to prevail when thousands and thousands of men and women are excluded from supposedly shared goods and profits. However, every day we find that the force of democratic principles and the determination of free men renew our faith in a better future for our peoples.

However great the problems facing us today in conquering hunger in the world; however serious the setbacks suffered in the struggle to preserve the environment; however frustrating our efforts to reduce poverty may appear, these are causes in which we can never lose faith. We shall always keep our courage high, no matter how great the challenge, whether it lie in fighting poverty, in eliminating hunger, or in strengthening peace and democracy.

Thank you very much.

CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE PREPARATION AND SALE  
OF STREET-VENDED FOODS  
(Prepared by Peru)

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CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE PREPARATION  
AND SALE OF STREET-VENDED FOODS

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

This Code contains a series of requirements and practices to be observed in the preparation and sale in the street of food and beverages for direct consumption.

This standard shall govern all individual and legal entities involved in the preparation and/or sale of food and beverages in the public street and shall apply to places where they are prepared, points where they are sold and means of transport used. Its purpose is to ensure a safe food or beverage product, suited for consumption, in order to protect the health of persons who use this type of food service.

SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Code, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- Food and beverages for direct consumption. Any type of hot or cold food or beverage that requires some degree of preparation before being consumed.
- Sales point - Any fixed or mobile structure intended for the sale of food or drink for direct consumption in the street.
- Coproculture - The sowing of excrement on a culture medium to identify the microorganisms it contains.
- Enteric - Pertaining or relating to the intestines.
- Sputum - Spittle.
- Impermeable - Not allowing the passage of water.
- Crockery - All glasses, plates and dishes used in serving a meal.
- Waste water - Water from domestic and industrial drains.
- Ingredients - Components of a mixture.
- Input - Element needed to obtain a product.
- Environment - That which surrounds the food.
- Informal - Clandestine, not official or authorized.
- Perishable - Easily spoiling or decomposing.
- Running water - Water coming out of a tap.
- Germs - Microbes.
- "Street foods - Ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors especially in streets and other similar public places".\*
- To taste - To test the taste or flavour of a preparation.

\* The definition of "street foods", the term approved at the Regional Workshop on street-vented foods held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in November 1986.

When food is prepared at points on the public street it must also be ensured that there is good quality water, and access to services for the disposal of waste water and rubbish.

Water at the sales point may be kept in stainless containers holding at least 20 litres and duly protected. The bins for rubbish and refuse must be made of impermeable material, easy to clean, with a plastic bag inside to facilitate handling of the rubbish.

4.4 The working or preparation surfaces must be covered with impermeable material such as resistant plastics or stainless steel, clean and in good condition.

4.5 Saucepans, utensils and crockery must be clean and in good condition. Unsuitable materials, such as those made of copper, cadmium, lead or any other toxic material should not be used BECAUSE these metals react easily with food, particularly if the food is acid, and form toxic compounds.

## SECTION 5 - REQUIREMENTS FOR PRELIMINARY PREPARATION

### 5.1 Handling Utensils

5.1.1 Wooden surface on which food is chopped up must be scrubbed with soap or detergent and water after every operation, BECAUSE this prevents recontamination of the food being handled by the possibly contaminated food in contact with the surface just before. The scrubbing brush removes the germs and scraps of food from the cracks in the wood.

5.1.2 Wash with soap and water all the utensils (knives, recipients, etc.) before use and in between each operation, BECAUSE this lowers the risk of contaminating food with dirty utensils.

5.1.3 Keep fuel or any inflammable product in closed and clearly identified recipients away from food and from the cooker.

5.1.4 When ingredients are mixed before cooking or serving this should be done in recipients specially intended for this purpose. Do not use others that may previously have contained some toxic product (for example, a jar of paint or motor oil) BECAUSE the container could still be impregnated with residues of the toxic substance, which could pass into the food; and also because the material it is made of is not suitable for containing food.

### 5.2 Hygienic Practices

5.2.1 Wash hands with soap and water before handling any food. A container should be available exclusively for washing hands, BECAUSE dirty hands are the main source of contamination and carriers for most food-borne diseases.

5.2.2 Wash greens and other vegetables with plenty of water, taking special care with those to be eaten raw, BECAUSE these greens could have been irrigated with waste waters, in which case they would be highly contaminated, and their consumption would constitute a serious risk to health.

5.2.3 Wash all food, including meat, before preparing it, to reduce the risks of contamination.

5.2.4 The water used in the basin must be drinking and running water, BECAUSE, by flowing over the food, it will wash away some of the contaminants.

