

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Sixteenth Session

Geneva, 1-12 July 1985

REPORT OF THE THIRTY FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

WHO, GENEVA, 25 - 29 JUNE 1984

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee held its Thirty First Session at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, from 25 to 29 June 1984. The Executive Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. E.F. Kimbrell (United States of America) and in the presence of its three Vice-Chairmen, Dr. Ms. A. Brincker (Denmark), Dr. A.A.M. Hasan (Iraq) and Dr. E.R. Méndez (Mexico). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present: for Asia, Dr. Suck-Woo Shin, from the Republic of Korea; for Europe, Dr. A.N. Zaitsev, from the USSR; for Latin America, Ing. J. Piazzini, from Argentina; for North America, Dr. N.W. Tape, from Canada; for the South-West Pacific, Dr. W.J. Pryor, from Australia. The Coordinator for Asia, Prof. A. Bhumiratana (Thailand), the Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland), and the Coordinator for Latin America, Minister Ing. R. Darias Rodés (Cuba) were also present.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Cameroon, representing the geographic location of Africa and from the Coordinator for Africa, Dr. J.K. Misoi (Kenya).

OPENING ADDRESS

3. The Thirty First Session of the Executive Committee was opened by Dr. J. Hamon, Assistant Director-General, WHO, on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. Dr. Hamon reaffirmed the importance which the World Health Assembly attached to the contribution of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to the social goal of "Health for all by the year 2000", through helping to improve the safety and nutritional quality of the food supply and through facilitating international trade in food commodities. He referred to the fact that many volumes of the Codex Alimentarius had now been published, including those volumes which contained all the standards adopted by the Commission, and stressed the need for increased efforts on the part of member countries of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to implement the standards and other recommendations of the Commission.
4. Dr. Hamon also referred to the item on the provisional agenda for the session relating to the future direction of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. As several Codex Committees had adjourned *sine die*, he thought it timely that the Executive Committee, in its role as adviser to the Commission, should now be considering this topic. In this connection, he mentioned that the Commission, at its last session, had

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been requested by member countries to look into a number of new topics of public health significance to several countries, including, in particular, the subject of residues of veterinary drugs in food, the problem of PCBs and the migration of chemicals from packaging material into foods. This indicated that member countries continued to look to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as the recognized international forum for guidance on these matters.

5. Dr. Hamon also stressed the great importance of the work of the Regional Codex Coordinating Committees. In particular he expressed satisfaction that the Regional Coordinating Committees had begun to recognize the need to improve the safety of food by strengthening food control and by integrating food safety into primary health care. This was a development of very great importance and it would be necessary to consider how best this development could receive practical application.

6. The Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission thanked the Assistant Director-General for having opened the session. He stated that the Executive Committee was particularly pleased to be reminded of the importance which the World Health Assembly attached to the contribution of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission towards the attainment of the goal of "Health for all by the year 2000", and that the Codex Alimentarius Commission stood ready to work with WHO in trying to accomplish this goal, and would be happy to explore ways to fully realise the potential which existed.

7. The Chairman indicated that he fully shared the views of the Assistant Director-General concerning the need for greater efforts on the part of governments to implement the Codex standards and maximum limits for pesticide residues, more especially as the Codex Alimentarius was now being published and sent to governments. He indicated that the Executive Committee at this session and the Commission at its next session would be giving much attention to this subject, in order to see how efforts towards putting the standards, maximum limits for pesticide residues, and codes of practice, into use by member governments, could be improved.

8. The Chairman stated that he was pleased to know that the Assistant Director-General also thought it very timely to have an item on the agenda of the Executive Committee's present session relating to the future direction of Codex work. The Chairman stated that he considered this to be a very important item for discussion at this juncture, and for this reason had requested the Secretariat to include such an item on the agenda.

9. The Chairman stated that he fully agreed with the views of the Assistant Director-General on the contribution the Codex Alimentarius Commission could make, by way of authoritative advice and guidance, in regard to matters of public health interest such as those he had mentioned. Many of these matters were also matters of great interest from a trade point of view, which was also the concern of Codex.

10. The Chairman stated that he shared the views of the Assistant Director-General concerning the importance of the work of the Regional Coordinating Committees. He considered that these Committees should continue their efforts to stress the importance of improving the safety of food by strengthening food control and by integrating food safety into primary health care, and he agreed that it was important to consider how best these efforts could be realized in terms of practical application.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

11. The Secretariat indicated that, because of unforeseen circumstances, it would not be in a position, at this session, to introduce Item 19 of the Agenda, "Consideration of suggestion of ISO for the possible publication by ISO of Codex standards in a standardized ISO format". The Executive Committee agreed to delete this item from the Agenda of its current session. The Executive Committee agreed on a slight re-arrangement in the order of items to be discussed.

PROGRESS REPORT ON PUBLICATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND RELATED
CODES OF PRACTICE (Agenda Item 2)

12. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/2. It was noted that the under-mentioned Volumes II to XII of the Codex Alimentarius had been issued to governments in loose-leaf format in English, French and Spanish:

- Volume II - Codex Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Edible Fungi
- Volume III - Codex Standards for Sugars (including Honey)
- Volume IV - Codex Standards for Processed Meat and Poultry Products and Soups and Broths
- Volume V - Codex Standards for Fish and Fishery Products
- Volume VI - Codex Standards and Guidelines for the Labelling of Food and Food Additives
- Volume VII - Codex Standards for Cocoa Products and Chocolate
- Volume VIII - Codex Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables
- Volume IX - Codex Standards for Foods for Special Dietary Uses including Foods for Infants and Children and Related Code of Hygienic Practice
- Volume X - Codex Standards for Fruit Juices, Concentrated Fruit Juices and Fruit Nectars
- Volume XI - Codex Standards for Edible Fats and Oils
- Volume XII - Codex Standards for Natural Mineral Waters and Edible Ices and Ice Mixes

13. The under-mentioned Volumes XIII to XV of the Codex Alimentarius would be issued very shortly:

- Volume XIII - Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues
- Volume XIV - Food Additives
- Volume XV - Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods and Recommended International Code of Practice for the Operation of Irradiation Facilities used for the Treatment of Foods.

14. The Executive Committee was informed that Volume XIII contained all the Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues adopted by the Commission up to the end of its 15th Session in July 1983. Volume XIV classified all the food additive provisions adopted by the Commission and also contained advisory texts relating to the use of food additives. Because the food additive provisions contained in Volume XIV formed integral parts of the individual Codex commodity standards published in other volumes of the Codex Alimentarius, most of which had already been submitted to governments for acceptance, the contents of Volume XIV per se were not subject to the formal acceptance procedure of the Commission. Volume XV contained the revised Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods and the revised Recommended International Code of Practice for the Operation of Radiation Facilities for the Treatment of Foods.

15. The Executive Committee was also informed that it was expected that the following two Volumes of the Codex Alimentarius, which were in preparation, would be issued towards the end of 1984:

Volume XVI - Standards for Milk Products

Volume XVII - Food Contaminants.

