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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Thirty second Session
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REPORT OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

*Nuku'alofa, Tonga
28-31 October 2008*

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Tenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific reached the following conclusions:

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 32ND SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 62ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Coordinating Committee:

Participation of developing countries in Codex Meetings

- Recognised the significant role and impact of the Codex Trust Fund to increase participation from developing countries in Codex (para. 8).

Terms of Reference for Coordinating Committees

- Reaffirmed the decision made at its 9th Session that the current Terms of Reference of the Coordinating Committees should be kept unchanged (para. 12).

Implementation of Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013

- Considered activities 4.5: *Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level*, 5.4: *Strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees* and 5.5: *Enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national level* of the Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013, as requested by the Commission (paras, 14, 16 and 52).

Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013

- Agreed to adopt the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013 and to request the Coordinator (Tonga) to monitor and report on the status of its the implementation at the 11th Session of CCNASWP (para. 36).

National food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting and use of Codex standards at national and regional level

- Recommended the 32nd Session of the Commission to reconsider the need to continue requesting information on issues related to national food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting and to the use of Codex standards at national and regional (para. 51).
- Unanimously agreed to recommend to the 32nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Tonga be appointed for a second term as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific (para. 61).

MATTERS REFERRED TO CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Coordinating Committee:

Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)

- Reaffirmed the decision made at its 9th Session that the current terms of reference of the coordinating committees should be kept unchanged (para. 12);

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO FAO AND WHOThe Coordinating Committee:

- Expressed its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their efforts to support Members through capacity building activities; highlighted the need for more involvement of experts from developing countries in the FAO/WHO provision of scientific advice, use of data from all geographical regions and to ensure that FAO/WHO risk assessment activities be adequately funded (paras 20-21).
- Agreed that FAO and WHO would develop lists of specialists and institutions to respond to the identified needs in Pacific Island Countries and would then report to the 11th CCNASWP (para. 34).
- Agreed to recommend to FAO and WHO to assist countries to carry out research and studies on safety of kava as food (para. 43).

OTHER MATTERSThe Coordinating Committee:

- Agreed on the need for further scientific research to clarify a number of safety issues, prior to considering the standardization of kava products and that the Coordinator (Tonga) in consultation with Pacific Island Countries, would prepare a paper on kava products for consideration at its 11th Session (paras 42 and 44).
- Endorsed the recommendation of the electronic working group that it was premature to consider the development of a standard for nonu (noni) products and that wider consultation be carried out with producing countries and industry (para. 47).
- Agreed to issue a Circular Letter in the form of a questionnaire, which would link more directly the information on the status of national food legislation, food control, Codex structure, consumer participation and use of Codex standards at national and regional level with the objectives and activities of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013 (paras 49-50 and 55).

..

INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP) held its 10th Session in Nuku'alofa from 28 to 31 October 2008 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga. The Session was chaired by Hon Lisiate 'Aloveita 'Akolo, Minister for Labour, Commerce and Industries and Acting Minister for Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries, and attended by 39 delegates and observers representing 11 Members and 4 international organizations. A complete list of participants, including the Secretariat, is given in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Session was opened by Hon Lisiate 'Aloveita 'Akolo on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, Hon Feleti Sevele. In his opening remarks, the Minister highlighted the importance of Codex Alimentarius as a global reference for consumers, food producers and processors, national food control agencies and international food trade. He further stressed the role of governments to take legislative actions to ensure that safe food of acceptable quality be sold and that risks of foodborne health hazards be minimized. Dr Pratap Premanand Jayavanth, WHO Country Liaison Officer for the Kingdom of Tonga, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1) ¹

3. The Coordinating Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the Session.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2) ²

4. The Coordinating Committee noted matters referred by the 30th and 31st Sessions of the Commission regarding: Proposal 8 "Conversion of regional standards into worldwide standards" of the Review of Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces (commodity work of Coordinating committees and submission of new work proposals for commodities); and the amendment to the Procedural Manual (Coordinator)³.

5. The Coordinating Committee also noted that several matters would be discussed under other Agenda Items. Discussions held and decisions made were as follows:

Participation of developing countries in Codex Meetings

6. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the Commission, at its 31st Session, had recommended that Coordinating committees consider the issue of participation of developing countries and report their views to the 32nd Session of the Commission⁴.

7. The Delegation of the United States of America, referring to their written statement in CRD 3, proposed to consider an appropriate approach to enhance participation of developing countries in Codex, noting the need among countries for more extensive engagement in the standard setting process.

¹ CX/NASWP 08/10/1

² CX/NASWP 08/10/2; CRD 3 (An approach to enhancing developing country participation in Codex – prepared by the United States of America)

³ ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 157 and 21

⁴ ALINORM 07/31/REP, paras 152-162

8. The Coordinating Committee recognized the significant role and impact of the Codex Trust Fund to increase participation from developing countries in Codex. The Coordinating Committee noted the need to look beyond the life of the Trust Fund and consider future options for strengthening participation of developing countries in the work of Codex on a more sustainable basis. It pointed out that, in order to make effective use of Codex Trust Fund's resources, countries should use appropriate criteria to prioritise their attendance to Codex committees and identify those where they could provide significant inputs.

