

# 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/NMW 00/2  
July 2000**

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON NATURAL MINERAL WATERS**  
**Seventh Session**  
**Fribourg, Switzerland, 30 October- 1 November 2000**

**MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS  
COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

**A. DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

**1. CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COMMISSION**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted the amendments separating the *Criteria for the Establishment Work Priorities* from the *Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies*, which include provisions for the establishment of *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Codex Task Forces.<sup>1</sup> The Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual's section related to the "Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities" is appended to this document as Appendix I.

**2. RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMODITY COMMITTEES AND GENERAL COMMITTEES: DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE FOOD HYGIENE PROVISIONS**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted the amendment concerning the food hygiene provisions to be used in commodity standards as proposed by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene<sup>2</sup>. The Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual's section related to the establishment of "Food Hygiene Provisions" in Codex standards is attached to this document as Appendix II.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 1998/2002**

The Commission adopted its Medium-Term Plan for 1998-2002<sup>3</sup>. The following element of the Medium-Term Plan is directly related to the work of the Committee:

**Commodity Standards:** Finalization of revision/simplification of Codex Commodity Standards. Elaboration of specific Commodity Standards where justified.

**4. CONSIDERATION OF ENDORSEMENTS TO ADOPTED STANDARDS**

***Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters: Limits for Health Related Substances (ALINORM 99/12A, paras 89-92 and Appendix VI***

While considering the endorsements to the above standard the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission adopted the limits for health related substances with exception of levels for arsenic, barium, manganese and selenium and agreed that they should be returned for further consideration to the Committee on Natural Mineral Waters as

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 67

<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 68

<sup>3</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 34 & App. II

a matter of priority, following which they would be submitted to the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants for endorsement. The Commission noted that WHO was currently preparing a monograph on arsenic and encouraged governments to submit relevant scientific data on these substances.

This matter will be considered under Agenda Item 4.

## **B. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

### **1. CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

#### ***Status of Codex Texts in the Framework of the TBT Agreement***

The 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCGP (Paris, France, 19-23 April 1999) agreed that all Codex texts, including standards and their annexes, were covered by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) definition of “standard”, and that distinctions based on Acceptance (under the Codex Procedure) were not relevant in the framework of the WTO.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE**

#### ***Draft Code of Hygiene Practice for Bottled/Packaged Drinking Waters (Other Than Natural Mineral Waters)***

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CCFH (Washington D.C., U.S.A., 29 November-4 December 1999) finishes the elaboration of the above Code agreed to advance it for final adoption by the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see ALINORM 01/13, Appendix II).

### **3. CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES AND CONTAMINANTS**

#### ***Comments on Section 3.2 (Health Related Limits for Certain Substances) of the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters<sup>5</sup>(ALINORM 99/12A, paras 89-92)***

89. The Committee recalled that the last session had considered this issue, following the adoption of the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission, and had circulated the Limits for Certain Substances for further comments. The Committee discussed the levels of several contaminants in natural mineral waters. Many delegations expressed the view that the proposed levels for contaminants in natural mineral water were too high and that natural mineral waters should comply with the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality (Volume 1, Recommendations, WHO, Geneva, 1993 ). Other delegations however considered that the composition of natural mineral waters was different according to the hydrology of the source and therefore different levels of contaminants may be justified.

90. The Delegation of Germany asked for the establishment of specific health related limits for certain substances in mineral water claimed to be suitable for infant food preparation.

91. The Committee agreed with the proposal of the Chairman to bring the levels of contaminants for natural mineral waters into line with the levels in the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality. The Health Related Limits for Certain Substances as amended are included in Appendix VI.

92. A number of delegations including Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Tunisia and Switzerland did not agree with this decision for the reasons mentioned in para. 89 above.

---

<sup>4</sup> ALINORM 99/33A, para. 61

<sup>5</sup> 16 CX/FAC 99/12 (comments of Slovak Republic, Denmark, South Africa, United States, Canada), CRD 7 (Spain) 11

**APPENDIX I****CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES**

When a Codex Committee proposes to elaborate a standard, code of practice or related text within its terms of reference, it should first consider the priorities established by the Commission in the Medium-Term Plan of Work, any specific relevant strategic project currently being undertaken by the Commission and the prospect of completing the work within a reasonable period of time. It should also assess the proposal against the criteria set out below.

If the proposal falls in an area outside the Committee's terms of reference the proposal should be reported to the Commission in writing together with proposals for such amendments to the Committee's terms of reference as may be required.

**CRITERIA****Criteria applicable to general subjects**

- (a) Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.
- (b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.
- (c) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.
- (d) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.

**Criteria applicable to commodities**

- (a) Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.
- (b) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries.
- (c) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.
- (d) International or regional market potential.
- (e) Amenability of the commodity to standardization.
- (f) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.
- (g) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi processed or processed.
- (h) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.

**APPENDIX II****RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMODITY COMMITTEES AND GENERAL COMMITTEES****FOOD HYGIENE**

Commodity Committees should use in the commodity standards the following text:

- It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev 3-1997), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.
- The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).