16. The Executive Committee was further informed that the undermentioned Volume of the Codex Alimentarius, which would not contain any standards or codes of practice, but which would contain general information about a wide variety of aspects of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, would be issued about the end of 1984:

Volume I - General.

17. The Executive Committee was informed that the codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission were also being re-issued - or freshly issued in the case of the more recently adopted codes - in loose-leaf format. Each code was being issued separately, but had been classified according to subject matter and assigned a volume reference. The volume references for the codes of practice were alphabetical, i.e. Volume A, Volume B, Volume C, etc. to distinguish them from the standards which were classified numerically.

18. The General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1 - 1969, Rev 1 (1979)), in revised form, had been published in Volume A of the Codex Alimentarius, which had been issued in English, French and Spanish.

19. The under-mentioned, mostly recently adopted, codes of practice which had never been sent to governments, would be issued shortly to governments in English, French and Spanish.

- CAC/RCP 22-1979 - Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Ground Nuts (Peanuts) (Volume D)
- CAC/RCP 23-1979 - Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods (Volume G)
- CAC/RCP 24-1979 - Recommended International Code of Practice for Lobsters (Volume B)
- CAC/RCP 25-1979 - Recommended International Code of Practice for Smoked Fish (Volume B)
- CAC/RCP 26-1979 - Recommended International Code of Practice for Salted Fish (Volume B)
- CAC/RCP 27-1983 - Recommended International Code of Practice for Minced Fish Prepared by Mechanical Separation (Volume B)
- CAC/RCP 28-1983 - Recommended International Code of Practice for Crabs (Volume B)
- CAC/RCP 29-1983 - Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Game (Volume C)
- CAC/RCP 30-1983 - Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for the Processing of Frogs Legs (Volume C)
- CAC/RCP 31-1983 - Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Dried Milk (Volume H)
- CAC/RCP 32-1983 - Recommended International Code of Practice for the Production, Storage and Composition of Mechanically Separated Meat Intended for Further Processing (Volume C)

CAC/RCP 8-1976 - Recommended International Code of Practice for
the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods
(Volume E) 1/

20. The earlier codes of practice, which had already been published and issued to governments, would be re-published in loose-leaf format in due course and sent to governments.
21. Acceptances of Codex Standards received up to 1 February 1983 had been published in English, French and Spanish in the publication entitled "Summary of Acceptances - Part I - World Wide and Regional Codex Standards". Acceptances of Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues received up to 19 September 1983 had been published in the publication entitled "Summary of Acceptances - Part II - Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues". These publications would be updated for the Sixteenth Session of the Commission.
22. The Secretariat concluded its introduction of this topic by informing the Executive Committee that folders to contain the Codex standards had already been issued. Larger folders to contain the codes of practice and also the summaries of acceptances would be issued shortly.
23. The Executive Committee wished to place on record its appreciation of the efforts of the Secretariat in making good progress with the publication and issue to governments of the various volumes of the Codex Alimentarius.
24. The Representative of the Region of South-West Pacific inquired as to how interested bodies and persons could obtain copies of the various volumes of the Codex Alimentarius as well as copies of the amendments which would be issued from time to time. The Secretariat indicated that as the volumes of the Codex Alimentarius were not priced publications, copies were not available from FAO or WHO Sales Agents in the different countries. Copies of the Codex volumes and amendments thereto were sent automatically to certain Government Ministries and to all Codex Contact Points. Interested bodies and persons not on the despatch lists of FAO and WHO would have to write to FAO, Rome, for copies. The Executive Committee expressed the view that the demand for copies of the volumes of the Codex Alimentarius from a wide range of interested bodies and individuals was likely to grow substantially and hoped that FAO would keep a watch on the situation to ensure ready availability of these publications to interested parties.
25. The Coordinator for Europe referred to the revision of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods and stated that the revised version of this very important standard might, following further consideration by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, be adopted by the Commission at its 16th session in July 1985 at Step 8. He hoped that the revised version would be issued as quickly as possible thereafter. The Secretariat assured the Coordinator that this would be done.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON (I) ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND MAXIMUM LIMITS
FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES AND (II) ON THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CODEX STANDARDS
AND (A) CMEA STANDARDS AND (B) EEC DIRECTIVES (Agenda Items 3 and 4)

1/ CAC/RCP 8-1976 has been reissued to incorporate Annex II-1983: Recommended International Code of Practice for the Handling of Quick Frozen Foods during Transport.

Acceptances

26. In introducing this topic, the Secretariat indicated that details of all acceptances of Codex Standards received up to 1 February 1983 including details of specified deviations, were to be found in the publication "Summary of Acceptances - Part I - World Wide and Regional Codex Standards" (CAC/Acceptances Part I - Rev.2). Details of all acceptances of Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues received up to 19 September 1983 were to be found in the publication "Summary of Acceptances - Part II - Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues" (CAC/Acceptances Part II - Rev. 2).

27. In the meantime further replies had been received and these replies were contained in the progress report (document CX/EXEC 84/31/3), which had been prepared for the current session of the Executive Committee. The section of the progress report dealing with acceptance of commodity standards showed that replies had been received from Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, Fiji, Equatorial Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Rwanda, Thailand, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. A number of the above countries, including Argentina, Cameroon, Canada, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Hungary, Norway and Rwanda had given either Full Acceptance or Acceptance with Specified Deviations to several standards. Details of these replies, including full details of deviations notified would be published in the next updating of the Summary of Acceptances. Of the other countries listed above, some (Bahrain, Dominican Republic) indicated that products in conformity with the standards (in the case of Bahrain, the standards contained in Volumes II to VIII) would be permitted to be distributed freely within their territorial jurisdictions. Of the remaining countries listed, some indicated a favourable attitude to the standards without a formal acceptance at this stage and others indicated that the standards were under study and that a reply would be made in due course.

28. Concerning acceptance of Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues, the progress report (CX/EXEC 84/31/3) indicated that replies had been received from Chad, Chile, Bolivia, Iceland, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Yugoslavia. In general the replies acknowledged the usefulness of the Codex maximum limits as reference material and as a basis for national legislation and also as a means of facilitating international trade. The Executive Committee noted that an updated Acceptance Form was being prepared for issue to governments, covering all maximum limits for pesticide residues adopted up to and including the Fifteenth Session of the Commission.

29. The attention of the Executive Committee was drawn to the discussions on acceptance of Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues which had taken place at the First Session of a Group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems held in Petchburi, Thailand from 24 to 27 February 1984 (ALINORM 85/31). A Resolution concerning acceptance of Codex MRLs had been adopted at the above session, which had been endorsed by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues at its 16th Session held from 28 May to 4 June 1984. The Resolution which would be presented to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its 16th Session, urged all Member Countries to review the lists of products contained in Volume XIII of the Codex Alimentarius (Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues) for which Codex MRLs had been established, in order to determine which of the products were imported. It further urged each Member Country to give favourable consideration to the possibility of accepting the Codex Maximum Limits for the food products imported or where acceptance was not possible, to the possibility of notifying the Codex Secretariat that products in conformity with the Codex Maximum Limits may be imported into the national territory, with the thought that where the country had no national limits or had national limits which were higher than the Codex limits in respect of the pesticide and product concerned, there should not, in principle, be any difficulty, and with the thought that where the country had a lower national limit, favourable consideration be given to notifying "Limited Acceptance".

