

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 14

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-seventh Session

International Conference Centre, Geneva (Switzerland), 28 June – 3 July 2004

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

BACKGROUND

1. In accordance with Rules VIII.4 and VIII.5 of the Rules of Procedure, the Directors-General of FAO or WHO may invite intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations to attend as observers sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies. Participation of international organizations in the work of the Commission, and the relations between the Commission and such organizations are governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitutions of FAO or WHO, as well as by the applicable regulations of FAO or WHO on relations with international organizations; such relations are handled by the Director-General of FAO or of WHO as appropriate.
2. The amendments to the current Rule VIII.5 have been proposed by the 20th session of the Committee on General Principles and are to be considered by the 27th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission under Provisional Agenda Item 3.

A. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Guidelines for Cooperation with International Intergovernmental Organizations

3. The 24th Session of the Commission agreed that a document should be developed by the Committee on General Principles to provide guidance on cooperation with other International Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) on the elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts. The 17th Session of the Committee on General Principles considered the document prepared by the Secretariat and agreed that guidelines should be developed to define the modalities of cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius

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Commission and other international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations when elaborating standards and related texts.

4. The draft guidelines considered by the 18th Session of the Committee on General Principles (April 2003) concentrated on cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations with a clear mandate for standards-setting in areas of interest to the Commission and the same principles of membership and procedures for standards setting as that form the basis for membership and standards setting in the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The guidelines proposed three types of cooperation:

- a) the elaboration of a joint standard or related text with a cooperating organization;
- b) the elaboration of a joint standard or related text by a cooperating organization on behalf of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; and
- c) substantial cooperation at the initial drafting stages of a Codex standard or related text.

5. The Committee agreed that in view of the concerns expressed, the proposal for the elaboration of a joint standard by a cooperating organization on behalf of Codex (proposal b)) could be deleted and noted that the third type of cooperation largely reflected existing practice and it might not be essential to retain it at this stage.

6. The Committee on General Principles at its 20th session (May 2004) considered the draft guidelines, which had been revised by the Secretariat in the light of the previous decision of the Committee to delete proposal b) and to focus on the first proposal for the elaboration of a joint standard or related text with a cooperating organization.

7. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat would redraft the draft guidelines for consideration at its 21st session (November 2004) and that the revised version should be developed on the basis of proposal c) above and in the light of the comments and proposals made at the session, in order to ensure cooperation, collaboration, consistency and communication, including information exchange, between Codex and the cooperating organization.

Relations between Codex and the Office international des épizooties (OIE)

8. The Director-General of OIE had informed the 26th Session of the Commission that an OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety had been established in 2002, including experts from Codex, with a mandate to elaborate international standards on microbiological and chemical hazards existing in the animal production chain, to identify gaps and duplication in OIE and Codex texts and to ensure their harmonization and to strengthen the collaboration between the two organizations¹. The Working Group held three meetings on 18-20 November 2002, on 8-9 July 2003 and on 1-2 April 2004. The Chairperson and the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission participated in these meetings at the invitation of the OIE.

9. The Executive Committee at its 53rd session noted that there were a number of areas for potential collaboration between Codex and OIE, including animal feeding, veterinary drugs, BSE and fish farming, and that there was pressing need to avoid duplication and gaps in the work undertaken by Codex and OIE.

10. The Executive Committee further noted that cooperation agreements existed between FAO and OIE, and between WHO and OIE, but not between Codex and OIE². It further noted that any future collaboration in which Codex might wish to engage with OIE would need to be appropriately handled by the parent organizations in accordance with the statute of the Commission and the relevant rules of the parent organizations.

11. The Executive Committee agreed to request FAO and WHO to initiate discussion with OIE as to how to foster and oversee the relations between Codex and OIE, and that the Executive Committee and the Commission should be consulted by the parent organizations before concrete steps be taken to develop such relations. The Committee also noted that cooperation with OIE would be considered in the framework of

¹ ALINORM 03/41, para.191

² The revision of the agreements between FAO and OIE and between OIE and WHO has been agreed by the organizations concerned and new agreements are expected to replace the current ones once formally adopted, respectively, by the governing bodies of the organizations (see ALINORM 04/27/10G, paras. 63-69).

cooperation with international governmental organizations being developed by the Committee on General Principles³.

12. The Commission is **invited** to express its view on the recommendations of the Executive Committee mentioned above, in the light of the status of the Guidelines for Cooperation with International Intergovernmental Organizations, under development (paras. 3-7 above).

B. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

13. In accordance with Article 6 of the *Principles Concerning the Participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*⁴, the Secretary reports to the Codex Alimentarius Commission on the relations between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and international non-governmental organizations established in accordance with the present procedures and provides a list of organizations granted Observer Status, with an indication of the membership that they represent.

14. A list of all international non-governmental organizations currently in "Observer Status" with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and a list of all applications for "Observer Status" considered since the Commission's 26th Session of the Secretariat will be provided to the Commission separately⁵.

15. The aforementioned Article of the *Principles* also provides that the Directors-General may terminate arrangements for Observer Status which are no longer considered necessary or appropriate in the light of changing programmes or other circumstances and that an international non-governmental organization in Observer Status which has not shown any interest and has not attended any meetings during a period of four years may be deemed not to have sufficient interest to warrant the continuance of such relationship.

16. The Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 26th Session decided to request FAO and WHO to prepare a report on the status of the current international organizations in "Observer Status" with the Commission and submit the report to the Commission's next Regular Session⁶.

17. In the Annex of this document, the activities of international non-governmental organizations in Observer Status are summarised in respect of their participation in the work of the Commission for the period of four years (January 2000 – December 2003). The summary is based on the data documented in the reports of the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies (ALINORMs) that were held during the corresponding period. Out of the 168 non-governmental organizations that currently have observer status with Codex, 127 non-governmental organizations that maintained observer status for the whole period of four years were included in the survey (organizations that were granted observer status after January 2000 were excluded).

18. It should be noted that the Committee on General Principles has initiated the revision of the *Principles*, in view of the amendments being made to Rule VIII.5 of the Rules of Procedure. The Committee will consider draft revised *Principles* to be prepared by the Codex Secretariat at its 21st session (November 2004).

19. The Commission is **invited** to note the information provided above and in the Annex, and to express its observations, if any, with a view to promoting coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non governmental organizations, as set out in Article 1 (b) of the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Relations between Codex and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

20. The Executive Committee at its 53rd session agreed that the Codex Secretariat establish preliminary contact with the ISO to obtain information on the current status of food safety-related work within the ISO

³ ALINORM 04/27/3, paras. 100-103

⁴ Procedural Manual, 13th edition, FAO/WHO, Rome, 2003.

⁵ CAC/27 INF/1

⁶ ALINORM 03/41, para.174

and present its findings to the Executive Committee, together with the implications to the work being undertaken by Codex⁷.

21. Subsequently, a contact was established between the Codex and ISO Secretariats to collect information on ISO's work in the area of interest to Codex. Detailed information is presented in the paper submitted by ISO⁸. According to the information obtained, the possible areas for coordination of work between Codex and ISO include, but may not be limited to:

a) Work undertaken by ISO Technical Committee 34 (ISO/TC 34), including food safety management systems, traceability systems in the agricultural food chain, analytical and test methods in the field of milk and milk products, detection and enumeration methods of food-borne pathogens and other microorganisms, detection and quantification methods of genetically modified organisms in foodstuffs; and

b) Work undertaken by ISO Policy Committee on Conformity Assessment (ISO/CASCO).

22. It should also be noted that a number of ISO standards have been adopted as reference methods by the Codex Alimentarius Commission⁹.

23. The Commission is **invited** to note the information provided above. The Commission **may also wish** to identify those areas where coordination of work between Codex and ISO should be maintained or strengthened and make proposals on practical modalities for implementing such coordination, as appropriate.

⁷ ALINORM 04/27/3, para. 99

⁸ CAC/27 INF-2

⁹ Codex Alimentarius, Volume 13, Methods of Analysis and Sampling

ANNEX

ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN OBSERVER STATUS (2000-2003)

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF NGOS IN OBSERVER STATUS ATTENDING CODEX MEETINGS AND/OR
SUBMITTING WRITTEN COMMENTS (2000-2003)**

		ATTENDANCES		
		YES	NO	TOTAL
COMMENT	YES	59	3	62
SUBMISSIONS	NO	33	32	65
TOTAL		92	35	127

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES OF NGOS IN OBSERVER STATUS ATTENDING OR SUBMITTING
WRITTEN COMMENTS TO CODEX MEETINGS (2000-2003)**

NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS	
	ATTENDANCES	COMMENT SUBMISSIONS
0	35	65
1-5	49	43
6-10	20	12
11+	23	7