



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEx COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### Thirty-fourth Session

Lille, France

2 – 6 June 2025

### CODEx PROCEDURAL MANUAL

#### REVIEW OF THE PROCEDURES IN SECTION 3: *GUIDELINES FOR SUBSIDIARY BODIES*

(Prepared by the host secretariat working group chaired by the United States of America and co-chaired by France)

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 33rd session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP33) considered a document<sup>1</sup> prepared by the Codex Secretariat presenting the new format of the 28th edition of the *Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual*. In its Appendix II, that document also listed a number of additional changes that could be made to the *Codex Procedural Manual* to align certain provisions with modern technology and current working practices. CCGP33 agreed upon these changes, which were subsequently adopted during the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46) and integrated into the 29th edition of the *Codex Procedural Manual*<sup>2</sup> published in 2024.

2. CCGP33 agreed to ask host secretariats to review the procedures in Section 3 of the *Codex Procedural Manual*, Guidelines for subsidiary bodies, to identify text to be updated, in line with current practices; to request the Codex Secretariat to circulate any proposed changes for comments by the Members; and to recommend to CAC46 that this issue be referred to CCGP.<sup>3</sup> CAC46 subsequently approved the review of the procedures in Section 3 to be undertaken by host country secretariats.<sup>4</sup> CCGP33 also agreed that a physical working group (PWG) may be established in conjunction with CCGP34, chaired by the United States of America and co-chaired by France, working in English (and French and Spanish, resources permitting), to consider proposals for updates to Section 3 and comments received thereon and any other possible updates to the *Codex Procedural Manual* identified by the Codex Secretariat.

3. This document presents the work undertaken by the host country secretariats working group (WG) chaired by the United States of America (CCFH and CCRVDF secretariats) and France (CCGP secretariat) to review and propose updates to Section 3 in line with current working methods.

#### II. PARTICIPATION AND METHODOLOGY

4. In January 2024, the Codex Secretariat distributed an invitation to all the host country secretariats to join the WG on the review of Section 3 of the *Codex Procedural Manual* operating on the Codex online forum. A total of 13 host country secretariats accepted the invitation.<sup>5</sup>

5. Section 3 went through two rounds of consultations. The chairs circulated a first proposal for updates to Section 3 in February 2024 with comments due before May 2024. Comments were received from eight host secretariats.<sup>6</sup> The chairs reviewed the comments and distributed a second proposal in October 2024 with comments due before December 2024. Comments were received from six host secretariats.<sup>7</sup> The co-chairs reviewed these comments and made a final proposal for updates to Section 3.

<sup>1</sup> [CX/GP 23/33/4](#)

<sup>2</sup> FAO & WHO. 2024. *Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual* – Twenty-ninth edition. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2280en>

<sup>3</sup> REP23/GP, paragraph 36(ii).

<sup>4</sup> [REP23/CAC](#), paragraph 115.

<sup>5</sup> CCASIA, CCCF, CCEURO, CCFA, CCFFP, CCFL, CCFO, CCLAC, CCMAS, CCNFDSU, CCNE and CCPR.

<sup>6</sup> CCASIA, CCEURO, CCFA, CCFL, CCFO, CCMAS and CCNFDSU.

<sup>7</sup> CCEURO, CCFFP, CCFL, CCFO, CCMAS and CCNFDSU.

6. In line with the task, proposals for modifications to Section 3 primarily focused on harmonizing the terminology used, updating the work processes described in the different guidelines (responsibilities, division of roles, steps, etc.), completing missing information and removing obsolete content. Residual terminology that was linked to the use of physical papers was also updated. Finally, apart from the limited addition of new paragraphs or the inversion of existing ones, the general structure of the different parts of Section 3 was not altered.

7. Comments received from host secretariats were taken into account to the largest extent possible. While some differences in views or preferences were noted, there was no real divergence expressed and consensus was reached on most points. When certain proposed changes were met with mixed reactions, the co-chairs usually reverted to the original text.

8. Certain overarching and specific issues that necessitate further consideration by CCGP34 were identified. These issues are presented in the following Section III of this document along with a more detailed presentation of the principal proposed updates to Section 3 of the *Codex Procedural Manual* and the related rationale.

### III. PRESENTATION OF DISCUSSIONS

#### Overarching issues

9. Several proposals were received during the two rounds of consultation aiming at formally introducing virtual modalities as an option in the conduct of committee sessions. While the co-chairs initially accepted these proposals, they were then informed by the Codex Secretariat that meeting format was not part of FAO's legal framework and were advised against proposing such additions. The co-chairs agreed not to retain such proposals and reverted back to the original text.

10. The guidelines on electronic working groups (EWGs) and physical working groups (PWGs) also elicited several comments that necessitate further consideration by CCGP34 as they may warrant more in-depth revisions of these two texts. These comments are summarized hereafter:

- A host secretariat was of the view that there would be merit in merging and updating the PWG and EWG guidelines into a single "Codex working groups" text that would encompass all different working modalities.
- On a more limited scale, other host secretariats were of the view that PWG and EWG guidelines should be maintained as separate texts, but would benefit from revisions aiming at integrating virtual components in their provisions. They notably indicated that virtual working groups (VWG) were now held on a regular basis and that they followed the PWG procedures in a virtual context. There was also support to update the EWG guidelines to include the possibility to hold virtual sessions.
- The need for consistency between the EWG guidelines and the newly published Codex EWG handbook<sup>8</sup> was also highlighted. During the last round of consultations, a host secretariat proposed new additions to the EWG guidelines based on the Codex EWG handbook, which have been integrated in the proposed update of Section 3.
- It was underlined that the EWG guidelines did not cover EWG established by the Commission. However, considering that the entire content of these guidelines is based on the premise that EWG are established by committees, no changes were proposed.

#### Specific issues

11. Paragraph 32: the current mentioning of Observer countries having the right to record an opposition to a committee decision raised concerns as Observer countries do not have the right to vote or to move motions either of substance or of procedure. This text was put in square bracket so that it may be discussed in CCGP34. The co-chairs were of the view that the legal status of this provision should be clarified.

12. Paragraph 36: the inclusion of a reference to "Step 5/8" in the context of circular letters requesting comments on draft standards recommended for final adoption was agreed by host secretariats. However, before possibly implementing this addition, it was noted that Section 2 of the PM could require a parallel update as there was currently no explicit mentioning of an "adoption at Step 5/8" in the uniform step-process.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> FAO & WHO. 2024. *The Codex electronic working groups handbook*. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3481en>.