CMEA Standards

30. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/4(a) containing a progress report on the comparative analysis of Codex standards and CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) standards, which had been prepared by Hungary. The progress report gave some details of the importance which the CMEA attaches to the task of harmonizing standards. The report related to 96 Codex standards. Hungary had received considerable help, in carrying out this task, through the CMEA directives for standardization which declare that provisions shall comply with international requirements. Another factor which facilitated this task was the fact that Hungary had the advantage of hosting the Secretariat of ISO/TC 34. The report pointed out that in many cases the comparative analysis had proved to be difficult because of the differences in structure and format between Codex and CMEA standards.

31. A brief summary of the comparative analysis carried out by Hungary was given in Appendix I to document CX/EXEC 84/31/4(a). The progress report pointed out that the harmonization process was expected to begin during 1984 and that when the harmonization process had been completed a document would be presented to the Standing Committee on Food Industry of the CMEA. The progress report concluded by stressing the fact that the attention of interested organizations had been drawn to the trading and economic advantages of harmonization of food standards, and that Hungary was strongly urging that, wherever possible, Codex standards be taken as a starting basis for CMEA standardization or standardization at the national level.

EEC Directives

32. The Executive Committee also had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/4(b) containing a progress report on the comparative analysis of Codex standards and EEC Directives. The progress report referred to ongoing discussions between the Codex Secretariat and officials of the EEC concerning ways and means of expediting acceptances of Codex standards by the Member States of the EEC. It had been agreed jointly that it would be desirable to engage a consultant to make a comparative study of the EEC Directives and the corresponding Codex food standards and maximum limits for pesticide residues.

33. It had proved possible to engage the services of a consultant familiar with both the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and that of the EEC on food standards and related matters. The terms of reference given to the consultant for the review were as follows:

- (i) Undertake a comparative review of EEC Directives and Draft Directives with the corresponding Codex Standards, indicating common aspects and differences, and suggest appropriate type of EEC acceptance.
- (ii) Suggest which Codex Standards for products not covered by EEC Directives might be suitable for EEC to accept, accept with deviations or permit for free circulation within the Community provided the products from third party countries conform with Codex Standards and any appropriate EEC requirements.
- (iii) Review EEC pesticides and Codex MRLs and design suitable forms for EEC acceptance for pesticides included in EEC Directives.
- (iv) Provide an opinion on the significance of "Cassis de Dijon" ruling and other relevant EEC legal decisions vis-à-vis acceptance of Codex Standards by Members of EEC.

34. Following preliminary discussion between the Chief of the FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and senior officials of the European Commission arrangements had been made for the consultant to make a number of visits to EEC Headquarters, Brussels and to have full access to the necessary documentation for the review. Similarly, interim discussions and consultations had been held with the consultant at FAO Headquarters, Rome. Currently the consultant's draft review was being finalized.

35. The review had covered the following broad topics, namely, the nature of international and national food standards; constitutional and legal matters; workloads and priorities; the significance of the 'Cassis de Dijon' ruling; issues concerning name and description in standards; progress in the European Community on food standards; a comparison of EEC Directives and corresponding Codex standards; a review of Codex standards and volumes of the Codex Alimentarius not covered specifically by Community legislation; a discussion of harmonization and suggested lines of action concerning acceptances, and a number of conclusions and recommendations for joint examination by officials of the European Community and the Codex Secretariat.

36. In addition to the foregoing narrative section of the review there would be six detailed annexes accompanying the review. The annexes would comprise the following:

- I. A synoptic comparison of Codex standards with Community rules (a presentation in tabular form).
- II. A narrative comparison of Codex standards with EEC Directives and suggested forms of EEC acceptance in accordance with the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius.
- III. A narrative and tabular comparison of Codex pesticide maximum residue limits and Community pesticide limits and recommendations.
- IV. Information on the significance of the 'Cassis de Dijon' ruling and other relevant legal EEC decisions vis-à-vis acceptance of Codex standards by member states of the EEC.
- V. A proposed Model Acceptance.
- VI. Guidelines for Acceptance.

37. The Secretariat stated that it was hopeful that the review would provide a practical basis for a joint examination by officials of the EEC and members of the Codex Secretariat to make proposals to EEC Member States to facilitate progress in the acceptance of Codex recommendations by the EEC. It was further hoped that the Commission of the European Economic Community would be in a position to provide the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 16th Session with a detailed report or statement on action taken or measures envisaged to facilitate and accelerate acceptances of Codex Standards, or where formal acceptance could not be given, action or measures envisaged to enable entry into the EEC of products in conformity with Codex standards.

38. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee of instances where compliance with Codex standards had been inserted in commercial contracts by importing countries, even though the importing countries concerned were not known to have accepted the standards. The Secretariat concluded by describing the various actions which had been taken in order to promote more acceptances, including insertion of consideration of this subject on the agenda of all relevant Codex Committees, and the writing of letters to specific persons in the various member countries who might be expected to be able to assist in securing a favourable response.

39. The Representative of the Region of Latin America informed the Executive Committee of the additional information on the subject of acceptances which had been made available by Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela to the Third Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America, held in Havana, Cuba from 27 March to 2 April 1984. In response to an enquiry from the Secretariat concerning the position of Argentina with regard to the Codex Standard for Canned Corned Beef, the Representative of the Region of Latin America, speaking on behalf of Argentina, indicated that Argentina had given Full Acceptance to the standard.

40. The Coordinator for Europe, speaking on behalf of Switzerland, informed the Executive Committee of developments in Switzerland, as regards the question of Codex standards and maximum limits for pesticide residues. He stated that some countries had a long established legal tradition in the structure of their food legislation and

that this could be modified only with great difficulty. He informed the Committee of new legislation being proposed in Switzerland concerning maximum limits for pesticide residues.

41. Turning to the Coordinating Committee for Europe, the Coordinator for Europe informed the Executive Committee of a pilot study which that Committee had decided to embark upon in the hope of promoting more acceptances in the European region. The Coordinating Committee for Europe had agreed that countries in the region should be asked to study three Codex standards (Cooked Cured Ham, Canned Tropical Fruit Salad and Edible Arachis Oil) and report back to the next session of the Coordinating Committee on any difficulties they had in accepting these standards. He added that the Coordinating Committee for Europe was particularly appreciative of the excellent work which had been done in Hungary on the comparison of the Codex standards with the CMEA standards. Likewise the Coordinating Committee for Europe was appreciative of the willingness shown and action taken by the EEC representatives in the exercise of comparing EEC Directives with Codex standards and other related matters.

42. Dr. A.A.M. Hasan (Vice-Chairman) stressed the importance of the importing countries accepting the Codex standards and maximum limits for pesticide residues, as otherwise developing countries, many of which were food exporters, had to face many different national standards. Another problem was that developing countries which were importers did not have adequate facilities for checking for compliance with the standards. He thought that these were problems which should be discussed further under the item dealing with the future direction of the work of the CAC.