9. Some delegations noted that the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2008-2013 (see Agenda Item 4) addressed the issues related to more effective preparation and participation in Codex work.

Terms of Reference for Coordinating Committees

10. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) at its 24th Session agreed to invite all Coordinating committees to discuss matters on the Terms of Reference for Coordinating committees, in particular inclusion of a proposed sentence regarding promotion of adoption of regional positions on strategic subjects⁵.

11. The Coordinating Committee was of the view that the current Terms of Reference were sufficiently broad to allow coordinating committees to formulate regional positions among members, where necessary, and that the possibility to carry out this activity was adequately covered by bullet point (g) "exercises a general coordinating role for the Region and such other functions as may be entrusted to it by the Commission". It was further noted that the Terms of Reference of all Coordinating committees should be kept harmonised.

12. In concluding this discussion, the Coordinating Committee reaffirmed the decision made at its 9th Session that the current Terms of Reference should be kept unchanged⁶.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013 (Agenda Item 2.1)⁷

Activity 4.5: Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level

13. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the Commission, at its 31st Session, agreed that coordinating committees review the current status of mechanisms for horizontal coordination and communication among national delegates to various food standards related international organizations and identify possible actions to be taken with a view to promoting interdisciplinary coordination and communication at national and regional level and report to the 32nd Session of the Commission⁸.

14. The Coordinating Committee noted information provided by members and observers in response to Part C (i) of CL 2008/12-NASWP, which indicated that some countries had in place different mechanisms, at different levels of development, to ensure proper communication and consultation with interested parties; and in some other countries national strategies underlined the need for horizontal coordination to develop consistent national positions.

Activity 5.5: Enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels

15. The Coordinating Committee recalled that the Commission, at its 31st Session, agreed that coordinating committees review the current status and identify any additional measures to be taken by governments and other parties, to enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels and report to the 32nd Session of the Commission⁹.

⁵ ALINNORM 07/30/33, para 14-22

⁶ ALINORM 07/30/19, paras 30-33

⁷ CX/NASWP 08/10/3 (Information of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to Part C of CL 2008/12-NASWP); CX/NASWP 08/10/3 Add. 1 (Information of Cook Islands); CRD 6 (Information of Fiji)

⁸ ALINORM 07/31/REP, para. 141.

⁹ ALINORM 07/31/REP, para. 146.

16. The Coordinating Committee noted information provided by Members and observers in response to Part C (ii) of CL 2008/12-NASWP, which indicated that at national level there were means, e.g. emails, websites, workshops, to communicate and distribute information on Codex and coordinating mechanisms, e.g. National Codex Committees or stakeholders' fora, to get more effective involvement of non-governmental organizations, aimed at ensuring coordination and appropriate consultation, including provision of inputs.

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING (Agenda Item 3)¹⁰

17. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, provided an overview of FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and provision of scientific advice implemented since the last Session of CCNASWP.

18. The Representative stated that FAO and WHO continue to be engaged in programmes and projects at national, regional and international levels to strengthen the essential pillars of food safety and enhance Codex related activities. The Coordinating Committee was also informed that a Pacific Food Summit was being planned in 2009-2010 to draw high level attention to food security, food safety and nutrition.

19. The Representative encouraged members to notify any food safety related issues to contact points of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) and INFOSAN emergency.

20. The Coordinating Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO and WHO for their efforts to support members through capacity building activities and urged for better coordination of capacity building activities in the region. It further noted the need for more involvement of experts from developing countries in the FAO/WHO provision of scientific advice and the use of data from all geographical regions.

21. The Coordinating Committee also highlighted the need to ensure that FAO/WHO risk assessment activities be adequately funded. The Representative of FAO informed the Coordinating Committee of the establishment of the Global Initiative for Food-related Scientific Advice (GIFSA), which among others, aimed to mobilize financial as well as technical and human resources to support provision of scientific advice in response to requests from Members and Codex.

22. The Representative of WHO briefly informed the Coordinating Committee of melamine contamination in infant formula and other food products¹¹. Through INFOSAN, several documents, including lists of products in which melamine had been detected, have been disseminated and Members had been supported to develop systems to assess the risk of melamine intake. In response to an urgent need to update and evaluate the current international knowledge on this issue, an independent expert meeting would take place in December 2008 to review toxicological aspects of melamine and cyanuric acid.

DRAFT NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP (Agenda Item 4)¹²

23. The Coordinator (Tonga) briefly introduced the report of the physical working group¹³, which had met on Monday 27 October 2008 and acknowledged the support of New Zealand in the preparation of the new Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP. The document included a revised Strategic Plan, as presented in Appendix I of CRD 4.