<sup>9</sup> The procedural basis for adoption at Step 5/8 is located in Section 2, paragraph 6, which states that "*The Commission may authorize [...] the omission of Steps 6 and 7, where such an omission is recommended by the Codex committee entrusted with the elaboration of the draft*". The only reference made to a "Step 5/8-procedure" in the PM is in section 4, Risk analysis, in the context of the accelerated procedure for the elaboration of pesticide MRLs.

CCGP34 could discuss this issue when reviewing the comments related to other sections of the PM and received in response to the circular letter CL 2024/27-GP (Agenda item 4.2 of CCGP34).

13. Paragraph 37 details the information that should be included in the preface of all standards and related texts. It was considered that this paragraph may need revisions following the conclusions of CCGP on the use of FAO publishing rules (Agenda item 5).

14. Paragraphs 94-96 and 124-126 (composition of PWG and EWG): these two sets of paragraphs indicate how and to what party the membership of PWG and EWG is notified. However, there is currently no registration or notification process for PWG. The registration process to EWG was originally described in the last sentence of paragraph 127, which has been removed and replaced by two additional and more detailed paragraphs (new paragraphs 136 and 137, see below). Therefore, the original objective and the application of these provisions in the current context is unclear and necessitate clarifications.

### **Transversal updates on terminology**

15. The use of certain terms was not entirely consistent across the different guidelines contained in Section 3 and has been harmonized. Notably, references to the Codex Secretariat varied greatly and were harmonized as “Codex Secretariat”, in line with the 30th edition of the *Codex Procedural Manual*. This also concerns references to “coordinating committees”, “official working languages”, “host country” or “host country secretariats”. Clarifications were made so as to ensure that the terms “host” or “co-host” are used to designate countries that have been given responsibility over a committee or a working group, while the terms “chairperson” or “co-chairperson” designate officials from these countries appointed to lead the work of these bodies. Finally, for simplicity reasons, the term “Codex committee” has been used for concision, when appropriate, to refer to committees, ad hoc intergovernmental task forces and coordinating committees.

16. Special consideration was given to the terms “Member nation” or “nation”. Although rarely employed in Codex day-to-day language, these terms are commonly used in the guidelines to host governments and in the guidelines to chairpersons in the context of host countries in charge of Codex committees. The co-chairs initially proposed to replace these terms by “Member country” or “country”, when appropriate. However, a host secretariat recalled that, while the 27th edition of the *Codex Procedural Manual* used “Member country” in all instances identified, it has been changed to “Member nation” in the 28th, as part of the Codex Secretariat work on editorial consistency. It was also noted that the term was used in the Statutes of the Commission as well as in the basic texts of FAO. Therefore, so as not to create inconsistencies, these references were not changed. A host secretariat also proposed to further align the other texts of Section 3 with this terminology by replacing subsequent references to “Members” by “Member nations”. However, in the context of these procedures, it was recalled that members refer to both member countries/nations and member organizations. Thus, in these cases, the use of the term nation was deemed inappropriate as it would exclude Member organizations from the scope of the related provisions. Overall, the terminology used to designate Members and Observers has not been fully harmonized in this section. Additional work could be undertaken in conjunction with the remaining sections of the *Codex Procedural Manual*.

### **Section 3.1: Guidelines to host governments of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces**

17. Title: the title was updated to reflect that coordinating committees are covered by the scope of these guidelines, in accordance with paragraph 1 (introduction).

18. Paragraph 1 (introduction): the mention of coordinating committees was reintroduced in the scope of this introduction as they used to be present up until the 27th edition of the *Codex Procedural Manual*. They were inadvertently deleted in the 28th edition, which created an inconsistency in the sentence. Similar changes were introduced in the respective introductions of Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

19. Paragraph 5 (chairperson and host country): the possibility for host countries to designate assistants to the chairperson or co-chairpersons was added, in recognition of an established practice within a number of Codex Committees.

20. Paragraph 7 (host country secretariat): the text was completed and clarified. The last sentence referring to the preparation of the draft report was deleted and a new dedicated paragraph 19 was added to better clarify the responsibility of preparing the draft report, reflecting that this responsibility primarily lays with the Codex Secretariat as opposed to the host country secretariat.

21. Paragraphs 14 and 15 (invitations and provisional agenda): the text was partly reorganized for ease of reading and the involvement of host secretariats in the preparation of invitations was added. New information regarding the content of invitations was added based on current practices.

22. Paragraph 16 (registration): the process through which delegates are registered to committee sessions was simplified. Emphasis was put on the need for delegates to be registered well in advance of the session.

23. Paragraph 17 (provisional agenda): the text was updated, notably by deleting the inclusion of time in the provisional agenda as it is no longer included therein, a detailed timetable being provided as a separate document.

24. Paragraph 18: the word “transactions” in relation with the conduct of a committee was updated as “discussions and conclusions”, in line with current practice.

25. New paragraph 19 (preparation of the draft report): a new paragraph was added to provide more information on the preparation of the draft report of a committee session, replacing the last sentence of paragraph 7 (see paragraph 20 above).

26. Paragraphs 22 and 23 (preparation and distribution of documents): the order of these two paragraphs was reversed so as to respect the chronological sequence of these tasks. Their content was also updated and clarified.

27. New paragraph 27 (CRD): a new paragraph was introduced to provide information on conference room documents (CRDs) as there is currently no dedicated provision in the *Codex Procedural Manual*.

**Section 3.2: Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces**

28. Title: the title was updated to reflect that coordinating committees are covered by the scope of these guidelines, in accordance with paragraph 1 (introduction).

29. Paragraph 27 (introduction): the mention of coordinating committees was reintroduced (same rationale as above).

30. Paragraphs 28-31 (conduct of meetings): update of terminology. The reference to “regional economic integration organization” in paragraph 31 was changed to “Member Organization”, as the duties described in this paragraph only apply to organizations to which membership was granted, in accordance with Article II of the Rules of procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

31. Paragraphs 33-34: the mandatory and optional content of session reports was updated.

**Section 3.3: Guidelines to chairpersons of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces**

32. Title: the title was updated to reflect that coordinating committees are covered by the scope of these guidelines, in accordance with paragraph 1 (introduction).