43. The Representative of the Region of Europe referred to activities within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) concerning the bringing of CMEA standards into conformity with Codex standards as much as possible. There had been a recommendation to member countries of the CMEA to accept Codex standards. The Representative of the Region of Europe stated that further information on developments in CMEA would be sent to the Secretariat.

44. The Representative of the Region of the South West Pacific stated that in that region some of the difficulties which had been mentioned by the Coordinator for Europe were present also. He expressed the view that it was important for member countries to stress the importance of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme in the governing councils of the parent organizations. He thought, on the basis of the written progress report by the Secretariat and on the basis of other developments, including various important activities under way, that real progress was being made.

45. The Representative of the Region of North America stressed the need to emphasize the utility of Codex standards and codes of practice in the processing and trading community. He described recent initiatives taken by the Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology (CIFST) and the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) at their 1984 annual meetings. The CIFST focussed on the Canadian Government's application of the Codex Codes of Practice on Food Hygiene in establishing good manufacturing practices. The IFT meeting dealt with the value of Codex texts in reducing non-tariff barriers in food trade.

46. The Executive Committee agreed that there had been some real progress in persuading member countries to formally accept or otherwise implement the Codex standards and maximum limits for pesticide residues. In particular the Executive Committee noted that there had been some "hidden acceptances", through the insertion of compliance with Codex standards in commercial contracts. Also developments for inducing a greater degree of favourable response to Codex recommendations on the part of the EEC and the CMEA seemed to the Executive Committee to have great potential and to be very promising. The Executive Committee wished to express its appreciation of the excellent paper which had been prepared by Hungary, and looked forward to a further report on developments in due course. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction that a very comprehensive paper had been prepared by a consultant which would form the basis for discussions between the EEC and Codex secretariats. The Executive Committee hoped that the EEC would be in a position to make a favourable response at the next session of the CAC.

47. On the question of problems affecting developing countries, the Executive Committee agreed that there was a need for strengthening food control and enforcement systems in developing countries. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to maintain its "drive" on acceptances and to see what could be done to obtain more information concerning use of Codex standards even though not formally accepted.

REPORT ON THE POSSIBLE USE OF A CODEX LOGO OR STATEMENTS ON LABELS INDICATING CONFORMITY WITH CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 9)

48. Mr. Gutteridge, former Legal Counsel of WHO and the author of a study on the agenda item, introduced the item. He referred to the origin of the study, mentioning the need to make further progress in obtaining acceptances of Codex Standards in one or more of the forms contained in the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius. He also mentioned the discussions of the WHO Executive Board in January 1982, when the view was expressed that there was a relationship between the furtherance of the acceptance of Codex Standards and the goal of Health for All by the Year 2000. It had been pointed out that the promotion of a safe food supply and proper nutrition was an essential element of primary health care, and one found allusions to this subject in the WHO series of published papers on Health for All.

49. One of the ways envisaged to attain this aim was the possible introduction on labels of a Codex mark or "logo". This same question had been considered by the Codex governing bodies between ten and twelve years ago, and both the Commission and the Executive Committee had not been in favour of introducing such a measure. The position remained largely valid today. In particular,

- (a) the WHO and FAO names and emblems should not be used or incorporated into any mark or used on labels. Experience had indicated that this would probably lead to abuse;
- (b) the practical difficulties inherent in the use of a mark of conformity in general were such that it remained extremely doubtful if this would be a practical proposition today, even on a limited basis, as it would be difficult to withdraw a mark once introduced.

50. Turning to the more general question of certification as such, Mr. Gutteridge stated that it was alluded to in the Programme in the context of the Codex Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food, where it was recommended in several places that governments of all countries should provide certification and inspection systems. In the light of the interest of a number of organizations and agencies, including GATT (International Trade Centre), the UNECE and the ISO itself in this subject, he thought that perhaps the Codex Programme should itself consider taking some initiatives in this direction, since certification did not of itself require the parallel creation of marks of conformity, though this would not necessarily be excluded at some future time if thought desirable. He thought that perhaps the Codex Alimentarius Programme might envisage further studies with a view to attempting some encouragement of harmonization of the certification process - possibly the introduction of step by step procedures for a more structured approach by the Programme.

51. After an exchange of views and having noted the Commission's decisions at an earlier session when this subject had been discussed, the Executive Committee decided to request the Secretariat to issue a circular letter to governments asking them whether they thought there was a need for a certification system, whether such a system should be an international one or a national one and what matters should be covered in the certificates to be issued.

REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
1982/83 AND 1984/85 (Agenda Item 5)

52. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/5. The attention of the Executive Committee was drawn to the explanations given in the document for the differences between the amounts budgeted for and the amounts actually spent on the various items of the budget of the Programme for 1982/83. It was noted that, in the overall, expenditure in 1982/83 had slightly exceeded the budget (by 1.2%), but that the over-expenditure was expected to be absorbed in 1984/85. The Secretariat referred to the FAO Publications Pool Account, under which debits or credits (depending on the outturn of the overall FAO expenditure on translation and printing) were, after the closure of the accounts, passed on to the various users in FAO, including Codex. The Executive Committee was informed that this system would no longer apply to the Codex budget. This change would have the advantage of enabling the Secretariat to control expenditure on translation and printing without having to allow for unforeseen elements.

53. As regards the budget for 1984/85, the Secretariat indicated that the budget had been maintained at a level corresponding in real terms to that for the 1982/83 biennium. The Secretariat further indicated that it was expected that the approved budget for 1984/85 would enable the Commission's planned programme of work to be fully implemented.

54. The Executive Committee noted that the budget for 1984/85 had been drawn up on the basis of an exchange rate of 1615 Italian lire to 1 US dollar. This rate had been established by the FAO Conference in November 1983. The budgetary estimates for 1984/85, which had been placed before the 1983 FAO Conference, had been drawn up on the basis of a lira/dollar exchange rate of Lit 1190 = 1 dollar. In view of the continued strengthening of the US dollar in relation to the Italian lira from the time when cost increases for 1984/85 had been calculated on the basis of an exchange rate of Lit. 1190 to the dollar, the FAO Conference in November 1983 established the exchange rate at Lit. 1615 to the dollar. This resulted in cost increases for 1984/85 being much less than had been expected in the original budgetary estimates for 1984/85.

55. In response to a query from the Coordinator for Europe, the Secretariat stated that it did not expect to see any reduction in expenditure on publications in the current 1984/85 biennium, but thought that expenditure could be reduced when all the volumes of the Codex Alimentarius had been published in the three languages of the Commission (English, French and Spanish), assuming, of course, that member countries did not ask for more publications.