24. The Coordinating Committee considered the document in detail and made the following comments and additional changes.

¹⁰ CX/NASWP 08/10/4 Part 1 and Part 2.

¹¹ More information is available at <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/> and <http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns>

¹² CX/NASWP 08/10/5; CX/NASWP 08/10/5 Add.1 (Responses to the Australian questionnaire to facilitate implementation of Objectives 3 and 4 of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan); CRD 4 (Report of the physical Working Group on the draft new Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP)

¹³ Led by the Regional Coordinator (Tonga). Australia, Canada, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, United States of America and Vanuatu participated in the physical working group

Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex

25. The Coordinating Committee agreed to amend Activity 1.2 for purposes of clarity.

Objective 2: To promote maximum participation of all members of the region in the activities of the regional committees and other Codex committees more generally

26. The Coordinating Committee agreed to a revised version of Activity 2.5 in recognising that aspects, such as mentoring programmes between developed and developing countries, were already covered in Activity 3.5.

Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the PIC members to carry out their core functions

27. The Coordinating Committee agreed to a revised version of Activity 3.5 to better describe that the scope of mentoring programmes was to enhance Codex Contact Points of Pacific Island Countries' knowledge and understanding of Codex issues, structure and process and to promote more effective participation in Codex standards development.

Objective 4: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing members of the region

28. The Coordinating Committee amended Activity 4.2 to clarify that the purpose of this activity was to provide scientific and technical expertise required in the region.

Objective 6: To promote the development of standards for food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries

29. The Coordinating Committee agreed to reverse the wording of Activity 6.2 to improve the logic flow of the description of the activity; and to refer in Activity 6.3 to "Committees and Task Forces" instead of "subsidiary bodies", for consistency with the language used in other parts of the document. It further agreed to retain Activity 6.4 in recognising that it differed from Activity 3.4 because it addressed training in institutions/ministries/departments while Activity 3.4 was specifically addressing training of Codex Contact Points of Pacific Island Countries.

Attachment A – Monitoring of Implementation of CCNASWP Regional Strategic Plan

30. The Coordinating Committee agreed to align the language of the Attachment to refer to "All members" instead of "all members of the region" in the interest of clarity.

Objective 1: To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex

31. The Coordinating Committee changed the status of implementation of Activity 1.1 from "implemented" to "ongoing" to better reflect the status of implementation of this activity.

Objective 2: To promote maximum participation of all members of the region in the activities of the regional committees and other Codex committees more generally

32. The Coordinating Committee agreed to add "Regional Coordinator" among the responsible parties for Activity 2.2 to recognise the regional Coordinator's leading role to promote and ensure a coordinated approach for assistance from the Codex Trust Fund and to maximise coverage of subject areas of interest to the region. The Coordinating Committee also indicated that this activity was "to be implemented". The responsible parties for Activity 2.5 were revised to indicate that the "Regional Coordinator in conjunction with members" was responsible for the identification of items of relevance to the region from other Codex committees and task forces and for the development of common positions.

Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the PIC members to carry out their core functions

33. The Coordinating Committee changed the status of Activity 3.1 to “Implemented” to acknowledge the survey carried out by Australia on the status of implementation of Objectives 3 and 4 of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan 2004-2008¹⁴. The status of implementation of Activity 3.4 was changed to “To be implemented”.

Objective 4: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing members of the region

34. The Coordinating Committee noted that all activities under Objective 4 should be implemented in a sequential way, each being linked to the following one. In particular, the Coordinating Committee acknowledged the need to prioritise regional issues for which research/analysis was needed (Activity 4.1) before starting the development of lists of specialists and institutions (Activity 4.2), thus allowing FAO/WHO to prepare more focused lists. It was further agreed that FAO and WHO would develop lists of specialists and institutions to respond to the identified needs in Pacific Island Countries and would then report on the implementation of this activity to the 11th CCNASWP; and that subsequently CCNASWP would consider the need to broaden these lists. In discussing this matter, the Coordinating Committee acknowledged that replies provided to the survey carried out by Australia on the status of implementation of Objectives 3 and 4 of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan 2004-2008 already provided some valid information on priority issues for the region. The Coordinating Committee agreed that Australia would extract useful information from the previous survey on priority for scientific advice and compare with the current and proposed Codex activities and, in consultation with CCNASWP members, analyse these information to prepare a list of priority. The relevant columns on “responsible parties”, “timeframe”, “output/measurable indicators” and “status” of Objective 4 were amended to reflect the above decisions.