33. Paragraph 38 (introduction): the mention of coordinating committees was reintroduced (same rationale as above).

34. Paragraph 39 (designation): the possibility for host countries to designate assistants to the chairperson or co-chairpersons was added.

35. Paragraph 48 (conduct of meeting): the reference to “regional economic integration organization” was changed to “Member organization”, in line with Article II of the Rules of procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

36. Paragraph 54 (consensus): a reference to concern forms used in the context of JMPR and JECFA was added as a measure to facilitate consensus and reflecting a practice already described in Section 4.

**Section 3.4: Criteria and procedural guidelines for Codex committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces working by correspondence**

37. Limited edits were proposed to these guidelines, related notably to terminology (see paragraph 15 above) and in consistency with similar edits introduced in the other texts of Section 3. These are not attached here in Appendix I but included in CX/GP 25/34/9 to facilitate discussion of all aspects on Section 3.4 under one agenda item (Agenda item 8).

**Section 3.5: Guidelines on physical working groups**

38. Paragraph 91 (introduction): it was clarified that PWG are also open to Observers.

39. New paragraph 98: new provisions were added to indicate that a committee can appoint co-hosts of a PWG and that co-hosting comes with responsibilities. This last information is based on the EWG handbook and was suggested by a host secretariat in the equivalent paragraph of the EWG guidelines (see paragraph 45 below). It was added here for consistency.

40. Paragraph 98 (chairperson): in relation to the previous addition, it was clarified that co-hosts are responsible for appointing co-chairpersons.

41. Paragraph 100 (conference services): this paragraph was renamed and reworded so as not to give the obligation to a host to establish a secretariat, as this is now rarely required given that most PWG are held in conjunction with committee sessions (they benefit from the committee venue and facilities).

42. Paragraphs 112-115 (organization of work, preparation and distribution of documents, conclusions): the responsibility to the tasks described, which originally fell to the PWG host secretariat, was transferred more broadly to the PWG host as secretariats are not always established. Mentions of “papers” were changed to “documents”.

### **Section 3.6: Guidelines on electronic working groups**

43. Paragraph 120 (introduction): the reference to “remote interactions” and “information and communications technology” was introduced in replacement of more dated terminology.

44. Paragraph 127 (organization and duties): the last sentence referring to the registration process was deleted as additional and more explicit paragraphs were added (new paragraphs 136 and 137, see below). The word “procedures” in the title was replaced by “duties” in accordance with the equivalent section in the PWG guidelines.

45. New paragraph 128: similar to the PWG guidelines, new provisions were added to indicate that a committee can appoint co-hosts of an EWG and that co-hosting comes with responsibilities (addition based on the EWG handbook).

46. Paragraph 128 (management): in relation to the previous addition, it was clarified that co-hosts are responsible for appointing co-chairpersons.

47. Paragraph 130 (secretariat): this paragraph was deleted as most EWG operate on the Codex forum and do not necessitate a secretariat. However, this deletion does not prevent a EWG host from establishing a secretariat if appropriate.

48. New paragraph 133: An additional paragraph was introduced to indicate that EWG-associated costs are the responsibility of the host(s). This provision is based on the EWG handbook.

49. New paragraphs 136-137: additional paragraphs were added to describe the process of invitation and registration to an EWG.

50. Paragraph 137 (organization of work): the paragraph was reworded to give more details on the process and responsibilities associated with the circulation of drafts and calls for comments. The reference to participant information that must be provided by EWG members was removed as this aspect is covered by the new paragraph 136 (see above).

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

51. The host secretariats WG completed the task assigned by CCGP33 and proposed updates to Section 3 of the *Codex Procedural Manual* in line with current working practices.

52. The proposed updates to Section 3, apart from Section 3.4, is available in Appendix I (track changes mode). The texts or sections related to the specific issues presented in paragraphs 14-17 above were kept under brackets and colored in Annexes I and II to facilitate identification and discussions at the Committee level.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

53. CCGP34 is invited to:

- discuss and resolve the specific issues presented in paragraphs 11-14 above, noting that the issues presented in paragraphs 12-13 could be addressed under other relevant agenda items;
- consider the need to engage further revisions of the PWG and EWG guidelines, taking into account the suggestions and information presented in paragraph 10. CCGP34 could notably discuss the three following options:
  - Option 1: development of single guidelines on Codex working groups intended to replace the current PWG and EWG guidelines;
  - Option 2: in-depth revisions to the PWG and EWG guidelines to align them with current working practices, especially virtual modalities;
  - Option 3: do not undertake further substantial work at this stage on the PWG and EWG guidelines.

- pending the resolution of the specific issues mentioned above and without prejudice to the option chosen under point b, agree upon the proposed updates to Section 3 presented in Appendix I and forward it to CAC48 for final adoption and integration in a future edition of the *Codex Procedural Manual*.

## APPENDIX I

## PROPOSED UPDATES TO SECTION 3

## Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies

3.1 Guidelines to host governments of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces

Adopted in 2004. Amended in 2010.

3.2 Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces

Adopted in 2004. Amended in 2006.

3.3 Guidelines to chairpersons of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces (including the criteria for the appointment of chairpersons)

Adopted in 2004. Amended in 2009 and 2010.

3.5 Guidelines on physical working groups

Adopted in 2005.

3.6 Guidelines on electronic working groups

Adopted in 2005.

As regards section 3.4 Criteria and procedural guidelines for Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces working by correspondence (adopted in 2021), the proposed updates are included in Appendix I of CX/GP 25/34/9.

### 3.1 Guidelines to host governments of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces

#### Introduction

1. By virtue of Article 7 of the statute of the Commission and Rule XI.1(b) of its rules of procedure, the Commission has established a number of Codex committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces to prepare standards and related texts in accordance with Section 2.1: Procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts, and coordinating committees to exercise general coordination of its work in specific regions or groups of countries. The rules of procedure of the Commission shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces. The guidelines applying to Codex committees, as described in this section, apply also to coordinating committees and to Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

#### Composition of Codex committees

##### Membership

2. Membership of Codex committees is open to Members of the Commission who have notified the Director-General of FAO or WHO of their desire to be considered as Members thereof or to selected Members designated by the Commission. Membership of regional coordinating committees is open only to Members of the Commission belonging to the region or group of countries concerned.