56. Dr. E.R. Méndez (Vice-Chairman), stressed the need to find funds to help increase the attendance of representatives of developing countries at Codex sessions. He referred to the financial assistance which had been made available by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to attend a Workshop in Havana immediately before the Third session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America. This had had the effect of helping to increase attendance at the Coordinating Committee session. He urged that similar arrangements be made in connection with the next session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America, but added that he thought financial help should be sought to improve attendance of developing countries in general at Codex sessions. Dr. Méndez was strongly supported by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Representative of the Region of Latin America.

57. The Coordinator for Latin America stated that working by correspondence was not enough to enable Coordinators to be effective in their regions. A fund should be established to help finance the work of the Coordinators in their visits to the various countries of their regions. This would promote Codex work in the regions.

58. The Representative of the Region of Asia thought efforts should be made to increase the overall budget of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, so that financial assistance could be made available to developing countries from the increased resources. In this connection the Secretariat referred to the financial constraints placed on both parent organizations by Member States, and added that for

many years now the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, like many others, had for budgetary purposes been operating on the zero growth principle.

59. The Executive Committee was informed by the Secretariat that there were no funds available in the Codex budget to provide financial assistance to Coordinators or to help Member States send representatives to Codex meetings. In fact under Rule XI.4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the cost of attendance at Codex meetings had to be borne by the governments of the countries concerned. Mr. A.M. Imbruglia, Chief Budget Officer, WHO, stated that while travel expenses were basically the responsibility of the governments concerned, if circumstances warranted it and in order to assure participation of developing countries at Codex sessions, WHO would be prepared to give consideration to the possibility of providing limited funds for this purpose. He added that such action would, if taken be on an ad hoc basis.

60. In view of the need to improve attendance by developing countries at Codex Committee sessions, the Executive Committee on the suggestion of the Representative of the Region of North America, requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility of funding for the above purpose by other bodies. In this connection, the Executive Committee noted with satisfaction and appreciation the fact that PAHO had been able to provide funds for a workshop which, in turn, had increased attendance at a Codex Committee session.

61. The Representative of the Region of Latin America expressed concern at the fact that in a number of Codex Committees Spanish language facilities had not yet been provided. He stressed the particular importance of providing for Spanish language facilities in the Codex Committee on Food Additives. The Executive Committee agreed on the importance of providing Spanish language facilities in all Codex General Subject Committees, including, in particular, the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

62. The Coordinator for Asia referred to the offer of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins to provide advice and guidance on the technology of vegetable protein production from indigenous material. He wondered whether a workshop on vegetable proteins could be arranged by the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins and whether financial assistance to enable representatives of developing countries to attend the workshop could be provided. He suggested that perhaps the ASEAN group of countries, in particular Australia, might be able to provide financial assistance towards the holding of such a workshop in the ASEAN region. The Members of the Executive Committee took note of the above suggestions of the Coordinator for Asia.

PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD VIS-A-VIS THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MARKETING OF BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES (Agenda Item 6)

63. The Executive Committee was reminded that the CAC, at its 15th session in 1983, had decided to defer the final decision on the amendment of the Code of Ethics to its 16th session in 1985. The Commission had asked governments to submit written statements regarding their position and had invited Regional Coordinating Committees to discuss the issue during their forthcoming sessions.

64. The Executive Committee was informed that since the time of the 15th session of the CAC, July 1983, no further written statements from governments on this topic had been received by the Secretariat. However, all four Regional Coordinating Committees had met since the 15th session of the CAC and all four Coordinating Committees had discussions on it.

65. The Coordinating Committee for Africa, at its 6th session in Kenya, had felt that it had not had sufficient time to study the relevant documentation concerning the proposal to amend the Code of Ethics and had, therefore, decided to defer the matter to its next session, which was expected to be held prior to the 16th session of the CAC.

66. The Coordinating Committee for Asia, at its 4th session in Thailand, had agreed that the amendment of the Code of Ethics should read as follows:

(i) Preamble:

"(g) The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes sets forth principles for the protection and promotion of breast-milk feeding, which is an important aspect of primary health care."

(ii) "5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the CAC".

(iii) Paragraph 5.10(b):

"(b) Information concerning the nutritional value of food should not mislead the public".

With this decision, the Asian Committee had followed the proposal made by the Executive Committee at its 30th session to the 15th session of the CAC.

67. The Coordinating Committee for Europe, at its 14th session in Switzerland, had also discussed at length the proposed amendment to the Codex Code of Ethics. There had been unanimity on the text of the preambular paragraph as proposed by the Executive Committee which reads "(g) The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes sets forth principles for the protection and promotion of breastmilk feeding, which is an important aspect of primary health care". In discussing para 5.9 the delegations had favoured the following proposed text, "5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the CAC. No claims in any form should be permitted that would directly or indirectly encourage a mother not to breastfeed her child, or imply that breastmilk substitutes are superior to breastmilk".

68. It was also unanimously agreed that paragraph 5.10 (b) should read as follows: "(b) Information concerning the nutritional value of food should not mislead the public".

69. Finally the Coordinating Committee for Latin America, at its 3rd session in Cuba, had also discussed the topic of amendment of the Code of Ethics. The majority of the delegations present had favoured the proposal made by the Executive Committee at its 30th session, as produced in para 66 of this report. Two delegations, on the other hand, had made the point that they felt it useful to maintain in the Code of Ethics a recommendation prohibiting advertising.

70. In discussing this topic, the Executive Committee took note of the fact that the countries present at the 14th session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe as well as 2 countries present at the 3rd session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America had indicated a preference for an amendment which would introduce in the Code of Ethics a recommendation prohibiting advertising that might encourage mothers not to breastfeed their children. Since this was however already clearly stated in the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, the Executive Committee felt a need to reaffirm its position expressed during its 30th session, namely that there was no need for such repetition and that in the interest of international harmonization, the shortest possible version was to be favoured. It therefore requested the Secretariat to send out a circular letter to all Member States of the CAC, inviting them to submit their position in writing but also to inform them of the position taken by the Executive Committee.

SUMMARY REPORT OF WHO EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON FOOD INSPECTION (EURO) (Agenda Item 7)

71. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/7 and was informed that a WHO European Regional Office Working Group on Food Inspection had met in Copenhagen, 21-25 November 1983. In presenting the Summary Report, the Secretariat outlined the purpose of the Working Group, which was to discuss food inspection with a view to producing suggestions for the better use of available resources and improved food inspection systems. The Working Group had arrived at a number of conclusions and recommendations including:

- that while there were occasions when microbiological specifications for end products could serve a purpose, there was much wasteful expenditure of resources on end product testing. Such specifications should preferably be in the form of guidelines rather than legal requirements. They should also be in accordance with the principles established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- the need for wider application of the "hazard analysis critical control point" (HACCP) system, being a cost effective means of ensuring the production of safe food;
- that food importers should be encouraged to require their suppliers to adopt the HACCP system. In accordance with the principles of the CAC, foods imported into a country should be treated no less favourably by the inspection services than those of national origin. The inspection of imported food should not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade;
- that the main emphasis in food inspection should be on advice and education rather than on punitive sanctions;
- the importance of education of food handlers as well as of the consumer in food hygiene;
- the need to improve coordination of food inspection services both within and between countries;
- the need to raise the level of training for food inspectors in some countries.