Objective 5: To promote procedures to review Codex codes, standards, guidelines and recommendations to facilitate their use as the basis for national standards; and Objective 6: To promote the development of standards for food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries

35. The Coordinating Committee completed the information of the status of implementation of Activities 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

36. The Coordinating Committee agreed to adopt the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013 (see Appendix II) and to inform the 32nd Session of the Commission. It further agreed to request the Coordinator to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to present a report on the status of implementation at the 11th Session of CCNASWP. The Delegations of Australia and New Zealand offered their assistance to the Coordinator in this task. The Coordinating Committee stressed the importance that the Coordinator play a proactive role to ensure that progress be made in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It was also acknowledged that prioritizing the activities of the Strategic Plan could help ensuring its timely and effective implementation.

OBJECTIVES 6 OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP “PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR FOOD PRODUCTS IN PIC” (Agenda Item 4.1)¹⁵

37. The Coordinating Committee noted that the report of the electronic working group had not been issued. It further noted that discussion on commodities relevant to the region would take place under Agenda Items 5 and 6.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD FOR KAVA (Agenda Item 5)¹⁶

38. The Coordinating Committee recalled that at its 9th Session it had agreed that a comprehensive discussion paper was to be prepared by an electronic working group¹⁷, led by the Coordinator (Tonga), to justify the need to develop a standard for kava for consideration at the current session.

¹⁴ CX/NASWP 08/10/5 Add.1 and CRD 5

¹⁵ CX/NASWP 08/10/6 NOT ISSUED; and CX/NASWP 08/10/6 Add.1 – NOT ISSUED

¹⁶ CX/NASWP 08/10/7, CRD 1 (comments of WHO)

39. The Coordinator briefly introduced the discussion paper, as presented in CX/NASWP 08/10/7, which also included a project document, and highlighted that kava was an important agricultural commodity, which could offer significant potential trade opportunities to Pacific Island Countries. He explained that the working group, in preparing the discussion paper, had considered the WHO Report on “Assessment of the risk of hepatotoxicity with kava products (WHO, 2007)”. In addition, the Coordinator stressed the importance of the long term traditional use of kava in Pacific Island Countries with defined varieties and plant parts and the traditional use of cold water for extraction.

40. The Representative of WHO, referring to WHO written comments in CRD 1, stated that the WHO had conducted an assessment of the risk of hepatotoxicity associated with several substances in kava products. The report recommended that further research was necessary, e.g. on the differences of toxicology between roots and other parts of kava. The Representative noted the diversity of kava products and uncertainty on their safety and stated that appropriate measures needed to be applied for the prevention of health risk arising from kava consumption. He further stressed that it was premature to treat kava as a food due to the effects attributed to its pharmacological properties.

41. Some delegations pointed out that kava and kava products had been variously regulated by countries and that there were still information / knowledge gaps on the scope of kava products used as food and on how they should be differentiated from pharmaceutical products. It was further pointed out that information on situation of kava trade included in the document CX/NASWP 08/10/7 needed to be updated.

42. The Coordinating Committee generally agreed on the need for further scientific research to clarify a number of safety issues, prior to considering the standardization of kava for food.

43. After some discussion, the Coordinating Committee agreed to recommend FAO and WHO to assist countries to carry out research and studies, in particular on those aspects indicated in Points 7 and 8 of the project document attached to CX/NASWP 08/10/7. The Representatives of WHO and FAO concurred with this recommendation and noted that clear identification of the need for technical inputs were required to facilitate necessary assistance, including data generation for safety assessment of kava as food.

44. In order to address the uncertainties regarding the scope of kava products, the Coordinating Committee agreed that the Coordinator (Tonga), in consultation with the Pacific Island Countries, would prepare a paper, which should compile information on: i) scope of kava products and evidence of the use of kava as food; ii) processing methods, iii) regulatory measures for safety control of these products by countries, and iv) markets of export; and other relevant issues, for consideration at its next Session.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD FOR NONU (NONI) PRODUCTS (Agenda Item 6)¹⁸

45. The Coordinator (Tonga) briefly introduced the discussion paper on the development of a standard for nonu (noni) products, which had been prepared by an electronic working group led by Tonga¹⁹. The Coordinator noted that currently there were no impediments to trade (inside and outside the region) for these products from the Pacific Island Countries and that several industry standards already existed. He further stated that the working group had recommended carrying out wider consultation with producing countries and industry before considering the need for Codex to initiate new work on a standard for nonu (noni) products.

¹⁷ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu participated in the electronic working group

¹⁸ CX/NASWP 08/10/8; and CX/NASWP 08/10/6 Add.1 – NOT ISSUED

¹⁹ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu participated in the electronic working group

46. Delegations which intervened commented: that some technical and scientific aspects of these products needed to be clarified; that there was a need to verify whether the Codex *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CODEX STAN 247-2005) could also apply to nonu (noni) products; that the varieties and processing methods used for these food products needed to be clarified; that the scope of the proposed work covered aspects of hygienic practices which fell outside the scope of a commodity standard; that there was a need to verify whether this work complied with Codex criteria for the establishment of work priorities (applicable to commodities)²⁰; and that according to the decision of the 31st Session of the Commission justification on new work for commodity standards should be provided in line with the “Guidelines on the Application of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priority Applicable to Commodities”²¹.

