

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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ALINORM 06/29/3

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-ninth Session

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 - 8 July 2006

REPORT OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland, 6-9 December 2005

NOTE: This report includes Codex Circular Letter CL 2005/55-EXEC

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CX 4/20.2

CL 2005/55-EXEC

TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: **Distribution of the report of the Fifty-seventh Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (ALINORM 06/29/3)**

The report of the Fifty-seventh Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is attached. It will be considered by the Twenty-ninth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, (Geneva, Switzerland, 3 - 8 July 2006)

Draft Strategic Plan 2008 - 2013 (ALINORM 06/29/3, paras. 35-36 and Appendix II)

Governments and interested international organizations are invited to comment on the Draft Strategic Plan above, to be considered at the 58th Session of the Executive Committee, and should do so in writing, preferably by e-mail to Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy (codex@fao.org or fax: +39 06 570.54593), **before 15 April 2006.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	1
STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE COMMISSION	1
FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS	4
CRITICAL REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK AND MONITORING PROGRESS OF STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT	6
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES.....	8
FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX: SIXTH PROGRESS REPORT (JULY-DECEMBER 2005)	8
OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO	9
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 8).....	10
DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE 29TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION	11
OTHER BUSINESS	11

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix I	List of Participants 13
Appendix II	Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 21

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held its Fifty-seventh Session at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, from 6 to 9 December 2005, under the chairmanship of Dr Claude Mosha (United Republic of Tanzania), Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The meeting was attended by the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission and Members of the Executive Committee elected on a regional basis from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America, and the Southwest Pacific, as well as the Coordinators for Africa, Asia, Europe, Near East, the Latin America and the Caribbean and North America and the Southwest Pacific. A complete list of participants is attached as Appendix I to this report.

2. The Session was opened by Mr Denis Aitken, Assistant Director-General and Director of the Office of the Director-General of WHO, who welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO and WHO. Mr Aitkin underlined the importance of inter-agency cooperation at the international level to address the food safety issues in general and through Codex in particular. He noted that the high priority the Codex programme deserved was well understood by FAO, WHO and their membership and that effort should continue to advocate the importance of Codex to a wider audience. While welcoming the Regional Coordinators participating in the Executive Committee as members for the first time, he considered regional coordination as a critical step to achieving consensus at the global level. He recognized the significant role of the Executive Committee in exercising strategic and managerial oversight to the work of Codex Committees and Task Forces.

3. Mr Ezzeddine Boutrif, Chief, Food Safety and Quality Service, FAO, also welcomed the participants present. Mr Boutrif informed the Executive Committee that many countries expressed their strong support to the work of Codex during the latest session of the FAO Conference, held in November 2005, and highlighted some of the major outcomes of the FAO Conference of relevance to Codex. He drew the attention of the Executive Committee to a recent press release issued jointly by FAO and WHO to address the food safety aspect of the avian influenza endemic, as a good example of close collaboration between the two parent organizations.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

4. The Executive Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as the Agenda for its session and agreed to discuss two matters under Agenda Item 10 "Other Business": 1) provisional agenda of the forthcoming sessions of the Coordinating Committees and 2) designation of host governments to certain subsidiary bodies.

STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda Item 2)

(a) Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (Agenda Item 2a)²

5. The Secretariat recalled the background of the preparation of the preliminary Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013, following the decision of the 28th Session of the Commission, and indicated that the preliminary draft Strategic Plan attached to the working document had been prepared by a working group consisting of the Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission, in the light of the comments received in reply to Circular Letter CL 2005/9-EXEC.

6. The Chairperson invited members to express views and comments on the preliminary draft, section by section.

7. The Committee agreed to establish an in-session working group (sub-committee of the Executive Committee) chaired by Vice-Chairperson Dr Karen Hulebak, consisting of the Vice-Chairpersons and the Members elected on a geographic basis, with the participation of the Representatives of FAO and WHO, in order to redraft the document taking into account the comments made by members of the Committee.

¹ CX/EXEC 05/57/1.

² CX/EXEC 05/57/02 Part I, CRD2 (Revised Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013, prepared by the Sub-committee chaired by Vice-Chair Hulebak).

8. The Committee, on the basis of the work of the Sub-committee, agreed to amend the draft Strategic Plan and noted the views of members, as follows.

General aspects

9. Some members raised questions as to the extent to which ongoing work of the Commission including elaboration of guidelines for risk analysis for application by governments should be reflected in the draft Strategic Plan. Some other members also pointed out that the reference to the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) would become obsolete after the imminent split of CCFAC into two separate committees.

10. Therefore, for clarification purpose, the Committee agreed to insert a footnote in the title of the draft Strategic Plan indicating that the draft plan would be updated in the light of the status of all current and projected activities at the time of its adoption by the Commission in 2007.

11. The Committee noted that terminology should be harmonized with the existing Codex documents throughout the text and agreed to make these and other editorial amendments.

STRATEGIC VISION STATEMENT

12. The Committee agreed to use the language found in the current Strategic Framework for the Strategic Vision Statement.

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

13. The Representative of WHO recalled that the World Health Assembly (WHA) had requested the Codex Alimentarius Commission to give full consideration to WHA Resolutions that were relevant to its mandate when developing Codex standards and related texts, and proposed to insert a new sentence to this effect in the first paragraph before its last sentence. This would apply also to resolutions and decisions made by FAO governing bodies. The Committee agreed to insert the new sentence with some editorial amendments to reflect the above.

14. The Committee agreed to delete the penultimate sentence of paragraph 2 referring to the challenges for the CAC and its members as it might be interpreted as a negative statement on the increasing share of global food trade involving developing countries.

PART 1 - STRATEGIC GOALS AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Goal 1: Promoting Sound Regulatory Frameworks

15. The Committee agreed to refer to the development of standards addressing food quality in the penultimate sentence of paragraph 6.

16. The Committee noted the proposal made by the Elected Member for the Near East and Coordinator for the Near East that the second sentence in the second bullet point under paragraph 6 refer to "essential and nutritional characteristic of products". However the Committee agreed to retain the original language in this regard.

17. The Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by some members, expressed the view that Codex standards development and review should take into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs and concerns of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capacities. The Committee agreed to amend the third bullet point under paragraph 6 accordingly, except the insertion of the reference to the concerns of developing countries.

Goal 3: Strengthening Codex Work-Management Capabilities

18. The Committee noted that key features in 6 bullet points were not presented in the order of priority.

Goal 4: Promoting Cooperation between Codex and Relevant Other Multilateral Regulatory Instruments

19. The Committee agreed to rename the title of Goal 4 as "Promoting Cooperation between Codex and Relevant International Intergovernmental Organizations" to make it more specific and amend the first sentence

of paragraph 15 accordingly. In the same paragraph, the Committee agreed to clarify that coordination with other organizations was carried out in conformity with the provisions of the Procedural Manual.

20. As regards paragraph 16, the Committee agreed with the proposal of the Representative of the WHO Legal Counsel to delete the reference to "formal agreements", taking into account Rule IX.6 of the Rules of Procedure on the relations with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and to refer to "establishment or promotion of cooperation" with other IGOs.

Goal 5: Promoting Maximum Membership and Participation

21. The Representative of FAO proposed to introduce a reference to activities intended to increase membership of Codex among countries that were FAO or WHO members and to promote members' effective participation. The Committee agreed to amend the current title to read "Promoting Maximum and Effective Participation of Members".

PART 2: Programme Areas and Planned Activities 2008-2013

Goal 1: Promoting Sound Regulatory Framework

22. Consistent with the prior decision taken by the Committee (see para. 17) the Committee agreed to amend the descriptions of activities in Sections 1.1 - 1.4 accordingly.

