

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

**Agenda Item 2**

**CX/GP 03/19/2**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

**Nineteenth (Extraordinary) Session  
Paris, France, 17 - 21 November 2003**

### **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING THE JOINT FAO/WHO EVALUATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND OTHER FAO AND WHO WORK ON FOOD STANDARDS**

#### **1. AMENDMENTS TO THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL**

##### **Clarification of Rule VI.4 (Voting and Procedures)**

The Commission amended Rule VI.4 on Voting and Procedures to include a reference to Rule X.2 related to the adoption or amendments of Codex standards by consensus.

##### **Membership of Regional Economic Integration Organizations**

The Commission amended the Rules on Membership to allow regional economic integration organizations to exercise rights of membership within the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies under specific conditions.

##### **Measures to Facilitate Consensus**

The Commission adopted the *Measures to Facilitate Consensus* for inclusion in the Procedural Manual as a general decision of the Commission.

#### **2. JOINT FAO/WHO EVALUATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND OTHER FAO AND WHO WORK ON FOOD STANDARDS**

##### **GENERAL ASPECTS**

##### **Annual Meetings of the Commission**

The Commission agreed to meet annually for the next two years, but that in future each session would consider the timing for the following session and the general nature of the agenda in order to achieve the appropriate balance between standards issues, general direction of work and policy matters, and taking into account the resources available for adequate participation.

##### **Implementation of the Evaluation**

The Commission decided that the responsibility for following up and monitoring progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the Evaluation Report would be entrusted to the Executive Committee. Twice-yearly sessions of the Committee would be scheduled in order to absorb the additional workload.

##### **Priorities for Implementation**

The Commission decided that the priorities should be:

- (a) Processes for standards management, with due regard to the special needs of developing countries.
- (b) Functions and composition of the Executive Committee, including the participation of observers in the Executive Committee and Executive Committee procedures.
- (c) Review of the Committee structures and mandates (including Regional Committees).
- (d) Review of Rules and Procedures including guidelines for Codex Committees.

The Commission concluded that all four priorities were of equal importance, and that the ranking was made on the grounds of speed of potential progress.

#### **REVIEW OF CODEX COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MANDATES OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES, INCLUDING REGIONAL COMMITTEES (PROPOSALS 5 AND 6)**

The Commission decided that all the Committees and Task Forces would be reviewed together bearing in mind the objective of reducing the number of meetings while also keeping them short and focused. The Commission endorsed the recommendation made by the Executive Committee concerning the selection of consultants that would be entrusted with the review, and stressed the critical importance of transparency in the process.

This question is not under consideration in the Committee on General Principles.

#### **REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

##### **Proposal No. 7: Strategic and Managerial Functions**

##### **Proposal No. 8: Budgetary, Planning and Programming Functions**

The Commission **decided** that the Executive Committee should work together with the Secretariat for both activities. The need to consider the development of performance measures for both itself and the Executive Committee at a future session was noted.

##### **Proposal No. 9: Executive Committee**

The Commission **decided** to retain the Executive Committee as a Strategic and Standards Management Body.

##### **Proposal No. 10: Additional functions of the Executive Committee**

The Commission **decided** that the Rules of Procedure should be amended to remove the obsolete functions of the Executive Committee.

##### **Proposal No. 11: Executive Committee Membership**

###### *a) Enlarged Executive Committee*

The Commission **decided** that the Executive Committee should be enlarged by appointing the Regional Coordinators as Members.

###### *b) Restricted participation in the Executive Committee*

The Commission did not achieve a consensus on the proposal to limit participation in meetings of the Executive Committee to one delegate representing the Members.

###### *c) Establishment of a Sub-Committee on Programming, Budget and Planning*

The Commission **decided** that the Executive Committee should have the flexibility to establish sub-committees from among its members. It was noted that any proposed new body would be subject to analysis of costs and that there would only be a limited number. It was noted that a sub-committee could be established for programming, budget and planning.

###### *d) Funding the participation of members of the Executive Committee*

The Commission decided that budget of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (not the FAO/WHO Trust Fund) should make provisions for the funding of the participation of members of the Executive Committee at its meetings. A number of countries considered that this should be limited to members from developing countries.

## **REVIEW OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE AND OTHER PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

### **Proposal No.23: Responsibility for the Procedural Review**

The Commission decided that the procedural review would be undertaken by the Codex Committee on General Principles, at special sessions and under a limited time-frame.