##### Observers

3. Any other Member of the Commission or any Member or Associate Member of FAO or WHO which has not become a Member of the Commission may participate as an Observer at any Codex committee if it has notified the Director-General of FAO or WHO of its wish to do so. Such countries may participate fully in the discussions of the committee and shall be provided with the same opportunities as other Members to express their point-of-view (including the submission of memoranda), but without the right to vote or to move motions either of substance or of procedure. International organizations which have formal relations with either FAO or WHO, should also be invited to attend, in an observer capacity, sessions of those Codex committees which are of interest to them.

#### Organization and duties

##### Chairperson and host country

4. The Codex Alimentarius Commission will designate a Member Nation of the Commission, which has indicated its willingness to accept financial and all other responsibility, as responsible for appointing a chairperson of the committee. In the following, this nation is referred to as host country.

5. The host country is responsible for appointing the chairperson of the committee from among its own nationals. Should this person for any reason be unable to take the chair, the host country shall designate another person to perform the functions of the chairperson for as long as the chairperson is unable to do so. The chairperson may be supported by one or more assistants or co-chairpersons designated by the host country.

##### Rapporteurs

6. A committee may appoint at any session one or more rapporteurs from among the delegates present.

##### Host country ~~S~~ecretariat

7. ~~A Member Nation to which a Codex committee has been assigned~~ The host country is responsible for providing all conference services including the secretariat; referred to herein as host country secretariat. The host country secretariat should have adequate administrative support staff able to work easily in the languages used at the session and should have at its disposal adequate information and communications technology ~~tools for the session to function efficiently~~. Simultaneous ~~interpretation, preferably simultaneous~~, should be provided from and into all of the official working languages used at the session, and if the report of the session is to be adopted in more than one of the official working languages of the committee, then ~~the translation~~ services of a translator should be available. ~~The committee secretariat and the Codex Secretariat are charged with the preparation of the draft report in consultation with the rapporteurs, if any.~~

#### Duties and terms of reference

8. The duties of a Codex committee shall include:

- a) the drawing up of a list of priorities as appropriate, among the subjects and products within its terms of reference;
- b) consideration of the types of safety and quality elements (or recommendations) to be covered,



- whether in standards and related texts for general application or in reference to specific food products;
- c) consideration of the types of products to be covered by standards and related texts e.g. whether materials for further processing into food should be covered;
- d) preparation of draft Codex standards and related texts within its terms of reference;
- e) reporting after each of its sessions, to ~~each session of~~ the Commission on the progress of its work and, ~~where necessary, on~~ any difficulties encountered, including those caused by its terms of reference, together with suggestions for their amendment; and
- f) the review and, as necessary, revision of existing standards and related texts on a scheduled, periodic basis to ensure that the standards and related texts within its terms of reference are consistent with current scientific knowledge and other relevant information.

## Sessions

### Date and place

9. A host country is consulted by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO before they determine when and where a session of this committee shall be convened. In determining the place of the session, consideration should be given to its accessibility.

### Co-hosting arrangements

10. The host country should consider arrangements for holding Codex sessions in developing countries.

11. The country, different from the host country, in which the session is held is in following referred to as “co-host country”.

12. The host country and co-host country should ensure that all arrangements necessary to hold a Codex session in the co-host country are completed in a timely manner so as to not interfere with the time frame for the distribution of the official invitations to the session as mentioned in these guidelines.

**Note:** Practical information and timelines for co-hosting arrangements can be found on the Codex website at: [www.codexalimentarius.orghttps://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/co-host/en/](https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/co-host/en/).

### Co-host country ~~Co-chairpersoning~~

13. The host country may invite the co-host country to appoint an official as a co-chairperson for the session.

### Invitations and provisional agenda

14. Sessions of Codex committees ~~and coordinating committees~~ will be convened by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO in consultation with the chairperson and the host country secretariat of the respective Codex committee. The letter of invitation and provisional agenda shall be prepared by the Secretary of the Commission in consultation with the chairperson and the host country secretariat of the committee for issue by the Directors-General to all Members and Associate Members of FAO and WHO or, in the case of coordinating committees, to the countries of the region or group of countries concerned, ~~Codex contact points and interested international organizations in accordance with the official mailing lists of FAO and WHO. Chairpersons should, before finalizing the drafts, Before distribution of the invitation and provisional agenda, host country secretariats should~~ inform and consult with their national Codex contact point where one has been established, and, if necessary, obtain clearance from the national authorities concerned (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, or as the case may be). The invitation and provisional agenda will be translated and distributed by FAO/WHO to the Codex contact points and interested international organizations, in accordance with the official mailing lists of FAO and WHO, in the official working languages of the ~~Commission-concerned committee~~ at least four months before the date of the meeting.

15. Invitations should include the following:

- a) title of the Codex committee;
- b) time and date of opening and date of closing of the session;
- c) place of the session;
- d) official working languages ~~to be used and arrangements for interpretation, i.e. whether simultaneous or not;~~
- e) if appropriate, information on hotel accommodation; and information on entry visas;
- f) if appropriate, time and date of the working groups convened in conjunction with the session; and

~~e)g)~~ request for Codex contact points and international organizations with observer status to register their delegations through the specified registration system. the names of the chief delegate and other members of the delegation, and for information on whether the chief delegate of a government will be attending as a representative or in the capacity of an Observer.

16. Replies to invitations, in the form of registration to the session, will normally be requested to be sent ~~to reach the Chairperson~~ as early as possible and in any case not less than 30 days before the session. ~~A copy should be sent also to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome. It is of the utmost importance that by the date requested in the invitation, delegates of a reply to invitations should be sent by~~ all those governments and international organizations which intend to participate are registered to the session.

17. The provisional agenda should state the ~~time,~~ date and place of the meeting and should include the following items:

- a) adoption of the agenda;
- b) if considered necessary, election the appointment of rapporteurs;
- c) items relating to subject matter to be discussed, including, where appropriate, the step in the Commission's procedure for the elaboration of standards at which the item is being dealt with at the session. There should also be reference to the committee papers documents relevant to the item;
- d) any other business;
- e) consideration of date and place of next session; and
- f) adoption of draft the report.