5.2.5 Clothes should be protected with an apron, and hair covered with a cap throughout food handling, BECAUSE this prevents clothes touching the food or hairs falling into the dish.

5.2.6 Do not wear rings on the fingers or bracelets on the wrists while handling food.

- Hermetic - Complete and impenetrable (closure).
- Pests - Undesirable animals (insects, rodents).

### SECTION 3 - REQUIREMENTS FOR INPUTS AND INGREDIENTS

#### 3.1 Purchase of Inputs and Ingredients

3.1.1 Purchase food sold in clean places (on shelves or in baskets or boxes but never directly on the ground) BECAUSE these foods will be less contaminated than others.

3.1.2 Purchase meat off butchers' meathooks or from approved slaughterhouses, rejecting the products of clandestine slaughter BECAUSE clandestine meat has not been inspected and could come from diseased animals.

3.1.3 Purchase packaged foods with a guarantee or manufacturers' brand name and not unlabelled food of informal origin BECAUSE, should any illness result from its consumption, the manufacturer or producer can easily be located to clarify the question of responsibility and avoid new outbreaks.

3.1.4 Purchase products whose sensory properties (colour, odour, taste, etc.) are those of fresh and not spoiled food BECAUSE this is a sure way of purchasing food of the best quality.

#### 3.2 Transport, Reception and Storage of Inputs and Ingredients

3.2.1 Products used in the preparation of meals shall be transported in such a way that they are not spoilt by heat or the length of time on the journey, or contamination by undesirable substances or products that may be transported together with food. The vehicle or means of transport shall be used exclusively for food BECAUSE contaminants may accidentally become mixed with the food and cause poisoning.

3.2.2 Inputs and ingredients must be received in a clean and protected place; meat, offal and fish should be put on trays, and commodities in bulk in clean containers.

3.2.3 Non-perishable food, which does not spoil easily and which is not immediately used, should be kept protected, covered and in closed containers BECAUSE this will avoid contact with pests (flies, cockroaches and rodents) that could contaminate it.

3.2.4 Perishable food which is not going to be prepared immediately, and which spoils easily, should be kept refrigerated BECAUSE this will prevent food from being spoilt and becoming dangerous to eat.

3.2.5 Keep recipients containing food clearly identified and far away from those containing toxic or poisonous substances, BECAUSE, by identifying them correctly, fatal accidents can be avoided.

### SECTION 4 - REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PLACE OR AREA OF PREPARATION

4.1 The place of preparation shall be sufficiently lit, shall be kept permanently clean and far from any source of contamination (rubbish, waste waters, animals) and shall be completely separate from living accommodation BECAUSE food is most likely to suffer contamination during preparation and the danger is more serious if the food is going to be eaten raw or only slightly cooked (salad).

4.2 Similarly, if the preparation of food is completed in sales points on the public street, the area must be clean, protected from the sun and the wind, separate and not accessible to the public, BECAUSE of the same reasons as in point 4.1.

#### 4.3 Sanitary Facilities

The places where food is prepared must have a liberal supply of drinking water, and services for the disposal of waste waters, and bins for rubbish and refuse from the preparation BECAUSE these are basic sanitary arrangements necessary to ensure that food is free of contamination.

5.2.7 No one with infected sores or broken skin should handle food at any time, BECAUSE infected wounds are a focus for germs that can contaminate food on contact.

## SECTION 6 - REQUIREMENTS FOR FINAL PREPARATION

### 6.1 Cooking and Handling

6.1.1 Cook the food sufficiently, whether it is boiled or cooked directly over a fire, BECAUSE heat destroys many contaminants, mainly germs and parasite cysts.

6.1.2 If the food is not served immediately, it should be kept in a cool, well ventilated place or, better still, refrigerated, and never outdoors or exposed to the sun, BECAUSE if it is not kept cool germs will proliferate easily.

6.1.3 If food is to be reheated, it must be only the portion to be served; food should not be reheated more than once, BECAUSE, if it is not heated sufficiently and if it is reheated more than once, any possible germs in the food will multiply to the point of making it dangerous.

6.1.4 Cooking utensils should be of suitable material (wood or stainless metal) and the recipients should be heat-resistant and used only for the preparation of food.

### 6.2 Hygienic Practices

6.2.1 Never continue to cook with a utensil that has been used to taste the food: take a clean one. BECAUSE the food can be contaminated with germs from the mouth, particularly if the cook is ill.