### **Proposal No.24: - Amendment of the Codex Mandate**

The Commission decided that the current Codex Mandate as expressed in Article 1 of the Statutes of the Commission, should be retained but that it might be discussed in the future.

### **Proposal No.25: - Revision of the Rules and working procedures governing the Executive Committee to enhance overall management**

### **Proposal No.26: - Subsequent revision of the Rules and working procedures of the Executive Committee**

The Commission **decided** to request the Committee on General Principles to:

- draft amendments and additions to the Rules of Procedure as described in Proposal 25 as a matter of priority, for adoption by the Commission in 2004, and
- draft amendments and additions to the Rules of Procedure dealing with the remaining issues contained in ALINORM 03/26/11: Part 2 for adoption by the Commission in 2005.

The Commission noted that Proposals No.25 and No.26 were not mutually incompatible and that the most desirable outcome would be a comprehensive set of amendments that could be adopted in 2004.

### **Proposal No.27: Right to address the Chair**

The Commission **decided** to ask the Committee on General Principles to consider a new Rule, based on a comparable Rule of the World Health Assembly<sup>1</sup> to the effect that “In plenary meetings of the Commission, the chief delegate may designate another delegate who shall have the right to speak and vote in the name of his or her delegation on any question. Moreover, upon the request of the chief delegate or any delegate so designated the Chairperson may allow an adviser to speak on any particular point”.

### **Proposal No.30: Revision of Rule XI.4**

The Commission decided to ask the Committee on General Principles to submit a proposal to the Commission by 2004 to revise Rule XI.4 to remove the possible impediments to the participation of recipients of funding from the FAO/WHO Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries and Countries in Codex Standard Setting Procedures in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It also requested that the revised Rule should take into account the Commission’s decision concerning funding of participation of Members of the Executive Committee from the Codex budget.

*The amendment of the Rules of Procedure, including amendments concerning the Executive Committee, will be considered under Agenda Item 3 a).*

## **OBSERVERS**

### **Proposal No. 12: Participation of observers in the Executive Committee**

### **Proposal No.28: Observer Organizations**

*Matters related to observers will be considered under Agenda Items 3b), 3c) and 5.*

## **IMPROVED PROCESSES FOR STANDARDS MANAGEMENT**

### **Proposal No. 13: Strategic Planning**

The Commission **decided** that the Secretariat should work with the Executive Committee in the preparation of strategic planning documents. It was noted that the strategic planning process in the Executive Committee should consider the special needs of developing countries.

### **Proposals Nos. 14 and 15: Critical review of proposals to undertake work and monitoring progress of standards development - Proposal No.38 – Criteria for the establishment of work priorities**

The Commission endorsed the critical review process and the proposal to revise the *Criteria*.

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.

**Proposal No. 16: - Standards Management Responsibility**

The Commission **decided** that the Executive Committee be the body to undertake the critical review of new work.

**Proposal No. 17: - Time-bound decision-making**

The Commission **decided** that the Executive Committee should review the status of development of draft standards at the end of a specified time-frame, normally not more than five years, and report its findings to the Commission.)

The Commission also agreed to the proposal contained in paragraph 31 of document ALINORM 03/26/11 Addendum 4 to instruct the Committee on General Principles regarding the current Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts, by 2006.

*The processes for standards management and the Elaboration Procedure will be considered under **Agenda Items 4a) and 4b).***

**Proposal No. 19: Use of facilitators**

**Proposal No. 20: Establishment of electronic working groups**

**Proposal No. 21: Establishment of physical working groups**

The Commission agreed in principle to all three proposals but **decided** that the modalities would require clarification by the body responsible for reviewing the Procedural Manual.

**Proposal No.29: Chairpersons of Codex Committees and Task Forces**

The Commission decided to maintain the *status quo* in regard to the appointment of chairpersons by host countries, but also decided to request the Committee on General Principles to develop criteria for the appointment of chairpersons.

**Proposal No.31: - Separation of advice to Host Governments and advice on the conduct of meetings**

**Proposal No.32: - Co-chairmanship**

**Proposal No.33: - Criteria for the selection of chairpersons**

**Proposal No.34: - Determination of consensus**

**Proposal No.35: - Conduct of meetings: Reports**

The Commission **agreed in principle** to all of the proposals except Proposal 32 and referred the work to the Committee on General Principles, requesting it to develop appropriate guidelines and explore further the question of co-chairpersons.

**Proposal No.36 – Conduct of meetings: Country groupings**

The Commission **asked** the Committee on General Principles to examine this issue by 2006.

*These proposals will be considered under **Agenda Items 6a), 6b) and 7.***