18. The work of the committee and the length of the meeting should be so arranged as to leave sufficient time at the end of the session for a report of the committee's transactions discussions and conclusions to be agreed adopted.

**NEW PARA 19.** The Codex Secretariat is charged with the preparation of the draft report, in consultation with the rapporteurs (if any), the chairperson and the host country secretariat. The draft report should be made available in all the official working languages used at the session in sufficient time for consideration by the delegations.

### Organization of work

19. A Codex ~~or coordinating~~ committee may assign request Member Nations, Member Organizations or international organizations represented at sessions of the committee to accomplish specific tasks to countries, groups of countries or to international organizations represented at meetings of the committee and may ask Members and international organizations for or provide data, information or views on specific points.

20. Ad hoc working groups established to accomplish specific tasks shall be disbanded once the tasks have been accomplished as determined by the committee.

21. A Codex ~~or coordinating~~ committee may not set up standing subcommittees, whether open to all Members of the Commission or not, without the specific approval of the Commission.

**(TO BE SWITCHED DOWN AS PARA 23) Preparation and dDistribution of papers documents**

22. **(PARA 23)** Papers Working documents for a session should be made publicly available in ~~the relevant all of the official working~~ languages used at the session through the Codex website at least two months before the opening of the session by the Codex Secretariat host secretariat in collaboration with the host country secretariat Codex Secretariat.

**(TO BE SWITCHED UP AS PARA 22) NEW TITLE: Preparation of documents**

23. **(PARA 22)** Papers Working documents for a session prepared by participants and working group chairs must be drafted submitted in one or more of the official working languages of the Commission, which should, if possible, be one of the languages used in the Codex committee concerned. These papers documents should be sent made available electronically to the Gchairperson of the committee, the host country secretariat and the Codex Secretariat with a copy to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome, in good time at least three months before the opening of the committee to ensure translation by the host country into the official working languages of the session to be included in the distribution of papers for the session.

24. Working Ddocuments circulated at a session of a Codex committee other than draft documents prepared at the session and ultimately issued in a final form, should subsequently receive the same distribution as other papers documents prepared for the committee.

25. Codex contact points will be responsible for ensuring that ~~papers~~documents<sup>xvi</sup> are ~~circulated~~available to those concerned within their own country and for ensuring that all necessary action is taken by the date specified.

26. Consecutive reference numbers in suitable series should be assigned to all documents of Codex committees. The reference number should appear at the top right-hand corner of the first page together with ~~a statement~~an indication of the language in which the document was prepared and the date of its preparation. A clear statement should be made of the provenance (origin or author country) of the ~~paper~~document immediately under the title. The text should be divided into numbered paragraphs. ~~At the end of these guidelines is a series of references for Codex documents adopted by the Commission for its own sessions and those of its subsidiary bodies.~~

**NEW TITLE. Conference room documents**

**NEW PARA 27.** The reports of working groups held in conjunction with a committee session will be published as Conference room documents (CRDs). Comments related to the agenda items received after the established deadline may be published as CRDs.

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<sup>xvi</sup> See Section 5.1 for references for Codex documents.

### 3.2 Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces

#### Introduction

27. By virtue of Article 7 of the statutes of the Commission and Rule XI.1(b) of its rules of procedure, the Commission has established a number of Codex committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces to prepare standards and related texts in accordance with Section 2.1: Procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts, and coordinating committees to exercise general coordination of its work in specific regions or groups of countries. The rules of procedure of the Commission shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces. The guidelines applying to the conduct of meetings of Codex committees as described in this section apply also to those of coordinating committees and to those of Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

#### Conduct of meetings

28. Meetings of Codex ~~and coordinating~~ committees shall be held in public unless the committee decides otherwise. ~~Members-The host countries~~ responsible for Codex ~~and coordinating~~ committees shall decide who should open meetings on their behalf.

29. Meetings should be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission.

30. Only the ~~chief delegates~~heads of delegations of Members, or of Observer countries or of international organizations have the right to speak unless they authorize other members of their delegations to do so.

31. The representative of a ~~regional economic integration organization~~Member Organization shall provide the ~~C~~chairperson of the committee, before the beginning of each session, with a written statement outlining where the competence lies between this ~~organization~~Member Organization and its ~~members~~Member States for each item, or subparts thereof, as appropriate, of the provisional agenda of a session, pursuant to the declaration of competence submitted according to Rule II of the rules of procedure of the Commission by this Member Organization. In areas of shared ("mixed") competence between this Member Organization and its ~~Members~~States, this statement shall make clear which party has the voting right.

32. Delegations from Members [and delegations from Observer countries] who wish their opposition to a decision of the committee to be recorded may do so, whether the decision has been taken by a vote or not, by asking for a statement of their position to be contained in the report of the committee. This statement should not merely use a phrase such as: "The delegation of X reserved its position" but should make clear the extent of the delegation's opposition to a particular decision of the committee and state whether they were simply opposed to the decision or wished for a further opportunity to consider the question.

#### Reports

33. In preparing reports, the following points shall be borne in mind:

- a) Decisions should be clearly stated; action taken in regard to economic impacts ~~s statements~~ should be fully recorded; all decisions on draft standards should be accompanied by an indication of the step in the procedure that the standards have reached.
- b) If action has to be taken before the next meeting of the committee, the nature of the action, who is to take it and when the action must be completed should be clearly stated.
- c) Where matters require attention by other Codex committees, this should be clearly stated.
- d) If the report is of any length, summaries of points agreed and the action to be taken should be included ~~at the end of the report~~, and in any case, a section should be included ~~at the end of the report~~ showing clearly in summary form:
  - i. standards considered at the session and the steps they have reached;
  - ii. standards at any step of the procedure, the consideration of which have been postponed or which are held in abeyance and the steps which they have reached; and
  - iii. new standards proposed for consideration, ~~the probable time of their consideration at Step 2~~ and the ~~responsibility~~responsible party for drawing up the first draft.

34. The following appendices should be attached to the report:

- a) list of participants ~~with full postal addresses; and~~
- b) draft standards with an indication of the step in the procedure which has been reached; and-
- c) new work proposals submitted by the committee to the Commission for approval.

If relevant, information documents agreed upon by the committee may also be attached to the report.