6.2.2 Avoid sneezing or coughing over the food, particularly when it is ready to be served, BECAUSE the tiny drops from coughs and sneezes contain germs that could contaminate the food.

6.2.3 Wash the hands before starting preliminary or final preparation, and at all times when handling food.

6.2.4 Salads should be prepared with utensils and never with hands, BECAUSE hands are the main vehicle of contamination.

## SECTION 7 - REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF PREPARED FOOD

7.1 If food is transported to the place of sale, it should be in hermetically sealed and protected containers so that they are not in contact with dirty surfaces (such as the boot or seat of a car), BECAUSE if the vehicle is not suitable for transporting foodstuffs, maximum precaution should be taken to protect food.

7.2 The place where the food is prepared should be as near as possible to the place where it is sold, so that it will not deteriorate in transport over long distances.

## SECTION 8 - REQUIREMENTS FOR MARKETING

### 8.1 The Sales Point and its Surroundings

8.1.1 The sales points (kiosks, barrows, tricycles, mobile stalls, etc.) must be built of solid and resistant materials, clean and in good condition, and be kept in clean places when not in use. They should not be used for any other purpose.

8.1.2 They should be stationed in places where they do not interfere with vehicular traffic or obstruct pedestrians and in the areas established by the authorities.

8.1.3 They should always be kept clean and tidy, including the working surface, awning, table, benches and boxes, cupboards, glass cases, etc., BECAUSE the place should not only look nice but also be suitable for selling food.

8.1.4 Never keep in the sales point articles not needed for the handling and marketing of food, such as clothes, blankets, footwear, swaddling clothes, etc., BECAUSE these objects can contaminate food.

8.1.5 The sales point should not be used as a permanent or temporary dwelling but should be exclusively for the handling and marketing of food BECAUSE this will avoid additional sources of contamination of food.

8.1.6 The surroundings of the sales point should be kept clean and free of litter BECAUSE, as well as being more attractive to the consumer, this will prevent further pollution of the environment and contamination of the food by the environment.

8.1.7 No animals should be allowed in or near the sales point, BECAUSE animals could contaminate the food and transmit diseases.

## 8.2 Protection and Serving of Food

8.2.1 The food and beverages exposed for sale must be protected with glass cases and covered with wire netting or plastic material.

8.2.2 Preferably, food and beverages should be served using expendable plates, covers and glasses. If this is not possible, the plates, covers and glasses should be clean and in good condition.

8.2.3 If the sales point is a mobile vehicle, the driving compartment should be properly separated from the food area of the vehicle.

8.2.4 Food remaining unsold at the end of the day may not be used the next day.

8.2.5 Take-away food shall be sold in clean, unused paper and/or plastic. The use of printed paper or printed plastic is forbidden, particularly if it comes into direct contact with the food.

8.2.6 Only final preparation, heating and serving of food is allowed in the sales point.

8.2.7 The utensils for selling food must be kept clean, covered and protected, BECAUSE they easily become contaminated if they are left dirty or unprotected.

8.2.8 Wash utensils with detergent and running, drinking water, categorically rejecting the use of buckets or other receptacles containing water that is not thrown away immediately after use, BECAUSE if the same water is used twice it can lead to contamination and recontamination of the utensils washed in it.

8.2.9 Serve the food with utensils that can be easily washed, BECAUSE this will make it more difficult for scraps of food to remain on the utensils and thus allow germs to develop.

8.2.10 Serve the food properly, holding the utensils in the right place, avoiding any contact between the hands and the food or the surface that will be in contact with it.

8.2.11 Do not handle money and food at the same time; the worker who prepares and serves the food should not have any contact with money and, if this is unavoidable, should wash his or her hands before serving food again, and should have a separate wash basin BECAUSE money is a very contaminating element.

## 8.3 Requirements for the Vendor-Handler

8.3.1 Persons handling food (either preparing or selling it) should be in good health, for which purpose they should undergo regular medical checks testifying to their health with certificates renewable every six months or year. This check-up will consist in a general clinical examination, a sputum examination to detect carriers or disseminators of the tuberculosis bacillus or the presence of infected cuts or sores, and also to detect whether the person is a healthy carrier of enteric diseases;

BECAUSE this will provide greater security for the food to be consumed. A health card shall be indispensable and obligatory for anyone selling or handling food.

8.3.2 Any vendor-handler of food should wear appropriate clothing, consisting of at least an apron and cap for men and a hairnet or headscarf for women, always clean and in good condition; they should be preferably white or pale in colour.