72. The Executive Committee was informed that the Summary Report had also been considered at the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe, at its Fourteenth Session held in Thun, Switzerland from 4 - 8 June 1984, which had requested that the report when published, be distributed to all National Codex Contact Points in Europe.

73. During the ensuing discussion on the report, it was explained that the full report would be published later this year. While the report was directed towards the European situation, it could be useful in situations in other regions.

74. The Executive Committee took note of the Summary Report.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO REVISE THE CODES OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS CONCEPT (HACCP)
(Agenda Item 8)

75. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/6. In introducing this subject the Secretariat reminded the Executive Committee that food may be subject to certain hazards (e.g. contamination with microorganisms, multiplication of harmful or potentially harmful microorganisms, contamination with various chemicals, etc.) during its production, processing, distribution and preparation, which may result in a deterioration of its quality (including safety) so that in the extreme case the food may not anymore be fit for human consumption. To minimize the risk was, inter alia, the function of food control. The most efficient control was the one which achieved the required goal at the smallest cost. Recent developments (starting in the early 70s) had led to the concept of HACCP as a desirable alternative to more traditional control options. It could be applied at a better cost/benefit ratio than the more traditional control options, since it was based on a more systematic and logical approach to the avoidance of food hazards.

76. The HACCP concept consisted of:

- (i) An assessment of hazards associated with production, processing, distribution and preparation of a given food;

- (ii) Determination of the critical points at which to control any identified hazard(s); and
- (iii) Establishment of procedures to monitor critical control points.

77. The Executive Committee was informed that several international meetings concerned with food safety had in recent years emphasized the need to introduce the HACCP concept in routine food control, in order to maximize food safety, and to minimize food spoilage and costs for food control.

78. The attention of the Executive Committee was also drawn to the Recommended International Codes of Hygienic Practice, which the Codex Alimentarius Commission had started to publish in 1969. Many of these Codes still followed the more traditional control concept and did not yet emphasize the HACCP concept.

79. More recently, on the other hand, codes such as the Code of Hygienic Practice for Low Acid and Acidified Low Acid Canned Foods had been elaborated along the HACCP lines. Also, the Code of Hygienic Practice for Processed Meat Products was being revised and the HACCP concept was being introduced. The experience from this exercise indicated a strong need to also review, and possibly revise, the other Codes of Hygienic Practice, to bring them into line with the modern HACCP concept. This seemed to be especially important with regard to the needs of developing countries, which found it increasingly difficult to employ their limited resources for food control in a less systematic way with a rather poor cost/benefit ratio. This view was also shared by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene which had discussed the HACCP concept at its 19th Session.

80. During its discussion, the Executive Committee agreed with the need to review and possibly revise those Codes of Hygienic Practice which did not yet follow the HACCP concept. However, it foresaw a rather heavy workload and concluded its discussion therefore by requesting the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene to examine the problem and to report to the CAC how the work could be accomplished.

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR A JOINT FAO/WHO EXPERT CONSULTATION ON RESIDUES OF VETERINARY DRUGS IN FOOD (Agenda Item 10)

81. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC/84/31/8. It was reminded of the decision taken by the 15th session of the CAC to examine, by means of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation, the question of residues in foods of various chemicals arising from their use in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine (see ALINORM 83/43, paras 156-162). The Executive Committee was now informed that the preparations for such an Expert Consultation were well under way. A preliminary intersecretariat discussion had been held in January 1984 during which the following details concerning the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation had been decided:

1. Time and venue (29 October - 5 November 1984, Rome)
2. Terms of reference:
 - (i) to examine the problems associated with residues in foods arising from the use of veterinary drugs in food-producing animals;
 - (ii) to advise the Codex Alimentarius Commission on how to consider these problems;
 - (iii) to examine the ways and means of regulatory control;
 - (iv) to suggest priorities for substances to be considered
3. Provisional Agenda
 - (i) Opening

- (ii) Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and appointment of Rapporteur
- (iii) Terms of Reference of the Consultation
- (iv) Current use of veterinary drugs
- (v) Health aspects of veterinary drug residues
- (vi) The safety evaluation of residues of veterinary drugs in foods
- (vii) Regulatory schemes for the control of residues
- (viii) Methods of analysis and detection
- (ix) International approach to the safety evaluation and control of veterinary drug residues
- (x) Priorities for action
- (xi) Recommendations and conclusions.

4. Definition of term "Veterinary Drug"

Tentative definition: "Veterinary drug" means any substance applied or administered orally or parenterally to any food-producing animal such as meat- or milk-producing animals, poultry, fish or bees, whether for therapeutic, prophylactic or diagnostic purposes or for the modification of physiological functions or behaviour.

5. Draft list of experts and temporary advisers to be invited.

82. Replying to questions regarding the selection of experts attending this consultation, the Secretariat explained that the appropriate rules of the two Organizations (FAO and WHO) had to be followed. This guaranteed geographical distribution as much as possible and the independence of the experts concerned. The Executive Committee recommended that the Member States which had shown a particular interest in this topic by tentatively offering at the 15th Session of the Commission to host a Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs, should there be a need for its establishment (Australia and Federal Republic of Germany), should be invited to be represented in an observer capacity, it being understood that it would be a matter for them to bear the expenses involved.

83. The Representative of the Region of Latin America, speaking on behalf of the Republic of Argentina, informed the Executive Committee that he would take the necessary steps to ensure the participation of the scientist from Argentina who had been invited to the Expert Consultation by the two Organizations, FAO and WHO, to attend in her personal capacity.

84. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction that the preparations for the Expert Consultation were well under way and re-stated its great interest in the topic of residues of veterinary drugs in food. The Report of this consultation would be awaited with great interest.

DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE DRAFT INTERNATIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ANTE-MORTEM AND POST-MORTEM JUDGEMENT OF SLAUGHTER ANIMALS AND MEAT (Agenda Item 11)

85. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/10 and CX/EXEC 84/31/10 Addendum. In introducing this topic the Secretariat traced the history of the above Code.

86. The first draft of the above Code had been prepared by an FAO/WHO Working Group which had met in 1977 and 1979. The draft had been circulated to Codex Member

Countries in 1980. The written comments received had been taken into account when the proposed draft Code was examined as a Step 2 document at the Fourth Session of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene (CCMH), (London, 18-22 May 1981). After detailed examination and considerable amendment, it had been advanced to Step 3 of the Procedure.

87. At the Fifth Session of the CCMH (London, 11-15 October 1982), some 45 countries and international organizations had contributed in writing and/or verbally to further consideration and amendment of the Code. The CCMH, recognizing that a large measure of agreement had been reached, decided to refer the Code to the Commission at Step 5, to recommend adoption at Step 8, with omission of Steps 6 and 7. At the same session the CCMH had also recommended adoption of the Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Game at Step 8, and having thus completed its current programme of work, had decided to recommend to the Commission that it should adjourn sine die.