35. The Codex Secretariat should ensure that, as soon as possible and in any event not later than one month after the end of the session, the final report, as adopted in the official working languages of the committee, is made available to all Members and Observers of the Commission on the Codex website.

36. Circular letters should be issued, as required, following publication of the meeting report requesting comments on proposed draft standards or related texts at Steps 5, 8, [Step 5/8] or Step 5 (accelerated), with the indication of the date by which comments or proposed amendments must be received in writing, so as to allow such comments to be considered by the Commission.

#### **Drawing up of Codex standards**

37. A Codex committee, in drawing up standards and related texts, should bear in mind the following:

- a) The guidance given in the general principles of the Codex Alimentarius.
- b) [That all standards and related texts should have a preface containing the following information:
  - i. the description of the standard or related text;
  - ii. a brief description of the scope and purpose(s) of the standard or related text;
  - iii. references including the step which the standard or related text has reached in the Commission's procedures for the elaboration of standards, together with the date on which the draft was approved; and
  - iv. matters in the draft standard or related text requiring endorsement or action by other Codex committees.]
- c) That for standards or any related text for a product which includes a number of subcategories, the committee should give preference to the development of a general standard or related text with specific provisions as necessary for subcategories.

### 3.3 Guidelines to chairpersons of Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces

#### Introduction

38. By virtue of Article 7 of the statutes of the Commission and Rule XI.1(b) of its rules of procedure, the Commission has established a number of Codex committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces to prepare standards and related texts in accordance with Section 2.1: Procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts, and coordinating committees to exercise general coordination of its work in specific regions or groups of countries. The rules of procedure of the Commission shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Codex committees, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces. The guidelines applying to the chairpersons of Codex committees as described in this section apply also to those of coordinating committees and to those of Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

#### Designation

39. The Commission will designate a Member Nation of the Commission, which has indicated its willingness to accept financial and all other responsibility, as responsible for appointing a chairperson of the committee. In the following, this nation is referred to as host country. The ~~Member Nation concerned~~ host country is responsible for appointing the chairperson of the committee from among its own nationals. Should this person for any reason be unable to take the chair, the ~~Member Nation concerned~~ host country shall designate another person to perform the functions of the chairperson for as long as the chairperson is unable to do so. The chairperson may be supported by one or more assistants or co-chairpersons designated by the host country.

#### Criteria for the appointment of chairpersons

40. By virtue of Article 7 of its statutes, the Commission may establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the accomplishment of its task.

41. The Members who shall be designated, under Rule XI.10, as responsible for appointing chairpersons of subsidiary bodies established under Rule XI.1(b)(i) and Rule XI.1(b)(ii), shall retain the right to appoint a chairperson of their choice.

42. The following criteria may be considered during the selection of the appointee:

- a) to be a national of the Member Nation responsible for appointing the chairperson of the committee;
- b) to have a general knowledge in the fields of the subsidiary body concerned and to be able to understand and analyse technical issues;
- c) insofar as possible, to be able to serve in a continuing capacity;
- d) to be familiar with the system of Codex, ~~and its rules~~ and procedures, and to have experience in the work of relevant international, governmental, or non-governmental organizations;
- e) to be able to communicate clearly both orally and in writing in one of the working languages of the Commission;
- f) to have demonstrated ability in chairing meetings with objectivity and impartiality, and in facilitating consensus building;
- g) to exercise tact and sensitivity to issues of particular importance to Members of the Commission; and
- h) not to engage and/or not to have engaged in activities which could give rise to a conflict of interest on any item on the agenda of the committee.

#### Conduct of meetings

43. The ~~C~~chairperson should invite observations from members of the committee concerning the provisional agenda and in the light of such observations formally request the committee to adopt the provisional agenda or the amended agenda.

44. Meetings should be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission. Attention is particularly drawn to Rule VIII.7 which reads: "The provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of FAO shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all matters which are not specifically dealt with under Rule VIII of the present Rules."

45. Rule XII of the general rules of FAO, ~~a copy of which will be supplied~~ which should be made available to all chairpersons of Codex ~~and coordinating~~ committees, gives full instructions on the procedures to be followed in dealing with voting, points of order, adjournment and suspension of meetings, adjournment, and closure of discussions on a particular item, reconsideration of a subject already decided and the order in which amendments should be dealt with.

46. Chairpersons of Codex committees should ensure that all questions are fully discussed, in particular, statements concerning possible economic implications of standards under consideration at Steps 4 and 7.

47. Chairpersons should also ensure that the written comments, received in a timely manner, of Members and Observers not present at the session are considered by the committee and that all issues are put clearly to the committee. This can usually best be done by stating what appears to be the generally acceptable view and asking delegates whether they have any objection to its being adopted.

48. Chairpersons should use the statement submitted by the representatives of the ~~regional-economic integration organizations~~ Member Organizations on the matters of respective competence between these ~~Member eOrganizations~~ and their ~~Members States~~ in the conduct of meetings, including assessing of the situation with regard to the party which has the right to vote.

#### **Consensus<sup>xvii</sup>**

49. The chairpersons should always try to arrive at a consensus and should not ask the committee to proceed to voting if agreement on the committee's decision can be secured by consensus.

50. Section 2.1: [Procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts](#) allows for full discussion and exchange of views on the issue under consideration, in order to ensure the transparency of the process and arrive at compromises that would facilitate consensus.

51. Much of the responsibility for facilitating the achievement of consensus would lie in the hands of the chairpersons.

52. When working out the means of progressing the work of a committee, the chairperson should consider:

- a) the need for timely progress in developing standards;
- b) the need to achieve consensus among the Members as to the content of, and justification for, proposed standards; and
- c) the importance of achieving consensus at all stages of the elaboration of standards and that draft standards should, as a matter of principle, be submitted to the Commission for adoption only where consensus has been achieved at the technical level.

53. Where there is opposition to an issue under discussion, the chairperson should ensure that the views of concerned Members be taken into consideration by striving to reconcile conflicting arguments before deciding whether consensus has been reached.

