



Agenda Item 7b)

CX/EXEC 12/67/6

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

Sixty-seventh Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

26-29 June 2012

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK

**PROPOSALS TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

**The Codex Alimentarius Commission: Fully committed to protecting the health of consumers and
ensuring fair practices in the food trade**

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

(1st session, Rome, 25th June to 3rd July 1963)

Information Note prepared for Members of the Codex Executive Committee

by Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Codex Vice-Chairperson

1. INTRODUCTION

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) held its first session in Rome from 25th June to 3rd July 1963. It is worth recalling the decision that had been taken prior to the first CAC session by the Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards (Geneva, 1st to 5th October 1962) to set up the Codex Alimentarius Commission as the principal organ of the FAO/WHO Programme on Food Standards. Furthermore, the Joint FAO/WHO Conference had suggested that “the Directors-General of FAO and WHO call the first session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to meet at FAO headquarters in Rome commencing on Monday, 24 June 1963.”*

The First Session of the CAC

120 delegates including representatives from 30 countries and observers from 16 International Organisations attended the first session of the CAC that was chaired by Dr J.L. Harvey (United States of America) and the Vice-chairs were Prof. M. J.L. Dols (The Netherlands); Mr H. Doyle (New Zealand); Dr. Z. Zaczekiewicz (Poland). Additionally, the following countries were elected members of the Codex Executive Committee: Argentina, Australia, Canada, India, Senegal and The United Kingdom.†

Global Participation at the CAC Sessions

Participation at the CAC sessions has grown rapidly over the years following the global recognition of the important role played by the Codex Alimentarius in the field of food safety and quality. Comparing the participation at the “initial” 1st session of the CAC (120 delegates, 1963) with that at the 34th session of the Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 2011) that was attended by 625 delegates from 145 Member countries

* Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Geneva, 1st to 5th October 1962. Available at <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/committees-task-forces/en/?provide=committeeDetail&idList=1>

† Commission Mixte FAO/OMS Codex Alimentarius, Rapport de la première session, Rome, 25 juin au 3 juillet 1963. Available at <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/archives.jsp?year=XX>

and 1 Member Organisation and 34 International Governmental and Non-governmental Organisations including UN agencies.”[‡], we find an incredible increase of + **505 delegates**.

2. CELEBRATING THE FIRST CAC SESSION AND MARKING IMPORTANT CODEX MILESTONES

50 years since its first session, the CAC remains fully committed to protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. The CAC has established itself as the internationally-recognised food standards setting body and its membership has increased steadily over the past fifty years to the current number of 185 members and 205 observers[§]. Over the years, the CAC has remained true to its objectives of ensuring “safe good food for everyone, everywhere” and it has developed numerous international food standards, guidelines, codes of practice and other related texts to this end.

Several important milestones have been reached by the CAC over the past fifty years and it would certainly be worth recalling them all in a future document. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to highlight at this stage **two** important “milestones” as they will also “celebrate” their anniversaries in 2013:

- **10 years after the 25th Extraordinary session of the CAC that met to review the results of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius (Geneva, 13th to 15th February 2003)**
- **10 years after the official launching of the Codex Trust Fund (February 2003).**

3. PROPOSAL TO MARK THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CAC

50 years after the first CAC session is an important anniversary that should be celebrated both within the Codex system (including the Codex parent organisations FAO and WHO) and among Codex members and observers at regional and country levels. Whilst fully acknowledging the fact that the activities related to marking this important anniversary should be undertaken in an inclusive, transparent and coordinated manner in order to ensure contributions from Codex members from all regions, an attempt has been made to list, for consideration and in order to get the ball rolling, a few activities that could be undertaken in order to mark this special anniversary. Please note that the list below has no official character whatsoever and that it is not at all exhaustive (*these are mere thoughts at this stage*).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. **50th Anniversary special publication:** This special publication could eventually be prepared by the Codex Secretariat with contributions from e.g. all Codex regions (via their Regional coordinators); countries that host Codex Committees; Members of the Bureau (Chair and the 3 Vice-chairs); the FAO; the WHO, Codex Members and Observers, Codex personalities, etc.
2. **Up-date the “Understanding Codex” publication** (the most recent version is the Third Edition, Rome, 2006).
3. **Create a 50th Anniversary Homepage** which could feature the CAC’s achievements and activities over the past 50 years; present an Agenda of global, regional, country-level events related to the Anniversary, feature a series “faces/personalities behind Codex” where various delegates from all regions could present themselves, their Codex-related activities, their achievements, challenges, goals, etc;
4. **Calendar/Agenda of the 50th Anniversary Events in 2013:** at the 36th session of the CAC, at the global, regional, member levels, in the parent organisations, etc.
5. **50th Anniversary Activities and Side-Events during the 36th session of the CAC (2013):** These could include a presentation of CAC achievements including the **implementation of the recommendations of the Codex Evaluation** and a presentation of the **Codex Trust Fund**, etc. The Anniversary activities should be discussed.

[‡] Report of the 34th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, REP11/CAC Available at <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/?sortingDate=012011>

[§] For the full list of the Codex Alimentarius Commission membership, please consult <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/members-observers/en/>

6. **Choose a special venue for the 36th session** (e.g. The Palais des Nations in Geneva)
7. **Invite the DGs of the FAO and the WHO to attend the official opening ceremony.**
8. **Ministers from different Codex regions could also be specially invited to attend this 36th session.** Encourage Codex Members to request their Ministers to attend the 36th session of the CAC as the FAO and WHO DGs would also be present. The Ministers present would address a few words to the assembly during the official opening ceremony of the 36th session;
9. **Extend a special invitation to countries that are either members of the FAO and/or the WHO and that are not yet members of Codex to attend the 36th session as observers** (Mr Sanjay Dave, Codex Chairperson, could request the DGs of FAO and WHO to extend invitations to these countries);
10. **50th Anniversary Gala:** Organise a “special” official gala reception at a different venue
11. **Extend VIP invitations for the official reception:** Invite the DGs of WHO and FAO as well as high-level representatives of other relevant international organisations, etc to attend the official reception. **Other VIPs could include:** former Codex Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Secretaries, other personalities that have made important contributions to Codex work in the past, etc.
12. **Unveil the NEW Codex LOGO** during the official reception;
13. **A special medal could be designed with the Codex logo and presented to the identified dignitaries.**
14. **A series of University Lectures** could be given by prominent Codex personalities;
15. **Celebrate the past 50 years of the CAC and prepare the next promising 50 years:** Engage in reflections and exchange thoughts on how to build on the past achievements in order to prepare the future accomplishments – our legacy for the next Codex generation;
16. **50 years of Codex in photos:** A photo exhibition presenting “unique/special” Codex moments could be organised during the 36th session of the CAC.
17. **Etc.**

4. INFORMATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CODEX EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members of the Codex Executive Committee should be informed of this important 50th CAC Anniversary at the forthcoming 67th CCEXEC. A brief presentation of this information could be given under Agenda Item 7: Other Business and Future Work.

All the 50th CAC Anniversary activities should be well coordinated, to the extent possible, with the Codex Secretariat and the Codex parent organisations FAO and WHO.