23. The Committee agreed to delete the whole section 1.7 because the content of the section was already covered by the section 1.8. The following sections were re-numbered accordingly.

24. The Committee discussed section 1.8 on capacity building and the role of Codex in relation to the activities of its parent organizations and agreed to improve the language to better depict the content of capacity building programmes.

25. The Elected Member for the Near East proposed that a reference be made to the safety assessment of foods derived from modern biotechnology as part of future areas of work.

Goal 2: Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis

26. The Committee agreed to refer to the communication "among" risk managers and risk assessors, rather than communication "between" them, and also simplify the language of Section 2.3.

27. The Committee agreed to amend the timeline in Section 2.6, noting that this section was subject to the decision of the Commission by 2007.

Goal 3: Strengthening Codex Work-Management Capabilities

28. The Committee agreed to amend Section 3.8 to clarify that decision making and priority setting criteria should be completed by Committees by 2008 and that review of criteria should be continuing thereafter.

29. The Committee agreed to amend the title of Section 3.7 and the description of Section 3.8 for clarification purposes.

Goal 4: Promoting Cooperation between Codex and Relevant International Intergovernmental Organizations

30. Following its earlier decision on Goal 4 of Part 1 of the draft Strategic Plan, the Committee agreed to amend the title and description of Section 4.2.

31. Consistent with its earlier decision concerning paragraph 15 of Part 1 of the draft Strategic Plan on cooperation with other organizations, the Committee amended Section 4.4 to refer to "establishment and promotion of cooperation" instead of "formal agreements" with IGOs.

32. The Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean expressed the view that cooperation with IGOs should be limited to the IPPC and the OIE, as they were referred to under the SPS Agreement, and should not be extended to NGOs. The Committee agreed to amend the description of Section 4.4 accordingly.

Goal 5: Promoting Maximum and Effective Participation of Members

33. The Committee agreed to streamline the text and description of Sections 5.1 and 5.6 and make them more concrete.

PART 3: PROPOSED TEMPLATE

34. The Committee agreed to simplify the previous draft template and bring in the elements of the tables currently used in the critical review in monitoring standards development so as to make the tables in Part 3 easy to update and more informative.

Status of the draft Strategic Plan

35. The Committee agreed to circulate the draft Strategic Plan as revised by the Committee (Appendix II) for comments from members and observers. The Committee also agreed that the Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons would meet in Rome by end of May 2006, review comments received and forward recommendations on how to address the comments for discussion at the 58th Session of the Executive Committee.

36. The Committee also agreed that the revised draft as agreed on by the 58th Session of the Executive Committee would be circulated to all Coordinating Committees for comments, prior to the final adoption by the Commission in 2007.

(b) Implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards (Agenda Item 2b)³

37. The Executive Committee noted the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Codex Evaluation, as presented in Tables 1 and 2 of the working document.

38. Following discussions at the last Commission session⁴ a Circular Letter on "Further Study of Certain Recommendations Contained in the Consultants' Report on the Review of the Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces" (CL 2005/30-CAC) had been sent to all Codex members and observers. The Secretariat would consolidate replies received and would make them available soon. The Secretariat was considering the possibility to organise a workshop on this subject in conjunction with the 23rd Session of the Committee on General Principles (April 2006) pending the availability of funds. It was stressed that this workshop, if convened, would be chaired by one of the Vice-Chairpersons, should concentrate on the exchange of views and ideas among the participants and should neither take decisions nor give recommendations to the Commission, in order not to pre-empt the discussion at its 29th session (July 2006).

39. The Secretariat also informed the Committee that the 33rd FAO Conference had adopted the amendments to the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission following the deletion of the acceptance procedure agreed on by the last session of the Commission. Once adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2006 the revised Statutes would be included in the 16th Edition of the Codex Procedural Manual.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (Agenda Item 3)⁵

40. The Secretariat and the Representatives of FAO and WHO informed the Committee on current situations regarding the budget for the 2006/7 biennium.

41. The Secretariat reported that the FAO Conference had only approved a global budget level of US\$ 765.7 million meaning a nominal increase of US\$ 16.6 million compared to the 2004/5 biennium. US\$ 10.6 million of this increase would be necessary to meet increasing security costs in FAO (Chapter 9 of the new FAO budget scheme). The remaining US\$ 6 million would be used to partially cover the anticipated increase of costs of US\$ 44.6 million, which would have been required to maintain the same activity level as in the present biennium. This meant a real reduction of the budget of US\$ 38.6 million (or 5.2 %) which would need to be absorbed through improved efficiency and activity cuts. The budget level approved was thus slightly higher than the zero nominal growth scenario. This might or might not result in reductions in the Codex budget. The final budget level for the Codex programme would become clear only after the meeting of the FAO Programme and Finance Committees in May 2006.

³ CX/EXEC 05/57/02 Part II.

⁴ ALINORM 05/28/41 paras. 158-159.

⁵ Document CX/EXEC 05/57/3 was not issued.

42. Following up on the recommendation of the 56th Session of the Executive Committee, endorsed by the 28th Session of the Commission, the Secretariat had sent a Circular Letter (CL 2005/49-CAC) to all members and observers informing that paper distribution to observers would be discontinued in the course of 2006 (after distribution of Commission documents) and inviting both members and observers to register to the Codex electronic distribution lists.
43. The Representative of the FAO informed the Committee that during the 33rd FAO Conference many delegations had spoken in favour of maintaining the budget level for Codex and Codex-related activities and that FAO budget proposal documents presented to the Conference had indeed stressed the need to strengthen Codex and related activities.
44. The Representative of the WHO informed the Committee that a recommended preliminary budget procurement for 2006/7 had been set recently to US\$ 305 million. In the present biennium US\$ 3 million had been allocated to food safety and of those US\$ 1.2 million as WHO's contribution to Codex. The remaining US\$1.8 million did not cover the staff salaries in the Food Safety Department. It was only possible to maintain operations through voluntary contributions either through extrabudgetary funds or staff secondments from members. WHO was critically dependent on these contributions, as overall two thirds of its activities were funded through extrabudgetary contributions from members. It was also mentioned that the Chemical Safety Programme providing the WHO Secretariat to JECFA and JMPR was financially in a critical situation.
45. The Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean asked whether due to the budget situation the forthcoming sessions of Codex Coordinating Committees were at risk of being cancelled, as was stated in one of the budgetary scenarios presented to the 33rd FAO Conference.
46. The Secretariat clarified that originally four budget scenarios had been prepared by FAO of which the lowest (zero nominal growth) would have meant a cut of approximately US\$ 200,000 for the Codex programme. Such high cuts could only be absorbed through cancellation of either all six sessions of Coordinating Committees or one session of the Commission in 2007. In the latter case, a significant slowing down in the Codex standards development and in the implementation of the Codex evaluation would be unavoidable. Moderate reductions could eventually be absorbed through a combination of measures such as significant reduction in publication, shorter meetings and use of fewer languages at meetings. In this case it might be possible to save all Codex meetings planned for the next biennium.
47. The Elected Member for the Near East proposed that Codex working documents be distributed in CD-ROMs to the national Codex Contact Points which might have difficulties in accessing the Internet.
48. The Coordinator for Europe suggested that key documents of Codex, at least, be translated and made available in the Russian language.
49. In the discussion many members stressed the importance of maintaining the current budget level for Codex and related activities. They also stressed the importance of regional Coordinating Committees as fora for forming regional opinions and allowing participation of and contributing to the capacity building of developing countries, including prospective Codex members, in Codex work. They stressed that all efforts should be made maintain these meetings.
50. The Executive Committee noted that the adopted level of FAO budget for 2006-2007 did not correspond to any of the previously prepared scenarios and that there was a possibility for FAO's Programme and Finance Committees at their forthcoming session to review the allocation of budgetary resources to various programmes. The Executive Committee expressed its strong desire that all scheduled meetings of Codex in the next biennium be maintained.
51. The Executive Committee decided to invite all Codex members to coordinate with representatives of their countries in FAO and WHO governing bodies so that they express their support for maintaining the budget for Codex and related activities at least at the level corresponding to the programme level of the 2004/5 biennium, within the relevant budget lines of the parent organisations.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK AND MONITORING PROGRESS OF STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT (Agenda Item 4)⁶

52. The Secretariat introduced the documents, including the updated status of work in the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses and the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems, that had been held prior to the present session of the Executive Committee.