8.3.3 Every handler-vendor should receive training in hygienic handling of food, covering at least the following aspects: the concept of food-borne diseases; environmental hygiene; personal hygiene and food protection practices. The authorities should give priority attention to training in food hygiene BECAUSE training provides the handler-vendor with the knowledge needed to provide a food product for direct consumption in adequately hygienic conditions.

8.3.4 The handler-seller should observe elementary hygienic practices: short hair, short, clean finger-nails, clean hands, no coughing or sneezing over the food, no handling of food with cuts or skin infections, no smoking during the preparation and serving of food. BECAUSE the practice of hygienic habits enables the consumer public to be provided with food prepared and served in the best hygienic conditions.

#### 8.4 Handling and Disposal of Wastes

8.4.1 Rubbish bins must be kept away from where the food is handled and always have a lid, BECAUSE this will prevent the rubbish bin from acting as a focus of attraction for pests.

8.4.2 There should be absolute separation of solid wastes (sweepings, etc.) from liquid wastes (washing water) BECAUSE they are easier to eliminate in this way and the risk of contamination is reduced.

8.4.3 The disposal of the separated wastes shall be as follows:

- cleaning wastes will go to a receptacle intended for this purpose for later removal by a Public Garbage Collection Service;
- food scraps can be kept to feed animals;
- liquid wastes will go to the nearest drain.

BECAUSE this will prevent the drains being blocked by solid wastes and thus becoming a hotbed for contamination and proliferation of pests.

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOURTH WORKSHOP ON FOOD STANDARDIZATION  
AND HEALTH FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
16 February 1989, San José, Costa Rica

ITEM 1 - MICROBIOLOGICAL STANDARDS FOR FOOD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- A. Establish the microbiological requirements in accordance with the type of food, its technology and the microorganisms selected.
- B. Establish microbiological limits that are possible to meet on the basis of national data collected in the country.
- C. Avoid as far as possible the term "absence of pathogenic organisms" when elaborating standards.
- D. Encourage the application of the Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) in the food industry as a methodology providing greater cost-efficiency, this being the most economic way of ensuring food quality and safety.
- E. Adopt Codex Alimentarius Standards for external trade in food.
- F. Use practical sampling plans that are easy to apply, such as the sampling plans of the International Committee of Microbiological Specifications for Food.
- G. Request PAHO to prepare a comprehensive document on microbiological specifications applied in countries of the region.
- H. Request the respective national authorities to bring into force a mechanism for certifying laboratories servicing the food industry.

ITEM 2 - NEED FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF SYSTEMS FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MONITORING OF FOOD-BORNE DISEASES (FBD)

- A. Support the PAHO initiative in creating a Working Party on Epidemiological Monitoring of Food-borne Diseases for the Region, so that this group may promote and encourage the creation of epidemiological systems of monitoring food-borne diseases in every country in the area.
- B. Urge Ministers or Secretaries of Health in the various countries to establish, through Divisions, Directorates, or Departments of food hygiene or food production in those organizations, Sections or Working Parties for epidemiological monitoring of FBD, not only in national bodies but also in provincial, regional, departmental, municipal or other bodies, in accordance with the political-administrative division in the country in question.
- C. Prepare regular national reports (monthly, quarterly, six-monthly or annual) based on information obtained through epidemiological monitoring, in order to ascertain the factors producing these diseases, so that adequate measures may be taken to prevent them.
- D. Establish six-monthly and annual notification of all outbreaks in countries, with sufficient information on each of them, so that PAHO may prepare a six-monthly publication on the activity for the whole region.

ITEM 3 - HEALTH PROBLEMS ARISING AS A RESULT OF THE USE OF PESTICIDES IN THE REGION

- A. Promote in the countries, especially with the agriculture, health and environment authorities, the application and optimization of their information systems, their diffusion throughout their population and training for pesticide users.

B. Encourage in the countries the formation of inter-institutional Working Parties or Commissions for exchanging information, updating legislation and monitoring its performance in the field of pesticides. There should be participants from at least the agriculture, environment, health, social security, economic and trade authorities, and also from pesticide industries.

C. Promote in the countries the implementation or optimization of systems of inspection in the field of proper pesticide use and handling. In countries without adequate laboratory infrastructure, promote the preparation of realistic projects to obtain finance.

D. Emphasize to the countries the need to use available information obtained through their laboratories to take adequate corrective measures.

E. Emphasize to Governments the need to make maximum use of inter-country collaboration through horizontal technical collaboration to resolve the deficiencies pointed out in pesticide control in all its phases.

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