47. In view of the above discussion, the Coordinating Committee endorsed the recommendation of the working group that it was premature to consider the development of a standard for nonu (noni) products and that wider consultation be carried out with producing countries and industry

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARD SETTING (Agenda Item 7)²²

48. The Coordinating Committee was informed of recent developments and current status of food control and food safety issues in member countries on the basis of the written submissions in reply to Part A of CL 2008/12-NASWP.

49. The Coordinating Committee had a brief discussion on the information on national food legislation, food control, Codex structure and consumer participation gathered with Part A of CL 2008/12-NASWP. The Coordinating Committee, noting the benefit of sharing this information among members, recognized the need to add some value to this information, e.g. assessing the gaps in national food control systems and the needs for standards. Therefore, the Coordinating Committee agreed to a proposal of a delegation to make this Agenda Item, along with Agenda Item 8, more useful and directly linked to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013, thus assisting the Coordinator in monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan (see para. 36).

50. The Coordinating Committee agreed that a Circular Letter be issued in the form of a questionnaire, which would link more directly the information on status of national food legislation, food control, Codex structure, and consumer participation to the objectives and activities of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013. The Coordinating Committee accepted the offer of New Zealand to prepare the questionnaire.

51. The Coordinating Committee agreed to recommend the 32nd Session of Commission to reconsider the need to continue requesting the information on these issues, i.e. Parts A and B of CL 2008/12-NASWP prepared in line with the recommendations made by the 57th session of the Executive Committee²³.

52. With regard to Activity 5.4 of Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013 “Strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees” the Coordinating Committee recalled the request of the 31st Session of the Commission to review the operation and activities of Codex Contact Points and other National Codex Committees and to discuss ways to strengthen their functions²⁴. The Coordinating Committee noted the information provided in the written comments: that National Codex Committees or equivalent structures were in place in all countries to discuss Codex matters; that role and functions of National Codex Committees varied among countries; and that in some countries efforts were ongoing to broaden the composition and participation in the work of the National Codex Committees in private sector (e.g. industry and consumers).

²⁰ Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

²¹ ALINORM 08/31/3 Appendix II

²² CX/NASWP 08/10/9 (Information of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in response to Part A of CL 2008/12-NASWP); CX/NASWP 08/10/9 Add.1 (Information of Cook Islands); CRD 2 (Additional information of Canada); CRD 6 (Additional information of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), CRD 7 (Information of Fiji); CRD 8 (Information of Federated States of Micronesia); Information of United States of America will be distributed to all CCNASWP Members.

²³ ALINORM 06/29/3 para. 103

²⁴ ALINORM 08/31/REP, para. 145

USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 8)²⁵

53. The Coordinating Committee recalled that this Agenda Item had been added by the 57th Session of the Executive Committee for consideration by the Coordinating committees in order to obtain their views on how Codex standards and related texts were used at national and regional level.

54. One delegation intervened explaining that the majority of Pacific Island Countries used Codex standards as the basis of their national legislation, also taking into account legislations of other countries according to their trade. The delegation further noted: the problems of translating into national language Codex standards which terminology were often too technical; the need to develop national food safety legislation that ensure at the same time the required level of consumer protection and a certain flexibility in the application by industry. The Chairperson acknowledged that the above issues and constraints were common to many countries.

55. In order to make this Agenda Item more useful, the Coordinating Committee agreed that the questionnaire that would link more directly the information on status of national food legislation, food control, Codex structure and consumer participation to the objectives and activities of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013 (see para. 50) would also gather information on the use of Codex standards at national and regional level.

NUTRITIONAL ISSUES WITHIN THE REGION (Agenda Item 9)²⁶

56. The Coordinating Committee recalled that this matter had been placed on the Provisional Agenda at the request of the Coordinator (Tonga), FAO and WHO and that information on nutritional issues in the region had been requested with Part D of CL 2008/12-NASWP.

57. The Representative of WHO briefly introduced document CX/NASWP 08/10/11 Add.1. He recalled that the document had been tabled during the Workshop organized by the Coordinator (Tonga) on 27 October 2008 and that workshop participants had discussions on two key issues: (i) the need to approach food industries for partnership; and (ii) the ongoing discussion in Codex on issues related to nutritional labelling and advertising.