53. The Committee had a general discussion on the approach to the critical review and agreed that general criteria and working procedures should be defined before undertaking the monitoring of specific items. The Representative of FAO and some members proposed to establish a sub-committee that would work between the sessions for this purpose, however the Committee noted that this could raise difficulties in practice due to the terms of office of the members of the Executive Committee.

54. Some members pointed out that few Chairpersons of Committees had provided their comments on items under elaboration for more than five years and stressed the importance of such comments in order to provide clarification on the issues under consideration in relevant committees and to assist the Executive Committee in its monitoring function.

55. Some members pointed out that the delays in the elaboration of standards should be addressed on a case by case basis, taking into account the situation in relevant committees, and might be due in particular to the following reasons: the nature of the standard; the controversial nature of some issues; the need for scientific advice or the difficulties to use such advice; and the heavy workload of some committees. Some members pointed out that the large number of items on the agenda of some Committees might not allow them to discuss some issues thoroughly, and highlighted the need for prioritization of work at the level of the Committees.

56. It was also noted that difficulties in determining the scope of work to be undertaken had an impact on progress of work in some committees. It was further noted that the improvements introduced after the Evaluation such as the introduction of project document would improve this situation.

57. The Committee noted that while requests for scientific advice from Codex committees were regularly increasing in several areas, the resources of FAO and WHO remained limited. Some members proposed that when scientific advice was necessary but was likely to be delayed for some time, work on the related subject should be suspended in the Committee concerned. In reply to a question, the Secretariat indicated that such cases the standard under development was held at the level of the Committee (Steps 4 or 7) and was not circulated for comments, with the understanding that the Committee could resume discussion and request comments when new scientific advice became available. The Committee also noted that the question of the timeframe for the suspension of work in such cases and other questions related to suspension would require further consideration.

58. Some members proposed to recommend suspension or discontinuation of work when items had been discussed for several sessions without any progress due to lack of consensus. Other members expressed the view that caution should be exercised when proposing discontinuation of work as some standards might be controversial but were of importance to member governments.

59. The Committee discussed whether the elements in Codex draft documents that were highly controversial should be deleted from Codex work. Some members expressed the view that this would be contrary to the objectives of Codex and emphasized the need for harmonization at the international level.

60. Several members pointed out that, in order to exercise its monitoring function, the Executive Committee should consider the obstacles to the development of standards and discuss possible solutions, but should not discuss the substance of the standards, in order to avoid repeating discussions that had already taken place in the relevant Committees. The need for applying objective criteria was also stressed.

61. The Executive Committee noted the view of the Elected Member for North America that Codex should operate as a rules based organisation and that criteria established by the Committees should be followed.

62. After some further discussion, the Committee agreed that the criteria and approach to be applied in the critical review could be summarized as follows:

⁶ CX/EXEC 05/57/4, CX/EXEC 05/57/4-Add.1.

- When progress on a standard is delayed due to the need for scientific advice, the Executive Committee could encourage FAO and WHO to schedule an expert consultation to provide such advice in a timely manner, and recommend suspension of work until such time as scientific advice became available;
- When scientific advice has been provided and a standard has been under consideration for more than five years, the Executive Committee should urge the Committee concerned to take action within a specified timeframe;
- When an item has been considered for several sessions without any progress and there is no prospect of reaching consensus, the Executive Committee could propose suspension or discontinuation of work on that subject; and
- When no justification has been provided by a Committee for delay in the elaboration of a standard, Executive Committee could propose corrective action.

63. The Committee agreed that these draft criteria including the timeframe would be discussed at its next session with a view to their finalization.

64. The Committee agreed to propose that the Commission recommend the following to Codex Committees and Task Forces:

- To prioritize work when the agenda of the Committee includes many items of work;
- To invite all Chairpersons, or host countries for adjourned committees, to provide their comments on the items of work that have been under consideration for more than five years; and
- To inform the Executive Committee and the Commission of the proposed timeframe for completion of all items that have been approved as new work prior to 2004.

65. Pending consideration of these proposals by the Commission, the Committee agreed to invite Codex Committees to implement the three proposals above without delay.

66. Following the general discussion, the Committee considered some of the work items that had been in the elaboration procedure for several years without significant progress.

67. The Committee noted that, following the request of the Committee on Fats and Oils for scientific advice in the development of the list of acceptable cargoes, FAO and WHO would convene an expert working group on the criteria for acceptable cargoes in 2006, and that its conclusions would be considered by the next session of the Committee in February 2007.

68. The Committee noted that several maximum levels for contaminants had been under consideration for many sessions of the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants without significant progress, agreed to solicit the comments of the Chairperson of the CCFAC and encouraged the CCFAC to proceed with the finalization of these maximum levels.

69. After some further discussion, some members indicated that they had not enough information on the issues under consideration, especially as no comments had been provided by some Chairpersons, and they were not in a position to make recommendations on several items under consideration. These members therefore proposed to postpone consideration of other individual items of work until the criteria mentioned above had been finalized. The Committee agreed with this proposal.

70. The Committee recalled that its earlier decision that the session of the Executive Committee held immediately prior to the Commission would review proposals for new work, while the session held between the sessions of the Commission would monitor standards development. The Committee therefore noted that its 58th Session would focus on the consideration of the proposals for new work. It would also finalize and forward to the 29th Session of the Commission for approval the criteria to be applied in the monitoring process (see para. 62). The Committee noted that its 59th Session would use the criteria approved by the Commission to conduct the critical review of individual standards under development and provide recommendations to the Committees concerned to address delays in the elaboration process, on the basis of an updated document reflecting the status of standards development at that time.

71. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to explore possibilities to establish a sub-committee to allow the Executive Committee to effectively conduct the critical review especially the monitoring of progress of work and to report its findings back to the Committee at its next session.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES (Agenda Item 5)⁷

72. The Committee noted that the *Ad Hoc* Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology had agreed to initiate two new items of work that would be submitted for approval to the 29th Session of the Commission and to initiate drafting work prior to critical review by the Executive Committee and official approval at Step 1 by the Commission, in order to ensure timely preparation of the documents. The Task Force had therefore drawn the attention of the Executive Committee to the need for flexibility in the application of the Elaboration Procedure.

73. The Representatives of FAO and WHO and several members stressed the importance of the work of the Task Force for member governments and supported the approach taken by the Task Force, which was to complete its work within four years.

74. In reply to some questions, the Representative of WHO indicated that member countries could apply to the Trust Fund to participate in working groups of Codex Committees and Task Forces and that this would apply to the working group of the Task Force mentioned above.

75. The Committee agreed that flexibility should be allowed in order to facilitate timely development of the documents by the Task Force, with the understanding that the proposals for new work would be submitted to the Critical Review in the 58th Session of the Executive Committee and to the Commission for approval.

FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX: SIXTH PROGRESS REPORT (JULY-DECEMBER 2005) (Agenda Item 6)⁸

76. The Representative of WHO presented the Sixth Progress Report on the Trust Fund covering activities for the second half of 2005 and indicated that a complete report covering the entire year 2005 would be prepared in early 2006.

77. Several members expressed their appreciation to FAO and WHO and the donor countries for their support and highlighted the benefit of their participation as it contributed to develop awareness of Codex and foods safety issues at the national level, and was an important aspect of capacity building.

78. The Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean reiterated the view, expressed at the Committee's previous sessions, that the report should indicate not only the beneficiaries of the Trust Fund and the committees they had attended, but the details of the applications made by each country, as it would allow to evaluate how participants were chosen and the continuity of the countries' involvement in the Committees to which they assigned high priority. The Coordinator also expressed the view that delegates who participated for the first time in Codex meetings needed some additional training in order to be able to benefit from their participation, and that the evaluation of participation should rely on objective elements, such as the presentation of written comments.

79. Several members referred to the practical difficulties faced by delegates in obtaining air tickets, subsistence allowance and visa to travel to some countries, and noted that they had had some difficulties to adhere to the deadline for application for 2006, set at the end of October 2005. The Representative of WHO indicated that flexibility would be exercised in considering the application but that an early deadline had been set in order to facilitate practical arrangements.

80. The Committee recalled that it had been agreed earlier that the Trust Fund could be used for training purposes and noted that a training course on Codex had been held, using the Trust Fund, in conjunction with the Regional Conference on Food Safety for Latin America and the Caribbean. Similar training courses could be planned in other regions. The Committee also noted that distant learning (e-learning) modules might further

⁷ CX/EXEC 05/57/5.

⁸ CX/EXEC 05/57/6.

contribute to capacity building and the Representative of WHO indicated that WHO was considering the development of such modules.

81. Some members indicated that progress reports should provide more information on the benefits reported by the beneficiaries of the trust fund, not only as regards participation but more generally in terms of capacity building at the national level. The Committee also noted a proposal to review the decision criteria to select beneficiaries of the Trust Fund.

82. The Elected Member for Africa stressed the importance of raising awareness of Codex issues at the political level in order to improve active participation and proposed to consider the possibility of organizing side events in conjunction with the meetings of the governing bodies of FAO and WHO.

83. The Committee expressed its thanks to FAO, WHO and donor countries, invited donor countries to continue their efforts, invited potential donors to consider contributing to the Trust Fund and noted that further consideration should be given to the need for additional information for beneficiary countries. It also invited host countries to consider the possibility of organizing information sessions prior to Codex meetings for beneficiaries of the Trust Fund.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO (Agenda Item 7)⁹

84. The Committee noted the information provided by FAO/WHO in the working document on activities carried out by FAO and WHO since the 28th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and provided its views on specific issues as follows.

(a) Consultative Process on the Provision of Scientific Advice

85. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee of the ongoing efforts to enhance FAO/WHO work on provision of scientific advice to Codex as well as to member states, a process initiated at the request of the Commission. The Procedural Guidelines including the compilation of all written procedures followed by FAO and WHO expert bodies would be available early 2006. A technical meeting to explore new approaches to enhance participation of experts and the use of data from developing countries was scheduled for 12 to 15 December 2005 in Belgrade.

86. The Representative presented three options for the completion of the FAO/WHO review process for the provision of scientific advice as well as their respective advantages and disadvantages:

- an expert consultation, which would be less cumbersome to organise but its conclusions would only represent the views of experts;
- an intergovernmental conference, which would result in a formal conclusion and commitment of member countries but would be more costly to organise; or
- submitting the final report, including the Procedural Guidelines and other recommendations, to FAO/WHO governing bodies for endorsement. This would also result in formal conclusions, which would however be reached by FAO and WHO separately.

87. The Committee recognised that the Consultative Process was conducted under the authority of FAO and WHO, not by Codex, and held the view that a practical approach would be for FAO and WHO to submit a semi-final report to the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for information and observation. After considering the views of the Commission, FAO and WHO should submit a final report to the respective governing bodies for adoption.

(b) Priority Setting of Requests for Scientific Advice

88. The Representative of WHO introduced the working document on the status of activities implemented since July 2005 as well as those planned for January and February 2006. The Representative also informed the Committee that it was planned to hold a training session in conjunction with the next session of Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) to allow delegations less familiar with the Codex process to better understand the

⁹ CX/EXEC 05/57/7

operation of and interaction between JMPR and CCPR. The Representative stated that with the present budget situation, future work on the provision of scientific advice would have to be limited and strictly prioritized.

(c) FAO/WHO Activities relevant to Codex Work

89. The Representatives of FAO and WHO informed the Committee about activities related to capacity building, including the production of supporting material for capacity building as well as the activities concerning the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN).

90. The Committee, having noted with satisfaction the activities reported in the working document, requested FAO and WHO to continue their efforts which were complementary to Codex work.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 8)¹⁰

Relation between Codex and other international intergovernmental organizations

91. The Executive Committee recalled that the 28th Session of the Commission had adopted the "Guidelines on Cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and International Intergovernmental Organizations in the Elaboration of Standards and Related Texts" and had endorsed the recommendation of the 55th Session of the Executive Committee aiming at enhancing the collaboration between Codex and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

92. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Codex Secretariat had actively been seeking contributions from the OIE in the areas of work of the Commission where there was a scope for continued or improved cooperation with the OIE. The Committee reaffirmed the need to continue and strengthen cooperation with the OIE in areas such as animal production food safety and safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA animals.

Application for Observer Status with Codex

93. In accordance with Rule IX.6 of the Rules of Procedure and the Principles Concerning the Participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Executive Committee considered the request for observer status from the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD).

94. The Executive Committee was generally satisfied that the applicant organization appeared to meet the criteria laid down in the above-mentioned Principles and recommended that observer status be granted to the applicant organization. The Executive Committee noted that the final decision would be taken by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO, taking into account the advice of the Executive Committee and all other relevant information.

Relation between Codex and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

95. The Executive Committee noted the information on ISO activities of relevance to Codex work, as provided in the working documents, in accordance with the decision of the 27th Session of the Commission. Particular attention of the Committee was drawn to the publication of ISO22000:2005 "Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain".

96. The Coordinator for Near East expressed appreciation to the information provided and indicated that ISO work on food labelling and food packaging could also be of interest to the Commission.

97. The Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, while supporting continuing to exchange information between Codex and ISO, stated that not all Codex members were participating in the work of ISO, which was a non-governmental organization, and that given the limited resources available within Codex, Codex Committees and Codex members should not be overloaded by being systematically involved, even indirectly, in the standards development process of ISO.

¹⁰ CX/EXEC 05/57/8, CX/EXEC 05/57/8 Add.1, CRD 1 (Information from ISO)

98. The Executive Committee noted that Codex was in observer status with Technical Committee 34 (Food Products) of ISO and that the Codex Secretariat, where its resources allowed, reviewed a limited number of ISO draft standards of relevance to the work of Codex, with the informal assistance of the Chairpersons of relevant Codex subsidiary bodies, and communicated its observations to the ISO. The aim of this exercise was mainly to document major differences between Codex texts and future ISO standards and to draw the attention of ISO to potential gaps or conflicts.

99. The Executive Committee agreed that the exchange of information between Codex and ISO secretariats should continue and that in order to minimise duplication of work and to increase consistency of normative guidance between Codex and ISO, national Codex Contact Points should be encouraged to strengthen communication and coordination with the respective national focal point for ISO.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE 29TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 9)¹¹

100. The Committee noted that the Draft Provisional Agenda for the 29th Session of the Commission had been prepared on the basis of a five day session, as some agenda items that had been considered by the 28th Session would not be included in the Agenda, such as matters requiring a quorum, reports from Regional Committees, and election of members on a geographic basis. The Secretariat also drew the attention of the Committee to budget constraints and the high cost of an additional meeting day. Some members expressed the view that the Draft Provisional Agenda still included substantial issues and that focused deliberations would be required to complete consideration of all items in five days.