88. At its Fifteenth Session (Rome, 4-15 July 1983), the Commission adopted the Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Game at Step 8. The "Judgement Code", however, was not adopted at Step 8, partly because Appendix III, which contained a list of residues found in meat and recommendations on how to deal with them was deleted, and partly because delegations made comments on the public health/animal health aspects of the Code and thought that further written comments were required. The Commission, therefore, decided to advance the Code to Step 6 of the Procedure and to invite written comments on the public health/animal health aspects of the Code. The views of governments would be collected and analysed by the FAO/WHO Secretariat and placed before the Executive Committee so that it could be decided as a policy matter whether there was justification for re-examining the Code. The "Judgement Code" was therefore circulated at Step 6 with a Circular Letter (CL 1984/4 January 1984) requesting such comments.

89. Document CX/EXEC 84/31/10 and Addendum contained summaries of the written comments supplied by Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the International Office of Epizootics (OIE). Ireland had stated that its comments would be communicated by the EEC.

90. Concerning the above comments, the Secretariat indicated that it appeared that only Brazil and Thailand and the EEC wished to see a number of important changes in the Code. In the case of Brazil and Thailand, they both supported a proposal to amend Section 3.4.1 which had been put forward by the delegation of Uruguay at the Fifth Session of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene and which had been reproduced in Appendix III to the Report of the Committee's Session. The Committee, however, had decided to retain the original text of 3.4.1. The issue had been raised again at the Fifteenth Session of the Commission, but the Commission did not alter the position taken by the Committee (ALINORM 83/43). The view of the EEC and the OIE that the recommendations of the Codex should limit themselves to aspects concerning the protection of human health and avoid all reference to non-zoonotic epizootics that are capable of being transmitted by meat, had been made known to and discussed by the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene at its 5th Session and by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 15th Session.

91. The Executive Committee was informed that more recently comments had also been received from Cuba and the Philippines which were partly substantive and partly editorial. There was in particular a proposal from the Philippines to include avian species in the Code. The Executive Committee noted that, in the opinion of the Secretariat, the characteristics of avian species were so different from the animal species covered in the scope of the "Judgement Code" that they would be more appropriately dealt with in a separate code.

92. The Executive Committee was informed that most of the comments were of a constructive editorial nature. There was also a considerable number of governments which expressed the opinion that the high degree of international consensus already achieved was unlikely to be improved upon by further discussion and that the Code had reached the stage of being ready for general adoption.

93. The Executive Committee noted that if another meeting of the CCMH were to be arranged it would be mainly for the purpose of re-discussing the Uruguayan proposal and the point of view of the EEC. The Executive Committee saw no reason to think that the issues concerned, which had already been fully debated, would be likely to be resolved by another session of the CCMH. The Executive Committee decided, therefore, that the best course of action was to put the Code, editorially revised to take account of constructive editorial points made in the comments, before the next session of the Commission at Step 8. It would of course be open to any member country and interested international organization to make Step 8 comments on the revised text.

PROPOSED CONSULTANCY ON PACKAGING MATERIALS FOR FOODS (Agenda Item 12)

94. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/11, in which it was recalled that the Commission, at its 15th Session, had agreed that a consultant should be engaged to prepare a report on packaging materials for foods, for consideration by the Commission at its 16th Session in July 1985. The report should review the legislative position of the different countries; health concerns; work already being done; feasibility of Codex activities in this area; and recommendations as to appropriate action, including what work should be undertaken and by whom (paras 534-539 of the Report of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission - ALINORM 83/43).

95. Document CX/EXEC 84/31/11 pointed out that the Codex Committee on Food Additives had recently started to look into the subject of the migration of chemicals into foods from packaging materials. In this connection, an extract from the Report of the 17th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives had been attached to document CX/EXEC 84/31/11 as Appendix I. The document pointed out that consideration of this topic by the Codex Committee on Food Additives was independent of the wish which had been expressed by the Commission at its 15th Session that a consultant should be engaged to review the subject in general.

96. The ad hoc Working Group on Priorities for Food Additives established by the Codex Committee on Food Additives, had been informed of the decision of the Commission at its 15th Session and expressed views, including suggestions as to terms of reference for the consultant, which were reproduced as Appendix II to CX/EXEC 84/31/11.

97. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that preliminary steps had already been taken to engage a consultant. The terms of reference which had been suggested by the Codex Committee on Food Additives were as follows:

- "(i) survey of plastic packaging materials and other packaging materials including rigid laminates, soft film wraps (saran wrap) etc.
- (ii) identification of health and trade problems due to packaging materials;
- (iii) study of package integrity of flexible packages in terms of microbiological safety;
- (iv) review of existing national and international legislation and
- (v) recommendations for action at international level for abatement of trade problems if any and for evaluation of risk due to packaging materials".

98. The Codex Committee on Food Additives had decided to refer the proposed terms of reference to the Executive Committee for any views it might have on them.

99. The Executive Committee agreed to accept the terms of reference described above, noting that the consultant would need to have a very wide expertise to cover the extremely broad terms of reference. With regard to (iii) of the terms of reference, Dr. Ms. A. Brincker (Vice Chairman) expressed the opinion that microbiological safety

appeared to be a matter for the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene rather than the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

100. The Executive Committee noted that the consultant would review related work done in other organizations including the Council of Europe and the European Economic Community.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING FOOD IRRADIATION (Agenda Item 13)

101. The Executive Committee was informed that the Directors-General of FAO, IAEA and WHO had sent a joint circular letter on 21 June 1983 to their respective Member States, proposing the establishment of an International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation. The functions of this Consultative Group would be to: (i) evaluate global developments in the field of food irradiation; (ii) provide a focal point of advice on the application of food irradiation to Member States and the Organizations, and (iii) furnish information as required, through the Organizations, to the CAC.

102. The Consultative Group had become operational in May 1984 after receipt by the Organizations of the 15th letter of acceptance. The initial members of this Group are: Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Hungary, Iraq, Israel, The Netherlands, Mexico, Philippines, Syria, Thailand and Turkey. Interest in participation had also been shown by Costa Rica, Finland, Malawi and Portugal and several other Member States are expected to join the Group in the near future.

103. The secretariat services for the Consultative Group would be provided by the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Isotope and Radiation Applications of Atomic Energy for Food and Agricultural Development, while WHO's contribution to the Group would be more on a morally-supportive basis, i.e. reassuring Member States that WHO sees food irradiation as a process which has the potential to increase a safe food supply and thus to contribute to Primary Health Care.

104. The Executive Committee was also informed that WHO was planning to issue a publication on food irradiation. While the exact scope of this publication still needed to be decided, it would be a continuation of the last report of a Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food (WHO TRS 659), describing the pros and cons of different food preservation and decontamination technologies, including irradiation.

