

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 3

CX/GP 09/25/3-Add.3

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES
Twenty-fifth Session
Paris, France, 30 March to 3 April 2009**

PROPOSED DRAFT REVISED CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD

Comments at Step 3

(Canada and IBFAN)

Canada

Canada recognizes the importance that many Members of Codex attach to the Code of Ethics. We strongly support ethical practices in food transactions and the basic principles in the Code of Ethics.

Within its mandate, Codex has adopted a number of texts since the last revision of the Code of Ethics in 1985, in particular those developed by the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). We are of the view that these texts adequately address the objectives of the existing Code of Ethics and provide sufficient guidance to governments. Further, Canada believes that many of the "implementation issues" contained in the existing Code are related to insufficient capacity to carry out imported food controls due to the lack of infrastructure, e.g., the need to strengthen regulatory control systems in these countries, and not to a lack of guidance in Codex texts. In this respect, we note and support the outcomes of the 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which agreed to:

- encourage member countries to further implement the provisions in existing Codex guidelines on food import and export inspection and certification systems related to the subsequent export of food, whether imported or produced domestically, that had been found to be unsafe or unsuitable;
- encourage FAO, WHO and other international organizations to give priority to providing technical assistance to member countries with insufficient capacity for establishing and implementing food import and export control systems; and
- encourage those member countries with insufficient control systems to give priority in their capacity building/technical assistance needs assessments to the issue of import control systems.

While it is Canada's view that existing Codex texts address the objectives of the existing Code and provide sufficient guidance to governments, we recognize that there would be value in Codex developing a document focusing on essential ethical principles to be followed by those engaged in international trade. Therefore, Canada supports the *Proposed Draft Revised Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods* put forth by the 24th Session of the CCGP. The proposed draft presents a concise statement of principles to be followed by those engaged in international trade in order to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in food trade.

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

Since the revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food was decided in 1998, IBFAN the International Baby Food Action Network, has underlined in every written comment it has submitted to the CCGP that IBFAN is in favour of an effective code of ethics. This is in order to protect the health of the consumers and to guarantee ethical principles to be followed in international trade.

Ethical rules for all those engaged in import and export is one key element of a Code of ethics in international trade. Ethical practices in trade are linked to consumer protection, consumer confidence and trust in the actors engaged in trade. Inequalities in trade are still real between the different actors on a worldwide level. Unfair trade practices exploit this; ethical practices guarantee the protection of the health of the consumer in all countries around the world even where food safety and control procedures cannot yet be fully implemented. Ethical rules prevent practices that are misleading consumers. A Code of Ethics protects small actors in the food chain and gives them a fair chance to participate.

The original Code of Ethics had 6 pages. Since the discussions for a revision had started in 1998 this has been downsized to 4 pages. The actual draft consists of one single page. We deplore this development as the need for fair and ethical practices are more essential than ever.

We support the first drafting note in the comment of the European Community in document CX/GP 09/25/3-Add.1 page 4 to insert again the preamble to give this document the kind of solemnity it deserves. We cannot follow however the demand of the ECMS to delete the bullet point regarding breastfeeding as this document should protect the most vulnerable consumers which are infants. Moreover the text to be inserted is related to ethical principles laid down for the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. To ensure the protection of the highest attainable standard of health of infants and young children and to meet the global guidelines developed for the feeding of infants and young children in emergencies.

We therefore demand to keep in the preamble or reinsert the following:

The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and relevant resolutions of World Health Assembly set forth principles for the protection and promotion of breastfeeding, which is an important aspect of primary health care. (wording from Alinorm 04/27733A Appendix IV)

Article 2

2.1 We propose to reinsert the footnote 1 into the main text to read: This Code applies to all food introduced into international trade, including concessional and food aid transactions

Article 4 Requirements for food in international trade

As all the actors in trade have a moral duty to protect the most vulnerable consumers, we request to insert a reference to the International Code of Marketing for Breastmilk Substitutes. This important document developed by the parent body WHO, contains ethical guidelines and needs to be referenced here.

Add the following text to Article 4 as point (e):

(e) Food for infants, young children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The marketing and labelling of foods for infants and young children should be in accordance with relevant provisions of the International Code of Marketing for Breastmilk Substitutes World Health Assembly resolutions and Codex standards and related text. (wording from **Alinorm 04/27733A Appendix IV**)