101. The Secretariat informed the Committee that it was proposed to hold a four day session of the Executive Committee in view of the substantial items to be discussed, in particular the strategic plan and the critical review of new work proposals.

102. The Committee noted that the final decision regarding the Provisional Agenda of the Commission would be taken by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 10)

Provisional Agenda of the Forthcoming Sessions of Coordinating Committees and Circular Letters to Solicit Country Comments

103. The Secretariat recalled that Coordinating Committees had two standing items on their agenda; (i) reports on food legislation and food control activities and (ii) reports on consumer participation in Codex and related matters. Taking into account possible duplication and confusion in the consideration of these items, the Secretariat proposed to combine all issues related to food legislation, food control, national Codex structures and consumer participation into one single item, in order to facilitate reporting by member countries and to rationalize discussion in the Coordinating Committees.

104. The Secretariat recalled the discussions concerning the use of Codex standards in the Committee on General Principles and in the Commission and proposed to include a separate item in the agenda of Coordinating Committees regarding the use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional levels. Some members welcomed this proposal and expressed the view that Coordinating Committees should also identify the difficulties of member countries in the use or application of Codex standards at the national and regional level, and might also consider trade problems related to standardization. The Committee recalled that following the abolition of the acceptance procedure, the Committee on General Principles had recognized the need for cooperation with WTO in order to improve monitoring information on the use of Codex standards at the national level.

105. The Committee agreed with the above proposals that would facilitate consideration of important issues in Coordinating Committees. It was proposed to provide some background and explanatory notes in the Circular Letter relating to the relevant agenda items to be discussed by the Committees, in order to assist countries in providing relevant information. It was also proposed that guidelines be developed in order to allow member countries to provide information to Coordinating Committees in a harmonised manner.

¹¹ CX/EXEC 05/57/9

106. The Elected Member for the Near East and other members indicated that the development of work plans in some coordinating committees was very useful to facilitate consideration of Codex issues at the regional level and the establishment of regional positions on such issues.

107. The Committee noted that the information provided by member countries depended of their awareness of Codex and related issues at the national level and encouraged FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat to pursue their advocacy and capacity building efforts at the national, regional and global levels.

Other matters

108. The Committee recalled that the Commission had agreed that the Committee on Additives and Contaminants would be split into two committees covering respectively additives and contaminants, and that the Netherlands would not seek to continue to host the Committee on Pesticide Residues after 2006. The Chairperson invited member countries to consider this situation. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the designation or confirmation of countries responsible for appointing chairpersons of Codex Committees and *Ad hoc* Task Forces was a standing item on the agenda of the Commission.

109. The Committee noted that its next session would be held in WHO Headquarters from 28 June to 1 July 2006, subject to approval by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO.

APPENDIX I

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
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APPENDIX II

**CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013¹****PART 1****STRATEGIC VISION STATEMENT**

The Codex Alimentarius Commission envisages a world afforded the highest attainable levels of consumer protection including food safety and quality. To this end, the Commission will develop internationally agreed standards and related texts for use in domestic regulation and international trade in food that are based on scientific principles and fulfil the objectives of consumer health protection and fair practices in food trade.

INTRODUCTION

1. This document sets out the strategic plan for the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), stating strategic goals of the Commission (Part 1) and incorporating a list of programme areas and planned activities with a clearly defined timetable (Part 2). The strategic vision and goals for the CAC underpin the high priority attached to food safety by its parent organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). *The Strategic Framework for FAO: 2000-2015* accords high priority to promoting policy and regulatory frameworks for food at the international and national levels. Several resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly recognized the need to highlight health considerations in international food trade and acknowledged the importance of the CAC for ensuring the highest levels of consumer health protection. These resolutions and related documents² urged WHO to work towards integrating food safety as one of its essential public health functions with the goal of developing sustainable, integrated food safety systems for the reduction of health risks along the entire food chain. It is understood that Codex, when elaborating standards, guidelines and recommendations, gives full consideration to those resolutions and decisions from WHO and FAO that are relevant within the framework of the Codex mandate. The fundamental mandate of the CAC is to develop international standards, guidelines and other recommendations for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.
2. The CAC has always operated in an environment of change and technological advancement. The growth in world food trade, advances in modern communication and increasing mobility of populations are all contributing to elevating the profile and significance of food safety and regulation. There is growing international concern related to a perceived emergence of or increase in food-borne diseases. Consumers around the world are seeking ever-greater assurances about the safety and quality of foods they eat. In its endeavour to promote food safety and quality, the CAC needs to ensure more effective participation and involvement of all members in setting globally relevant standards and to consider opportunities for strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders, in particular consumers and their representative organizations, at the global and national levels. It is also likely that developing countries will account for an increasing proportion of global food and agricultural trade. CAC, FAO and WHO are striving to respond to the new challenges and keep abreast of most recent development.³
3. The recognition and status that Codex standards, guidelines and other recommendations acquired under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures has presented challenges and brought responsibilities, including the need to ensure that Codex standards and related texts are based on scientific principles and meet the needs and

¹ This plan will be updated in the light of the status of all current and projected activities at the time of adoption by the Commission in 2007.

² WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety (WHO, 2002).

³ Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Food Standards Work.

mandate of the organization. The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade is also of great relevance, given the significance of the provisions pertaining to product description, labelling, packaging and quality descriptors for consumer information and fair practices in trade. The CAC has an important role in providing for essential composition and quality requirements that are not more trade-restrictive than necessary. The CAC needs to maintain its pre-eminent status as the internationally recognized body for food standard-setting and to call for the use of its standards to the widest extent possible by all members as a basis for domestic regulation and international trade. This will help members to be more aware of the importance of the international harmonization of food safety and quality standards, as well as the enhancement of food control systems for ensuring food safety and quality.

DECISION-MAKING BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

4. The CAC, as a risk management body, does not undertake scientific evaluations *per se* but relies on the opinions of scientific expert bodies convened by FAO and WHO on specific issues. These expert bodies such as the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA) and other *ad hoc* expert consultations are functionally separate from the CAC and its subsidiary bodies and do not directly fall within the scope of the present Strategic Plan. The mandates, functions, composition and agendas of these bodies are established by FAO and WHO. The independence of the expert bodies is critical to the objectivity of their opinions, and meetings of these bodies should interact with the CAC in accordance with the Working Principle for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius. There is considerable synergy between the scientific bodies of FAO and WHO and the intergovernmental bodies of the CAC in order to take decisions based on scientific evidence.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

5. To enable the overall achievement of the strategic vision, the CAC must take action jointly with its parent organizations and its members. The Commission urges FAO and WHO to mobilise sufficient resources to allow the CAC to fulfil its mandate. Their other key roles are to provide scientific advice requested by the CAC and to offer technical assistance to developing members so that they can effectively participate in the standard-setting process and build capacity for the development of sound food control systems. The Commission fully recognises the efforts of the members of the CAC, especially those which provide significant financial and other support to the work of the CAC as host governments of subsidiary bodies or as contributors to extra-budgetary programmes of FAO and WHO. In close cooperation with the partners above, the Commission will focus on the following goals to achieve its strategic vision.

