

# 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 5

CX/GP 04/21/6 Add. 1

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
Twenty-first (Extraordinary) Session  
Paris, France, 8 - 12 November 2004**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE STATUS OF OBSERVERS IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**WEBCASTING AND PUBLICIZING OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1) The Committee on General Principles, at its 19<sup>th</sup> (Extraordinary) session, considered the status of observers in the Executive Committee. After an exchange of views between delegations on the different options, including the *status quo*, actual participation of observers, web casting of meetings, establishment of listening rooms and other facilities, the Committee requested the Codex Secretariat to prepare for the forthcoming extraordinary session of the Committee a discussion document elaborating further such possible alternative options, in light of all pertinent considerations with particular reference to cost and legal and institutional implications of any of the envisaged options. It was noted that consultation with other organizations both within and outside the United Nations system could be undertaken in connection with the preparation of the document (ALINORM 04/27/33).

2) The document CX/GP 04/21/6 has been prepared with a focus on legal and institutional implications of the options mentioned above. The present document is aimed at providing additional information on cost and logistic implications of these options.

**A. Actual Participation of Observers in Meetings**

3) If the meeting of the Executive Committee is to be open to physical attendance by observers from governments, UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in Observer Status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the meeting rooms so far used in the FAO and WHO Headquarters are considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate all the participants. Since the number of meeting rooms of suitable size on FAO and WHO premises is limited, larger meeting rooms may need to be identified outside FAO or WHO, depending on the availability of in-house facilities. Conversely, this may impose constraints on the choice of the dates of the Executive Committee for its regular sessions as well as extraordinary session that may be convened in accordance with Rule IV.4 of the Rules of Procedure. Furthermore, pending the degree of interest and participation of observers in the Executive Committee, on-site registration and documentation services may need to be organised at a larger scale.

**B. Web-casting of Meetings**

4) The cost for web-casting will mainly consist of installation of video and audio recording facilities, computer processing of video and audio signals, designing and maintenance of appropriate Internet facilities with sufficient band-width, human resource costs for operators and technicians as well as authorship fees for interpreters. The total cost will then largely depend on, among other factors, number of camera angles, number of audio channels (original sound only or with interpretations), maximum number of ports or concurrent viewers (i.e. Internet band-width) and possibilities for web-streaming of archived records.

5) Given the rapid evolution in information technologies, it is difficult to make exact cost estimates for web-casting meetings of the Executive Committee. It may however be of some value to refer to the costs incurred in the past webcasting events that took place in two Codex subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

6) The webcasting of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (Washington, 23-28 October 2000) was arranged by the host government and it cost US\$ 126,200. In this instance, arrangements were made for thirty-six hours broadcasting using three cameras and for 500 viewers in each of the three languages (French, Spanish, and English) - a total of 1500 ports and with the choice of watching a live streaming or viewing the archived video (delayed webcasting). The number of ports eventually turned out to be more than sufficient compared to the real number of viewers (for details, see CAC/24-INF3).

7) The webcasting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (Yokohama, 11-14 March 2003) was arranged by a non-governmental organization, the International Association of Consumer Food Organizations (IACFO). The webcasting, limited to live streaming with two audio channels (original language and Japanese) and using a single camera, covered the first two days of the session and cost US\$ 12,100 (for details, see CAC/26 INF/9).

### **C. Establishment of Listening Rooms**

8) This option has some advantages and disadvantages in common with Options A and B above. Given that only audio signals need to be recorded and transmitted, hardware and software requirements will be less than in audio and video webcasting. However, the cost and complexity of the operation will depend on the number of audio channels to be transmitted. Listening rooms should be identified within or outside FAO or WHO premises and registration services will be necessary as in Option A, for security reasons.