54. The chairperson should also consider implementing the following measures in order to facilitate consensus building in the elaboration of standards at the committee stage:

- a) Ensuring that:
  - i. the scientific basis is well established on current data including, wherever possible, scientific data and intake and exposure information from the developing countries;
  - ii. where data from developing countries are not available, an explicit request for collecting and making available such data is made; ~~and~~
  - ~~iii.~~ where necessary, further studies are carried out in order to clarify controversial issues; and-
  - ~~iii-iv.~~ where applicable under the risk analysis principles of the committees concerned, the use of a concern form to provide additional explanation on the scientific concern(s) for consideration by the competent Joint FAO/WHO expert bodies.
- b) Ensuring that issues are thoroughly discussed at meetings of the committees concerned.
- c) Organizing informal meetings of the parties concerned where disagreements arise, provided that the objectives of any such meetings are clearly defined by the committee concerned and that participation is open to all interested delegations and Observers in order to preserve transparency.
- d) Requesting the Commission, where possible, for a redefinition of the scope of the subject matter being considered for the elaboration of standards in order to cut out issues on which consensus cannot be reached.
- e) Ensuring that matters are not progressed from step to step until all relevant concerns are taken into account and adequate compromises worked out.<sup>xviii</sup>

<sup>xvii</sup> Reference is made to the measures to facilitate consensus (see Appendix: General decisions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission).

<sup>xviii</sup> This does not preclude square bracketing of parts of a text in the early stages of the elaboration of a standard, where there is consensus on the large majority of the text.



- f) Facilitating increased involvement and participation of developing countries.

55. Where there is a deadlock in the standards development, the chairperson should consider acting as a facilitator or appointing a facilitator in agreement with the relevant Codex committee, working during a session or between sessions to work with Members to reach consensus. The facilitator should orally report on the activity undertaken and the outcome of the facilitation to the plenary.

- a) The committee concerned should clearly state the terms of reference of the facilitator.
- b) The facilitator should be experienced in Codex matters but neutral on the matter concerned.
- c) All parties participating in the process should agree on the selection of the facilitator.



### 3.5 Guidelines on physical working groups

#### Introduction

91. Working groups should be ad hoc, open to all Members and Observers, take into account the problems of developing country participation, and only be established where there is consensus in the committee to do so and other strategies have been considered.

92. Section 1.2: Rules of procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the guidelines governing the work of a Codex committee shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the working groups this committee establishes, unless stated otherwise in these guidelines.<sup>xxiv</sup>

93. Section 3.5: Guidelines on physical working groups (hereinafter, "working groups") established by Codex committees as described in these guidelines apply also to those established by regional coordinating committees and by Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

#### **Composition of working groups**

##### Membership

94. Membership of a working group is notified to the chairperson of the Codex committee and to the host country secretariat of the committee.

95. When establishing a working group, a Codex committee should ensure, as far as possible, that the membership is representative of the membership of the Commission.

##### Observers

96. Observers should notify the chairperson of the Codex committee and the host country secretariat of the committee of their wish to participate in a working group. Observers may participate in all sessions and activities of a working group, unless otherwise specified by the committee Members.<sup>1</sup>

##### Organization and duties

97. A Codex committee may decide that the working groups will be managed by the host government-country secretariat, or by another Member of the Commission, having volunteered to undertake this responsibility and having been accepted by the committee (hereinafter "the host").

**NEW PARA 98:** A Codex committee may also decide to appoint additional volunteer Members to assist the host in leading the work of the working group (hereinafter "co-hosts"). Members should offer to operate as co-hosts only if they intend to take on a specific responsibility in co-leading the PWG.

##### Chairperson

98. The host is responsible for appointing the Chairperson of the working group. The co-hosts, if any, are responsible for appointing co-chairpersons to assist the chairperson in leading the work of the working group.

99. While selecting of the appointee(s), the host and co-host(s) may consider applying, where relevant, the Codex criteria for the appointment of chairpersons.<sup>xxv</sup>

##### SecretariatConference services

100. The host is responsible for providing all conference services, as necessary, includingsuch as thea secretariat and/or an assistant to the chairperson, for the working group and should meet all the requirements agreed upon by the committee, when the working group was established.

##### Duties and terms of reference

101. The terms of reference of the working group shall be established by the committee during its plenary session, shall be limited to the immediate task at hand and normally shall not be subsequently modified.

102. The terms of reference shall clearly state the objective(s) to be achieved by the establishment of the working group and the language(s) to be used. Interpretation and translation services should be provided in all languages of the committee, unless decided otherwise by the committee.

103. The terms of reference shall clearly state the time frame by which the work is expected to be completed. The proposals/recommendations of a working group shall be presented to the committee for consideration.

<sup>xxiv</sup> The provisions of the *Guidelines to host governments of Codex Committees*, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces, the *Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex committees*, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces and the *Guidelines to chairpersons of Codex committees*, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces are especially relevant in this matter.

<sup>xxv</sup> Reference is made to the *Guidelines to chairpersons of Codex committees*, coordinating committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

104. They shall not be binding on the committee.

105. The working group shall be dissolved after the specified work has been completed or when the time limit allocated for the work has expired or at any other point in time, if the Codex committee which has established it, so decides.

106. No decision on behalf of the committee, nor vote, either on point of substance or of procedure, shall take place in working groups.

### Sessions

#### Date

107. A session of a working group may be held at any time, between two sessions or in conjunction with ~~the a~~ session of the committee, which has established it.

108. When convened between two sessions of the committee, the session of the working group should be scheduled as to allow the working group to report to the committee well in advance of the next meeting so that countries and other interested parties, that were not members of the working group, can comment on the proposals that the working group might put to the committee.

109. When convened during-in conjunction with a session of a committee, a working group should be scheduled so as to allow participation of all delegations present at the session.

### Working group notification and provisional agenda

110. Sessions of a working group shall be convened by the chairperson designated by the host.

111. If the working group is scheduled between two sessions of the committee, a notice of the working group meeting and provisional agenda shall be prepared, translated, and distributed by the host. It shall be issued to all Members and Observers who have expressed the willingness to attend the meeting. These documents should be distributed as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

### Organization of work

112. Written comments will be circulated to all concerned by the host ~~secretariat~~.

### Preparation and distribution of papers

113. The host ~~secretariat~~ should circulate the papers-documents at least two months before the opening of the session.

114. Papers-Documents for the session prepared by the participants should be sent to the host ~~secretariat~~, in good time.

### Conclusions

115. The host ~~secretariat~~ should, as soon as possible after the end of the session of a working group, send ~~a copy of~~ the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document, and the list of participants, to the Codex Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.