GOAL 1: PROMOTING SOUND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

6. An effective food control system is critical in enabling all countries to ensure the safety of their foods entering international trade and to ensure that imported foods conform to national requirements. International harmonization based on Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations is essential to promoting a global approach to consumer health protection, including systems for the reduction of food-borne risks, and minimizing the negative effects of technical regulations on international trade. For this purpose, the CAC will provide essential guidance for its members through the continued development of international standards and guidelines relating to food safety and hygiene, nutrition, labelling, and import/export inspection and certification and quality of food stuff. This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key directions:
 - The CAC will develop international standards, guidelines, and recommendations based on scientific principles for the reduction of health risks along the entire food chain. In strengthening the strategic focus of the CAC in the development of risk-based, performance-based standards and related texts for broad application across a range of commodities, the CAC must give priority to establishing a coherent and integrated set of food standards covering the entire food chain. Such an approach can serve as a model for the members of the CAC to pursue food regulatory systems that provide consumers with safe food and ensure fair practices in the food trade;

- Codex standards and related texts for food safety and quality, including labelling aspects, should be carefully prepared to reflect global variations. Codex standards for food quality should focus on essential characteristics of products to ensure that they are not overly prescriptive and that the standards are not more trade restrictive than necessary; and
 - The CAC, when elaborating and deciding upon Codex standards and related texts should take into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities, Codex standards and related texts should not have the effect of creating unnecessary, unjustified or discriminatory obstacles to the exports of developing countries.
7. In many countries, effective food control is undermined by the existence of fragmented legislation, multiple jurisdictions and weaknesses in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement. Sound national food control and regulatory systems are essential to ensuring the health and safety of the domestic population as well as ensuring the safety and quality of foods entering international trade. The FAO and WHO have made significant advances in promoting sound regulatory frameworks at the national level. The Commission, while encouraging members to use Codex relevant standards, strongly encourages FAO and WHO to continue to promote national regulatory systems that are based on international principles and guidelines and address all components of the food chain. The development of sound food control and regulatory infrastructure including human resources is particularly important for developing countries as they seek to achieve higher levels of food safety and nutrition and will require high-level political and policy commitment.⁴ Successful negotiation of bilateral mutual recognition and equivalence of food control systems also depends on the abilities of countries to assure each other of the integrity and international conformity of their regulatory systems.

GOAL 2: PROMOTING WIDEST AND CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES AND RISK ANALYSIS

8. The scientific basis of decision-making by the CAC is spelled out in the Statements of Principle on the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-Making and the Extent to Which Other Factors are Taken into Account and in the Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius⁵. The CAC will ensure their consistent application by relevant Codex subsidiary bodies, in order to maintain its focus on this Goal. Risk analysis as it applies to food safety across the food chain is an internationally accepted discipline and will require ongoing and sustained inputs from the CAC, its parent organisations and national governments to promote its understanding and application at the international and national levels.
9. In recent years the scope of scientific advice sought by the CAC from the parent organisations increased considerably and went beyond chemical and microbiological hazards. FAO and WHO responded to these requests through several FAO/WHO *ad hoc* consultations on topics such as foods derived from genetically modified organisms and antimicrobial resistance. The Commission requests FAO and WHO to continue to promote the understanding of risk analysis and to continue to explore new areas of work, such as nutritional risk assessment, so as to provide the scientific advice relevant to CAC activities for standard setting.
10. The timely availability of scientific advice is a prerequisite for the CAC to fulfil its mandate. The Commission will continue to encourage FAO and WHO to make sufficient resources available to ensure that the scientific advice to the CAC can be provided in a timely and sustainable way. To make more efficient and effective use of the FAO/WHO expert bodies and *ad hoc* consultations, particularly given the rapidly expanding scope of scientific advice requested from FAO and WHO, the CAC will continue to strengthen the interaction between the risk managers (relevant Codex subsidiary bodies) and the risk assessors (FAO/WHO expert bodies and *ad hoc* expert consultations). The Commission has agreed to recommend to FAO and WHO a set of criteria for the prioritization of requests from the

⁴ Report of the Conference on International Food Trade beyond 2000: Science based Decisions, Harmonization, Equivalence and Mutual Recognition, Melbourne, Australia, 11-15 October, 1999, Appendix 1.

⁵ Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual.

CAC for scientific advice and will review the usefulness of this approach. The CAC, in close cooperation with its parent organizations, will enhance its capacity to respond efficiently to emerging food borne risks by strengthening its work management capabilities (see Goal 3).

11. The CAC has the goal of elaborating standards that cover the needs of its entire membership to ensure these standards are applicable globally. A constraint to this goal is the persistent lack of relevant data from all major parts of the world. The CAC will continue to encourage countries from both the developed and developing worlds to submit relevant data to the CAC and the parent organizations. The Commission recommends that FAO and WHO build on the achievements already accomplished⁶ and take meaningful steps to ensure that scientific advice is provided more quickly, with even higher quality, that more requests are addressed, and that the process is conducted with enhanced transparency. The Commission particularly encourages FAO and WHO to explore new approaches to enhance participation of experts and the use of data from developing countries in the elaboration of scientific advice. Where relevant data are not available from developing countries, the CAC encourages FAO and WHO to assist the developing countries in generating such data.

GOAL 3: STRENGTHENING CODEX WORK-MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

12. Attention to food safety and global food trade has continued to increase among countries and among the international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with these matters. More expeditious and efficient work by the CAC is necessary to provide members and international organizations with the standards, guidelines, and recommendations that they need.
13. The CAC has already made several important advances towards achieving more efficient work-management procedures, such as strengthening the role of the Executive Committee as a strategic and standards-management body, holding annual Commission sessions, and instituting more effective use of information technology. But the CAC must take additional steps to keep pace with international developments by better managing its work so that it addresses high priority issues in a timely manner and that standards development work is completed within specified time frames.
14. The implementation of new Codex work-management procedures⁷ must make the CAC more effective and efficient, while maintaining the valuable reputation that the CAC has earned as an open, fair, transparent, and rules-based body. Key features of continuing enhancements include⁸:
 - Enhancing the capabilities of the Executive Committee with respect to strategic oversight, direction, and cross coordination of the work programmes of all subsidiary bodies through recommendations to the Commission;
 - Ensuring that the Commission and its subsidiary bodies make decisions about work prioritization using criteria that enable effective decision making, taking into consideration the need to initiate new work and to revise existing standards;
 - Ensuring that new work and standard-revision work is completed within defined time frames. Work progress is monitored by the Executive Committee, and in the event that work exceeds specified time frames, the Executive Committee recommends to the Commission that corrective actions be taken as necessary;
 - Exploring mechanisms for progressing the work of subsidiary bodies in between sessions, while maintaining transparency and inclusiveness;
 - Promoting consensus-based decision-making; and
 - Strengthening the Secretariat of the CAC to ensure effective operation and work management of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and to maintain effective communication with the Codex Contact Points.

⁶ FAO/WHO Consultative Process for the Provision of Scientific Advice to Codex and Member Countries.

⁷ As suggested by both the Report of the Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Food Standards Work and the Report on the Review of Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces and as endorsed by the Commission.

⁸ Key features are not listed in priority order.

GOAL 4: PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN CODEX AND RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

15. The CAC must work closely on matters of common interest with other relevant international intergovernmental organizations, including those whose work has indirect but significant implications for food-standard issues. Monitoring by the CAC of activities of other organizations that are relevant to food standards, and coordination with them, where appropriate and consistent with Codex procedures, is necessary to achieve complementarity, avoid duplication and prevent development of contradictory standards or guidelines. Such collaboration is also critical to the development of health-protection and food-trade measures that address the food chain from farm to table in a coherent and seamless manner.
16. The WTO recognizes the CAC as the pre-eminent international body for establishing food safety standards. The Commission must, therefore, play a leadership role in establishing international food standards for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in food trade, while taking due account of international regulatory initiatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The CAC also has a responsibility to provide its technical input and expertise towards the building of international consensus on food standards and regulatory policy matters. Establishment or promotion of cooperation, between the CAC and other relevant international intergovernmental organizations, should be considered, where appropriate, to ensure effective collaboration and coordination, and that such cooperation should be in line with the Guidelines on Cooperation between Codex Alimentarius Commission and International Intergovernmental Organizations in the Elaboration of Standards and Related Texts.