58. With regard to the proposals included in the document, the Coordinating Committee noted the work of the Codex Committees on Food Labelling (CCFL) and on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU). In particular:

- a definition of advertising with respect to nutrition claims had been included in paragraph 1.1 of the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997)²⁷;
- the 37th CCFL (Calgary, Canada, 4-8 May 2009) will consider papers regarding: (i) revision of the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling concerning the list of nutrients that are always declared on a voluntary or mandatory basis and discussion of issues related to mandatory nutrition; (ii) development of criteria/principles for legibility and readability of nutrition labels; and (iii) labelling provisions dealing with the food ingredients identified in the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health; and
- the 30th CCNFSDU (Cape Town, South Africa, 3-7 November 2008) will consider issues of relevance to the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAS) that might assist Pacific Island Countries: (i) defining dietary fibre for the purposes of food labelling, (ii) revision of nutrient reference values for labelling purposes, specifically vitamins and minerals, (iii) the scientific basis for health claims, and (iv) the establishment and application of nutritional risk analysis principles.

²⁵ CX/NASWP 08/10/10 (Responses of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to Part B of CL 2008/12-NASWP); CX/NASWP 08/10/10 Add. 1 (Information of Cook Islands); CRD 7 (Information of Fiji)

²⁶ CX/NASWP 08/10/11 (Information of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to Part D of CL 2008/12-NASWP); CX/NASWP 08/10/11 Add. 1 (Improving Nutrition and Health in the Pacific through Improved Food Standards, prepared by WHO/WPRO); CX/NASWP 08/10/11 Add. 2 (Information of Cook Islands); CRD 7 (Information of Fiji)

²⁷ Adopted by the 31st CAC (ALINORM 08/31/REP para. 21 and Appendix VII)

59. One delegation expressed the view that advertising was best regulated at national level and that the revision of commodity standards to address issues related to the implementation of the WHO DPAS was not feasible and should be addressed in a horizontal manner.

60. It was further noted that a dialogue between the food industry and the health sector (Sydney, Australia, 5-7 November 2008) will be discussing food fortification in the Pacific.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 10)²⁸

61. On the proposal of the Delegation of Samoa, the Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 32nd Session of the Commission that Tonga be reappointed for a second term as Coordinator for North America and the South West Pacific. The Delegation of Tonga thanked all the Countries for their support and accepted the nomination, subject to the confirmation by the Government of Tonga.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 11)

62. The Coordinating Committee noted that there was no matter to be discussed under this Agenda Item”.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 12)

63. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 11th Session would be held in approximately two years time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 32nd Session of the Commission.

²⁸ CX/NASWP 08/10/12 Rev.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY:	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (ALINORM 09/32/32)
Status of Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the CCNASWP 2008-2013	-	Coordinator 11 th CCNASWP	Para. 36
Discussion Paper on Kava	-	Coordinator 11 th CCNASWP	Para. 44

Appendix I

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Appendix II**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP
2008-2013****INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out the Strategic Plan for the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for North America and South West Pacific for the period 2008-2013.

GOAL

The goal of this Strategic Plan is to enhance the effectiveness of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific in achieving its responsibilities to its Member countries and the Region's contribution to Codex Alimentarius Commission.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies six strategic objectives of the region for the period 2008-2013. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of the Coordinating Committee to determine the status of the Plan and the continued appropriateness of the identified objectives.

Objective 1: To improve the coordination and communication of the Region's activities in Codex

Rationale:

Meaningful consultation and coordination among relevant stakeholders is important to ensure effective operation of the region's activities within Codex. Advancement of issues of interest to the members of the Region is enhanced by coordination and communication amongst the members.

Implementation:

- ◆ 1.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all NASWP Members at Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups.
- ◆ 1.2 Continue to promote the sharing of written comments on Circular Letters (CLs) and other working documents, and subsequent discussion of issues of mutual interest as may be appropriate, including coordinating of positions, where appropriate.
- ◆ 1.3 Prepare a checklist of responsibilities/actions to support seamless transition between regional Coordinators.
- ◆ 1.4 Encourage information exchange among member countries through the use of electronic information systems.
- ◆ 1.5 Focus CCNASWP agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to the region.
- ◆ 1.6 Develop a regional strategy on issues of mutual interest arising from regional discussion.

Objective 2: To promote maximum participation of all member countries of the region in the activities of the regional coordinating committee and other Codex Committees more generally

Rationale:

The participation of all member countries is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring issues identified as being significant to the region take account of the full range of interest and viewpoints.

Implementation:

- ◆ 2.1 PIC member countries to continue to avail of funding assistance under the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhancing the Participation of Developing Countries in the Work of Codex.
- ◆ 2.2 Promote coordinated approach for assistance from the Trust Fund to maximise coverage of subject areas of interest to the region. PIC members to coordinate application to the Trust Fund to ensure, to the extent possible, that members benefit from participation from a wider range of committees.
- ◆ 2.3 Encourage all members to submit written comments on subjects of national and regional interest irrespective of whether members can physically attend meetings.
- ◆ 2.4 Ensure that the country comments from members of the including those not present at meetings are considered by the Committee.
- ◆ 2.5 Identify items arising from other Codex Committees and Task Forces that are of particular significance to the region to facilitate development of common position and advancement of regional interest in Codex.

Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the Pacific Island Country Members to carry out their core functions

Rationale:

In order for a country to participate effectively in the Codex process, it requires a functional Codex Contact Point including an effective support structure. Regional networking could greatly benefit the newer members of the region to improve their understanding of Codex and help enhance their participation in Codex.

Implementation:

- ◆ 3.1 Identify the capacity building needs of the Codex Contact Points to strengthen Codex structures at the national level and facilitate greater participation of Members in Codex work.
- ◆ 3.2 Conduct national and/or regional workshops on Codex for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee members.
- ◆ 3.3 Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.
- ◆ 3.4 On-the-job training for PIC CCPs through attachment to QUAD CCPS to observe the management of Codex work.
- ◆ 3.5 Develop a mentoring programme between the developed and developing countries of the region to enhance the PIC knowledge and understanding of Codex issues, structure and processes and promote more effective participation in international standards development.

Objective 4: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing member countries in the region

Rationale:

The Terms of Reference for CCNASWP specifies, amongst other things, that it “*promotes within the Committee contacts for the mutual exchange of information.....and stimulates the strengthening of food control infrastructures*”. As a fundamental element of food control systems is good science, the exchange of scientific and technical expertise will contribute to enhancing the scientific basis of the various food control infrastructures in the region.

Implementation:

- ◆ 4.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis.
- ◆ 4.2 Develop a list of specialists and institutions which can provide the required scientific/technical expertise in the region.
- ◆ 4.3 Foster the establishment of communication links amongst the technical experts in the countries of the region and promote the sharing of data and other research materials as appropriate.
- ◆ 4.4 Conduct workshops/training courses as appropriate to facilitate the development of technical capacity of the members of the region to address the identified issues.

Objective 5: To promote procedures to review Codex codes, standards, guidelines and recommendations to facilitate their use as the basis for national standards

Rationale:

Increased harmonization of regulatory standards, policies and practices related to food would contribute to public health protection and subsequently contribute to the facilitation of trade in foods, not only amongst members of the region, but also more broadly. Many of the Pacific Island countries are unfamiliar with the full range of Codex standards and it would be helpful to their standards development/revision process to identify those standards and guidelines that might be of greatest interest to them.

Implementation:

- ◆ 5.1 Support practical training on the importance of international harmonisation and the development of national standards and regulations based on Codex.
- ◆ 5.2 Compile a list of Codex standards of particular interest and relevance to members of the region.

Objective 6: To promote the development of standards for food products produced in the Pacific Island Countries.

Rationale:

To ensure PICs needs are taken into account in the development of worldwide and/or regional standards for products produced or traded in the region, input to the development of standards needs to be improved.

Implementation:

- ◆ 6.1 Establish national mechanisms for standard development process in the PICs.

- ◆ 6.2 Provide a mechanism for identifying standards development issues in Codex of interest to the PICs and establish sub-regional Working Group, as appropriate for PICs to address these issues.
- ◆ 6.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products of interest to the PICs to CCNASWP for consideration prior to submission to the Commission or other Committees and Task Forces.
- ◆ 6.4 On-the-job training at appropriate institutions/ministries/departments in the developed member countries of CCNSWP.

Attachment A**MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CCNASWP REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN**

Activities	Responsible parties	Time frame	Output/measurable indicators	Status
Objective 1: To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex				
1.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all NASWP Members at Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups.	Quad countries in consultation with other members All members to share plans for attendance at Codex meetings	Immediate and ongoing	All CCNASWP countries at given meetings invited to participate Information on planned attendance shared among all Member countries of the region	Ongoing
1.2 Continue to promote the sharing of written comments on Circular Letters (CLs) and other working documents, and subsequent discussion of issues of mutual interest, including coordinating of positions, where appropriate.	All members	Ongoing	Comments shared on a routine basis among members	Implemented
1.3 Prepare a checklist of responsibilities/actions to support seamless transition between Regional Coordinators.	New and previous Regional Coordinators with assistance from Secretariat	Ongoing	Contact established and information/experience shared between current and previous coordinators	Checklist prepared for Regional Coordinator
1.4 Encourage information exchange among member countries through the use of electronic information systems.	All members	Ongoing	Increased contact among members and establishment of regional website to disseminate information and promote communication within the region.	Regional website established.
1.5 Focus CCNASWP agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to region	Regional Coordinator in consultation with FAO/WHO and members	Ongoing	Agenda for CCNASWP meeting strengthened	Ongoing
1.6 Develop a regional strategy on issues of mutual interest arising from regional discussions.	Regional Coordinator in consultation with FAO/WHO and members	Ongoing	A regional strategy agreed (<i>linked to 1.5</i>)	To be implemented