116. Conclusions of a working group shall be made available electronically to all GCPs-Members and Observers by the Codex Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the working group's recommendations.

117. The Codex Secretariat should ensure that these conclusions are included in the distribution of papers working documents for the next session of the Codex committee.

118. The working group shall report, through its chairperson, on the progress of its work at the next session of the committee, which has established the working group.

### 3.6 Guidelines on electronic working groups

#### Introduction

119. The search for worldwide consensus and for greater acceptability of Codex standards requires the involvement of all the Members of Codex and the active participation of developing countries.

120. Special efforts are needed to enhance the participation of developing countries in Codex committees, by increased use of written communications and remote interactions, especially through the use of information and communications technology~~remote participation via email, Internet and other modern technologies~~, in the work done between sessions of committees.

121. Codex committees, when deciding to undertake work between sessions, should give the first priority to considering the establishment of electronic working groups (EWGs).

122. Section 1.2: Rules of procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the guidelines governing the work of a committee shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the EWGs ~~this~~<sup>xxvi</sup> committee establishes, unless stated otherwise in these guidelines.

123. The guidelines applying to EWGs established by Codex committees, as described in these guidelines, apply also to those established by regional coordinating committees and by Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task forces.

#### **[Composition of electronic working groups**

##### **Membership**

124. Membership of an EWG is notified to the chairperson of the Codex committee and to the host country secretariat of the committee.

125. When establishing an EWG, a Codex committee should ensure, as far as possible, that the membership is representative of the membership of the Commission.

##### **Observers**

126. Observers should notify the chairperson of the committee and the host country secretariat of the committee, of their wish to participate in a working group. Observers may participate in all the activities of an EWG, unless otherwise specified by committee members.]

##### **Organization and ~~procedures~~duties**

127. A Codex committees ~~s~~ may decide that the EWG will be managed by the host ~~government-country~~ secretariat, or by another Member of the Commission, having volunteered to undertake this responsibility and having been accepted by the committee (hereinafter "the host"). ~~The host should be notified of the participants in an electronic working group by Codex Members through their CCPs and by Observer organizations.~~

**NEW PARA 128.** A Codex committee may also decide to appoint additional volunteer Members to assist the host in leading work of the EWG (hereinafter "co-hosts"). Members should offer to operate as co-hosts only if they intend to take on a specific responsibility in co-leading the EWG.

##### **Management**

128. The host is responsible for appointing a chairperson to manage the management of the EWG for which it has been appointed. The co-hosts, if any, are responsible for appointing co-chairpersons to assist the chairperson in leading work of the EWG.

129. The business of an EWG is transacted exclusively by electronic means.

##### **Secretariat**

130. ~~DELETED~~~~The host is responsible for providing the secretariat of the EWG with all services needed for its functioning, including suitable information technology (IT) equipment, and should meet all the requirements agreed upon by the committee.~~

##### **Duties and terms of reference**

131. The terms of reference of the EWG shall be established by the committee during its plenary session, shall be limited to the immediate task at hand and normally shall not be subsequently modified.

132. The terms of reference shall clearly state the objective(s) to be achieved by the establishment of the EWG and the language(s) to be used. Interpretation and translation services should be provided in all languages of

<sup>xxvi</sup> See note xxiv above.

the committee, unless decided otherwise by the committee.

**NEW PARA 133:** Any cost associated with the work of the EWG e.g., in relation to interpretation and translation, is the responsibility of the EWG host(s).

133. The terms of reference shall clearly state the time frame by which the work is expected to be completed.

134. The EWG shall be dissolved after the specified work has been completed or when the time limit allocated for the work has expired or at any other point in time, if the Codex committee which has established it, so decides.

135. No decision on behalf of the committee, nor vote, either on point of substance or of procedure, shall take place in EWGs.

#### **Invitation and electronic working group notice**

**NEW PARA 136.** An invitation outlining the modalities by which an EWG operates and may be joined is to be prepared and distributed to all Members and Observers by the Codex Secretariat. This invitation shall include a request for the names, positions and email addresses of all the persons who will participate in the EWG and the representative who is authorized to submit comments.

**NEW PARA 137.** Responses to the invitation shall be notified by Codex contact points and by Observer organizations for approval to the designated contact(s) for registration. When a Member or an Observer organization registers several participants, they shall designate one as their official representative who is authorized to submit comments on their behalf to the EWG.

#### **Electronic working group notification and programme of work**

136. A notice indicating when the EWG starts to operate and a programme of work shall be prepared, translated into the official working languages of the EWG, if any, and distributed by the host to all Members and Observers who have expressed the willingness to contribute.

#### **Organization of work**

137. The Circulation of drafts and calls for comments are the responsibility of the host. They are to be made available by electronic means such as an online collaborative platform shall include a request for the names, positions, and email addresses of all the persons willing to contribute to the business of the EWG.

138. Comments from participants should be submitted exclusively by electronic means. These submissions shall be circulated-made available electronically to all concerned by the hostthe participants of the EWG.

139. Any participants should be made aware of the materials contributed by all others.

140. An update on the progress of its work shall be presented by the host at each session of the Codex committee which has established it, indicating the number of countries-participants having submitted contributions electronically. A compilation summary of these contributions should be made available.

#### **Preparation and distribution of materials**

141. Materials should be sent to the host ~~secretariat~~, in good time.

142. ~~The host is responsible for the distribution of a~~ All the materials submitted by a participant during the business of the EWG should be available to all other participants of the EWG.

143. Attention should be given to constraints of a technical nature ~~(file sizes and formats, limited bandwidth, etc.)~~ and special care should be taken to ensure the widest distribution of all the available materials.

#### **Conclusions**

144. As soon as possible after the end of the business of an EWG, the host ~~secretariat~~ should send ~~a copy of~~ the final ~~conclusionsreport and its recommendations~~ in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document and of the list of participants to the ~~Joint FAO/WHO~~ Codex Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.

145. The ~~conclusions-recommendations~~ of an EWG and the list of participants shall be distributed-made available to GCPs-all Members and Observers as part of the EWG report by the ~~Joint FAO/WHO~~ Codex Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the EWG's recommendations.

146. The ~~Joint FAO/WHO~~ Codex Secretariat should ensure that these ~~conclusions-recommendations~~ are included in the distribution of papersworking documents for the next session of the Codex committee, which has established the EWG.