GOAL 5: PROMOTING MAXIMUM AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS

17. Full participation by all Codex Members and other interested parties in the work of the CAC is now more important than ever. The participation of all members and relevant intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations is critical to sound decision-making and ensuring that Codex standards and related texts take account of the full range of interests and viewpoints. Since the early 1990s there has been a significant increase in the membership of the CAC with developing countries now constituting a significant proportion of total membership. The Commission welcomes some initiatives undertaken so far to mitigate the financial and human resource constraints hitherto hampering the effective participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the activities of the CAC. Such initiatives include the establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex, and the development of training manuals and other Codex related capacity building tools. Capacity building programmes under FAO and WHO also have a bearing on strengthening these countries' participation in Codex activities. The Trust Fund and other FAO and WHO programmes are efforts aimed at enabling the members to further gain experience in the Codex process. The Commission strongly urges beneficiary members to take these opportunities offered and create sustainability towards more effective participation, by making firm commitments to adequate allocation of national resources towards Codex work.
18. There is a continuing need for FAO and WHO to implement capacity building programmes in a coherent manner, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, aimed at strengthening national administrative and consultative structures on Codex (e.g. Codex Contact Point, National Codex Committee) and enhancing technical expertise required for effective participation in international standards development. The CAC will play an advisory role in facilitating the efforts made by FAO and WHO so that those efforts address the needs of the CAC and its members.
19. In addition to actions to promote participation of member countries, the CAC will continue to enhance inclusiveness and transparency of the Codex process by furthering its efforts to encourage the participation of consumers and public interest groups in its processes at the international level and encourage governments to take action at the national level. The CAC will take advantage of any information technological developments for advancement of inclusiveness and transparency in the Codex process.

PART 2

PROGRAMME AREAS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES 2008-2013

Goal 1: Promoting Sound Regulatory Framework

1.1 : Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food safety
Description: Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food safety to ensure that they: emphasize a horizontal approach; employ a risk-based approach to food safety that addresses the entire food chain; and reflect global variations so as to avoid being more trade restrictive than necessary, taking into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities.
Timeline : Continuing
Responsible parties: CCFH, CCFAC, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCNFSDU, relevant Task Forces and Commodity Committees

1.2 : Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food quality
Description: Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food quality to ensure that they are generic in nature and whilst maintaining inclusiveness, reflect global variations and focus on essential characteristics so as to avoid being overly prescriptive and not more trade restrictive than necessary, taking into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities.
Timeline : Continuing
Responsible parties: Relevant Task Forces and all Commodity Committees

1.3 : Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food labelling and nutrition
Description: Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food labelling and nutrition to ensure that they: emphasize a horizontal approach and the need to maintain inclusiveness, and address food labelling and nutrition so as to avoid being overly prescriptive and not more trade restrictive than necessary, taking into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: CCFL, CCNFSDU

1.4 : Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food inspection and certification, and methods of sampling and analysis
Description: Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food inspection and certification as well as methods of sampling, including guidance on equivalence, mutual recognition and traceability / product tracing, to ensure that they: emphasize a horizontal approach and the need to maintain inclusiveness, and reflect global variations so as to avoid being overly prescriptive and not more trade restrictive than necessary, taking into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: CCMAS, CCFICS

1.5 : Develop guidance for safe and prudent non-human antimicrobial usage for containment of resistance
Description: Develop guidance within the remit of the Codex mandate for safe and prudent antimicrobial usage for containment of resistance in food production which focuses on public health,

is based on sound science and follows risk analysis principles, and takes into account the work of other international organisations.

Timeline: Completion by 2011

Responsible parties: Existing relevant Codex Committees or an *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force (Final decision by the 29th session of the Commission)

1.6 : Explore innovative risk management frameworks

Description: Explore innovative risk management frameworks to address gaps in the existing Codex standards, guidelines, and recommendations. Develop guidance on residues of veterinary drugs without ADI/MRLs and their development process. Explore the usefulness of interim maximum residue limits for pesticides and share the results of new approaches among Codex Committees.

Timeline: Completion by 2009

Responsible parties: CCRVDF, CCPR

1.7 : Encourage FAO/WHO to expand capacity building programmes

Description: Encourage FAO/WHO to strengthen their programmes to enhance food control infrastructures and to provide technical assistance including assistance on generating data to countries in need to promote application or use of Codex standards and related texts at the national level. Request FAO/WHO to report to the Commission on the implementation status of their capacity building activities.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC and Coordinating Committees

1.8 : Publish the Codex Alimentarius

Description: Ensure timely update and availability of Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations to all interested parties through the Internet and other appropriate means.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: Codex Secretariat, Codex Contact Points

Goal 2: Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis

2.1 Review the consistency of risk analysis principles elaborated by the relevant Codex Committees

Description: Review the risk analysis principles elaborated by the relevant Codex Committees for consistency with the Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius. The review might result in the CAC advising Codex Committees to amend their risk analysis principles document relevant to their area of work.

Timeline: Completion by 2011.

Responsible parties: CCGP

2.2 Review risk analysis principles developed by relevant Codex Committees

Description: Review risk analysis principles developed by relevant Codex Committees in the light of the experience gained assuming that by 2008 all relevant Codex Committees have elaborated risk assessment policies pertaining to their area of work and that these policies have been adopted by the CAC.

As these risk assessment policies play a pivotal role in the interaction between risk managers and risk assessors, communication between these two parties should be further improved, where appropriate. The result of such a review may be revised documents on risk analysis principles for adoption by the Commission. The review should also take into account the outcome of the activity described under 2.1.

Timeline: Completion by 2013

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, CCFAC, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCFH, CCNFSU

2.3 Enhance communication among relevant Codex subsidiary bodies and the FAO/WHO scientific expert bodies
Description: Enhance communication between the risk managers and risk assessors in accordance with paragraph 38 of the Working Principle for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius.
Timeline: Completion by 2013
Responsible parties: CCFAC, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCFH, CCNFSDU
2.4 Review the set of criteria recommended to FAO and WHO for prioritization of requests from Codex for scientific advice.
Description: Review the usefulness of the criteria agreed upon by the 28 th Session of the CAC for use by FAO/WHO to prioritize requests from Codex for scientific advice.
Timeline: Completion by 2009.
Responsible parties: CCEXEC
2.5 Encourage countries to channel their requests for scientific advice to FAO / WHO through the CAC
Description: Encourage countries to channel their requests through the CAC in order to make the best use of the limited resources available at FAO and WHO for the provision of scientific advice.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, all subsidiary bodies
2.6 Elaborate guidelines for risk analysis for application by governments.
Description: Complete the elaboration of a guideline for risk analysis to be used by governments.
Timeline: Subject to decision by CAC in 2007
Responsible parties: CCGP
<u>Goal 3: Strengthening Codex Work-Management Capabilities</u>
3.1 Review the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities and procedures of the critical review
Description: Review and revise, if necessary, the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities and the effectiveness of the critical review process.
Timeline: Completion of analysis by CCEXEC by 2009; if there is need for revision, completion of revision by CCGP by 2011
Responsible parties: CCEXEC, CCGP
3.2 Ensure effective standards management
Description: Annually review progress of all subsidiary-body activities (i.e., standards, codes of practice, codes of hygienic practice, guidelines) against specified timeframes for completion of each activity, and recommend corrective actions to the Commission for activities that appear likely to exceed or have exceeded specified timeframes.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: CCEXEC
3.3 Develop committee-specific decision making and priority setting criteria
Description: Develop committee-specific decision-making and priority-setting criteria and use these criteria for management of work. Implement and review criteria where necessary.
Timeline: Completion of decision making and priority setting criteria by 2008. Review of criteria continuing (beginning in 2008)
Responsible parties: All General Subject Committees and some other subsidiary bodies as appropriate

3.4 Analyse work-management approaches that facilitate advancement of texts in the Codex step process.

Description: Analyse work-management approaches used by the committees that facilitate advancement of texts in the Codex step procedure in the light of the criteria referred to in 3.3 and their use by the committees.