Activities	Responsible parties	Time frame	Output/measurable indicators	Status
Objective 2: to promote maximum participation of all members of the region in the activities of the regional coordinating committee and other Codex Committees more generally				
2.1 PIC members to continue to avail of funding assistance under the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhancing Participation of Developing Countries in the Work of Codex.	All eligible PIC members	Ongoing	PICs increased attendance at Codex	Implemented
2.2 Promote coordinated approach for assistance from the Trust Fund to maximize coverage of subject areas of interest to the region. PIC members to coordinate application to the Trust Fund to ensure, to the extent possible, that members benefit from participation in a wider range of committees.	All eligible members and the regional coordinator	Ongoing	Key subject areas covered	To be implemented
2.3 Encourage all members to submit written comments on subjects of national and regional interest irrespective of whether members can attend meetings.	All members	Immediate and ongoing	PICs submit written comments on issues of interest to them. (link to Objective 3: mentoring) (link to 1.2)	Quad countries sharing their written comments with all members of the region to inform and assist them to formulate national positions/views
2.4 Ensure that the country comments from Members including those not present at meetings are considered by the Committee.	All members	Ongoing	Comments submitted by Members considered at meeting	To be implemented
2.5 Identify items arising from other Codex Committees and Task Forces that are of particular significance to the region to facilitate development of common position and advancement of regional interest in Codex.	Regional coordinator in conjunction with members	Ongoing	Issues of interest to the region identified	To be implemented
Objective 3: To promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the PIC members to carry out their core functions				
3.1 Identify the capacity building needs of the Codex contact points to strengthen Codex structures at the national level and facilitate greater participation of members in Codex work	FAO/WHO, Regional coordinator and members	Ongoing	Regional/national level training programmes implemented	Implemented

Activities	Responsible parties	Time frame	Output/measurable indicators	Status
3.2 Conduct national and/or regional workshops on Codex for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee members.	FAO/WHO and Quad member countries	Ongoing	Regional/national workshops conducted to strengthen national capacities	National/regional workshops implemented with further workshops planned around regional meetings.
3.3 Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.	Members with lead from Regional Coordinator	Ongoing	Improved networking of CCPs in the region	Network initiated with exchange of emails but more sustained action needed
3.4 On-the-job training for PIC CCPs through attachment to QUAD CCPS to observe the management of Codex work.	Quad members	Ongoing	On the job training provided to PIC members	To be implemented
3.5 Develop a mentoring programme between the developed and developing countries of the region to enhance the PIC knowledge and understanding of Codex issues, structure and processes and promote more effective participation in international standards development.	Quad members in cooperation with Regional Coordinator	Ongoing	Guidance provided on Codex related matters on an ongoing basis	Initiated
Objective 4: to strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing members of the region¹				
4.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis	Australia, FAO/WHO and all members	On going	Technical expertise and guidance provided by Quad countries to PIC members on critical areas of interest	Initiated in areas such as the revision of the Codex standard for Cassava
4.2 Develop a list of specialists and institutions which can provide the required scientific/technical expertise in the region.	FAO/WHO and 11 th CCNASWP	Ongoing	i) FAO/WHO to undertake specific work for PIC members ii) 11 th CCNASWP to consider expanding the list to all members	To be implemented
4.3 Foster the establishment of communication links amongst the technical experts in the countries of the region and promote the sharing of data and other research materials as appropriate.	Codex Contact Points and Members	On going	Codex Contact Points to provide or facilitate access to technical expertise	To be implemented

¹ Activities 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 are sequential.

Activities	Responsible parties	Time frame	Output/measurable indicators	Status
4.4 Conduct workshops/training courses as appropriate to facilitate the development of technical capacity of the members of the region to address the identified issues.	FAO/WHO and Quad members	On going	Workshops conducted on specific areas of interest	To be implemented
Objective 5: to promote procedures to review Codex codes, standards, guidelines and recommendations to facilitate their use as the basis for national standards				
5.1 Support practical training on the importance of international harmonisation and the development of national standards and regulations based on Codex.	FAO/WHO and Quad members	On going	Workshops conducted	Regional workshop conducted in New Zealand in September 2007 and further workshop planned in conjunction with 10 th CCNASWP and CCASIA
5.2 Compile a list of Codex standards of particular interest and relevance to members.	All members	On going	List compiled	To be implemented
Objective 6: to promote the development of standards for food products produced in the Pacific island countries				
6.1 Establish national mechanisms for standards development process in the PICS.	All PICS	By 2008	National mechanisms established	To be implemented
6.2 Provide a mechanism for identifying standards development issues in Codex of interest to the PICS and establish sub-regional Working Group, as appropriate for PICS to address these issues.	Regional coordinator	By 2008	Electronic working group established for kava and noni juice	Continuing
6.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products of interest to the PICS to CCNASWP for consideration prior to submission to the Commission or other Committees and Task Forces.	PICS	On going	Recommendation to the Commission and Codex Committees proposals for new work for development of regional standards	Continuing
6.4 On the job training at appropriate institutions / ministries / departments in the developed member countries of CCNASWP	All Members	On going	Appropriate training provided	To be implemented