Timeline: Completion of analysis by 2009

Responsible parties: Analysis work to be done possibly either by Codex Secretariat or by consultant for next step (3.5)

3.5 Adopt approaches proven to facilitate advancement of texts in the Codex step procedure by subsidiary bodies not currently using such approaches.

Description: Recommend adoption of approaches proven to facilitate advancement of texts in the Codex step procedure by subsidiary bodies not currently using such approaches, in the light of the analysis undertaken as per 3.4.

Timeline: Completion by 2011

Responsible parties: CCEXEC and CAC

3.6 Implement priority-ranked comprehensive accounting of all requests for scientific advice

Description: Request FAO and WHO to annually produce a priority-ranked comprehensive accounting (including budget information as it has impacts on Codex work) of all requests for scientific advice (i.e. continuing, ad hoc, requested by subsidiary bodies, or requested by members). The criteria that shall be used for priority ranking are those agreed to at the 55th Session of the Executive Committee (ALINORM 05/28/3). FAO and WHO are also requested to include budget information relevant to provision of scientific advice.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CCEXEC

3.7 Evaluate the capacity of the Codex Secretariat to perform its function effectively

Description: Evaluate the effectiveness and resource needs of the Codex Secretariat in the operation and work management of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and in communicating with and serving the needs of Codex Contact Points.

Timeline: Completion by 2009

Responsible parties: Codex Secretariat, CCEXEC, CAC

3.8 Streamline Codex Commodity work

Description: Implement the decisions of the Commission on how to streamline Codex work on commodities through an improved structure of Codex subsidiary bodies.

Timeline: Completion by 2010

Responsible parties: CCEXEC, CAC

Goal 4: Promoting Cooperation between Codex and other relevant international intergovernmental organizations

4.1 Track the activities of other international standard-setting bodies

Description: Track the activities of other international standard-setting bodies to identify areas of potential complementarities, gaps, duplication, or conflict. A summary of such activities relevant to Codex shall be reported to the Executive Committee and to the Commission annually.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, Codex Secretariat, subsidiary bodies

4.2 Encourage Codex contributions to the work of other international bodies

Description: Encourage other relevant international bodies, when elaborating food standards and related texts to take due account of Codex standards, related texts and any relevant ongoing work. Where appropriate, propose inclusion of appropriate cross-reference to Codex standards and relevant texts.

Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: Codex Secretariat

4.3 Encourage contributions from other international bodies in Codex work
Description: Invite international bodies concerned with food safety and food quality to participate in the standards development process of Codex
Timeline: Ongoing
Responsible parties: Observers, Codex Secretariat

4.4 Consider cooperation with other relevant international intergovernmental organizations
Description: While recognizing the needs to further improve interaction with OIE and IPPC, where appropriate, explore possibilities for cooperation to ensure effective collaboration and coordination, and that such cooperation should be in line with the Guideline on Cooperation between Codex and International Intergovernmental Organizations.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: Legal Counsels of FAO and WHO, Codex Secretariat

4.5 Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national level
Description: Encourage Codex member countries to establish effective mechanisms within their own countries so that horizontal coordination and communication occurs among national delegates to various food-standards-related international organizations. Invite members to develop evaluation criteria to assess the success of the mechanisms that they have established and report progress in this activity through their respective Codex Regional Coordinating Committees to the CAC.
Timeline: Completion by 2009
Responsible parties: Codex Members, Coordinating Committees

Goal 5: Promoting Maximum and Effective Participation of Members

5.1 Promote Enhanced Participation of developing countries in Codex
Description: Request FAO/WHO to encourage current donors to continue to provide funds to the FAO/WHO Trust Fund and invite other donors to contribute to the Fund to ensure sustainability. Request FAO/WHO to analyse the impact of the Codex Trust Fund on the capacity of beneficiary countries and report its findings to the CCEXEC and the Commission. Provide recommendations to FAO / WHO with a view to improved operation of the Trust Fund based on the outcome of the Trust Fund mid-term evaluation.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: CAC , Executive Committee,

5.2 Promote effective use of written comments in the Codex process
Description: Encourage members and observers to make maximum use of opportunities to submit written comments while respecting the deadlines for such submissions to allow all members and observers to study the positions of other members and observers in a timely manner. Examine how best to handle the late submission of comments from the view points of transparency and inclusiveness.
Timeline: Continuing
Responsible parties: Codex Members, Observers, CCEXEC, Codex Secretariat

5.3 Evaluate effectiveness of Codex Committee sessions held in developing countries
Description: Evaluate the effectiveness of holding Codex sessions in developing countries in terms of enhanced participation. Analyse the effectiveness of co-hosting arrangements, and continue to explore possibilities of convening Codex sessions outside the host countries.
Timeline: Completion by 2009
Responsible parties: Host countries, CCEXEC

5.4 Strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees
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Description: Request FAO and WHO to provide technical assistance for the strengthening of national Codex structures; provide improved support by the Codex Secretariat to Codex Contact Points through the effective use of Internet facilities.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, Codex Secretariat
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5.5 Enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international and national levels

Description: Encourage non-governmental organizations to participate in Codex work at national and international levels. Encourage members to establish sound structures and processes for consultation on Codex matters to ensure effective involvement and participation of all interested parties.
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Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CAC, Codex Members, Observers, Coordinating Committees
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5.6 Enhance communication about Codex work at international and national levels
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Description: Develop new communication approaches to promote the work of Codex at national and international levels. Develop direct and easily understandable messages on Codex to interested parties including consumers and especially emphasizing high level policy makers. .

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: Codex Secretariat, WHO and FAO, Codex Contact Points, subsidiary bodies

PART 3
PROPOSED TEMPLATE

This Part serves, as a checklist of ongoing work, the purpose of managing current and future work undertaken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission. This Part will regularly be presented for review by the Executive Committee.

Sample:

<i>Codex Committee on xx</i> ⁹	Timeframe		Current Step ¹⁰	Relevant Output Codes ¹¹	Provision of scientific advice	Explanatory notes	Specific Comments from the Chairperson of the Committee	Advice given by the Executive Committee
	Document title	Job ID ¹²						
Draft Guidelines for A	N03-2005	2009	6/7	1.2	Not required			
Draft Standard for B	N04-2006	2011	5	1.3	Not required			
Proposed Draft Guidelines for C	N05-2006	2011	3/4	1.2	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation planned in 2009			
Proposed Draft Standard for D	N04-2008	2013	2	1.3	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation requested by 2011			
General comments by the Chairperson of the Committee:								

⁹ Name of the subsidiary body.

¹⁰ Step in the Elaboration Procedure.

¹¹ Reference made to Part 2 of the Strategic Plan.

¹² Job IDs are assigned by the Commission upon approval as new work.

¹³ Year by which the draft text is to be adopted at Step 8, as agreed by the Commission on the basis of the Project Document.