105. The Executive Committee took note of these recent developments.

1983/84 SESSIONS OF COORDINATING COMMITTEES - REPORTS (Agenda Item 14)

106. The Executive Committee was informed by the Secretariat of the salient points arising from the Report of the 6th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa (Nairobi, Kenya, 31 October to 5 November 1983). Professor A. Bhumiratana, Coordinator for Asia, reported on the 4th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia (Petchburi, Thailand, 28 February to 5 March 1984), Dr. P. Rossier, Coordinator for Europe, reported on the 14th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe (Thun, Switzerland, 4 to 8 June 1984) and Minister/President Darias Rodés, Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, reported on the 3rd Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America (Havana, Cuba, 27 March to 2 April 1984).

107. With regard to the Coordinating Committee for Europe, the Executive Committee was informed that the Swiss delegation at that session had raised the question of whether a world-wide standard could be converted into a regional standard, and, in particular, whether the standard for White Chocolate/Cocoa Butter Confectionery could be converted to a European Standard.

108. The Executive Committee noted that although the matter had been discussed there had been no agreement on it within the Coordinating Committee. The Executive Committee decided no action was required of it at the present time.

109. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the reports of the Coordinating Committees and expressed its appreciation of the efforts made in carrying out the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

CONSIDERATION OF VIEWS OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES FOR AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA ON NEED TO DEVELOP CODEX STANDARDS FOR TROPICAL FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (Agenda Item 15)

110. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/12. The document recalled that the question of whether the Commission should embark upon the development of Codex standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables had been considered by the Commission at its 15th Session in July 1983 in the light of a paper (ALINORM 83/7) prepared by a consultant. The paper had taken into account replies by 20 countries to a questionnaire on the subject which had been issued to all Codex Contact Points in July 1982 (CL 1982/26). The Commission's conclusions were contained in paragraph 94 of the Report of its 15th Session (ALINORM 83/43), which read as follows:

"94. In view of the divergence of opinion on this subject, and of the fact that most delegations were of the opinion that the time was not yet ripe to reach a decision on this matter, the Commission agreed that it would not take a decision on this matter at this time. The Commission agreed that this matter should be taken up by the Coordinating Committees and that the Secretariat should send out another circular letter with a view to obtaining more responses. The Commission agreed to discuss this matter at its next Session (see also paragraph 544)."

111. The Secretariat had issued a further Circular Letter in January 1984 (CL 1984/11). Only three further countries have replied. Two of them (Ireland and Switzerland) were in favour of the development of Codex standards for these products and the other (Poland) was opposed.

112. Document CX/EXEC 84/31/12 contained the relevant extracts from the Reports of the Sixth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa (ALINORM 85/28, paras 153-159), the Fourth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (ALINORM 85/15, paras. 116-127) and the Third Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America (ALINORM 85/36, paras 135-142).

113. The Executive Committee noted from the above extracts that the Coordinating Committee for Africa did have an exchange of views on this topic, but that it had decided to reserve its decision on the question of whether it was desirable for the Commission to develop Codex standards for these commodities until its next session, expected to be held in February 1985. The Coordinating Committee for Asia had decided that Codex Standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables were not needed for various reasons given in the Report of the Committee's session. The Coordinating Committee for Latin America had, for reasons given in the Report of the session, favoured the development of Codex standards for these products.

114. The Executive Committee was informed that the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe at its 14th Session held in Thun, Switzerland, from 4 to 8 June 1984, saw no need at this time for the establishment of international standards for these products. The Coordinating Committee for Europe had noted that both the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) had already initiated action in the preparation of European standards for certain exotic fresh fruits, and recommended, therefore, that no further action be taken until that work had been completed, at which time the Commission should review the results.

115. Dr. E.R. Méndez (Vice Chairman), speaking on behalf of Mexico, stated that if the Codex Alimentarius Commission decided to embark upon the development of international Codex standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables, the Government of Mexico would be pleased to host such a Committee. The Executive Committee expressed appreciation and thanks for this generous offer of the Government of Mexico.

116. The Executive Committee, noting that the Coordinating Committee for Africa had yet to take a decision on this matter and also noting the lack of consensus as between the Coordinating Committees for Asia, Europe and Latin America, decided that it would be inappropriate for it to make a recommendation on the matter at this time. The Executive Committee agreed to review the matter at its next session.

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER THERE IS TOO MUCH DETAIL, IN CERTAIN CODEX STANDARDS AND WHETHER SOME PARTS OF THESE COULD BE MADE OPTIONAL (Agenda Item 16)

117. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/15. The document outlined the background to this question and traced developments in the various Codex Committees which had been concerned with it. The topic had been first raised in the Coordinating Committee for Asia, at its Second Session, held in Manila, in March 1979, and had subsequently been discussed at the following Codex sessions:

- (i) Sixth Session of Codex Committee on General Principles, Paris, October 1979 (ALINORM 79/35, paras. 34-40)
- (ii) Thirteenth Session of the Commission, Rome, December 1979 (ALINORM 79/38, paras 272-282)
- (iii) Seventh Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles, Paris April 1981 (ALINORM 81/83, paras 11-23)
- (iv) Fourteenth Session of the Commission, Geneva, July 1981 (ALINORM 81/39, para. 166)
- (v) Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, Colombo, February 1982 (ALINORM 83/15, paras. 16-18)
- (vi) Fifteenth Session of the Commission, Rome, July 1983, (ALINORM 83/43, paras. 219-226)
- (vii) Seventeenth Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, Washington DC 13-17 February 1984 (ALINORM 85/20, paras. 173-178)
- (viii) Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, Petchburi, Thailand, 25 February - 5 March 1984 (ALINORM 85/15, paras. 26 - 27)
- (ix) Sixteenth Session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products, Bergen, 7-11 May 1984 (ALINORM 85/18)

118. Document CX/EXEC 84/31/15 had pointed out that the Commission, at its Fourteenth Session in 1981, had agreed with the views of the Codex Committee on General Principles, which were as follows:

- "(i) It is better to consider all the relevant details and agree in an international standard on what it should be than to exclude the detail from the standard and leave it to national legislation.
- (ii) Codex Committees are the competent bodies to determine how much detail there should be in each draft standard, which can vary with the product being considered.
- (iii) The suggestion that certain parts of a standard could be mandatory and other parts optional is not accepted, and the Codex Committees should not be asked to consider this. Instead when considering how much detail there should be in the standards they are elaborating, the attention of the Codex Committees should be drawn to the importance of paying close attention to the work priorities criteria, and also to the possibility for participating countries to submit economic impact statements concerning any or all of the provisions of the standards.

- (iv) Governments should address the question of acceptance of Codex standards with a sense of urgency. Where a Government cannot accept a standard or some provisions of a standard, it should indicate what will be its attitude to products which are in conformity with the standards. The possibility of free circulation for products in conformity with the standards should be given urgent consideration."

119. The above views had not been shared by the Coordinating Committee for Asia and, therefore, the Coordinating Committee for Asia had requested the Commission to re-examine the whole question at its Fifteenth Session in July 1983 on the basis of a paper which the delegation of India had undertaken to prepare. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Session in July 1983 had concluded that the problem which had been expounded by India in document ALINORM 83/36 was a fundamental issue which needed to be considered in depth. The Commission had decided, therefore, that the matter should be re-discussed as a general issue by the Sixteenth Session of the Commission in July 1985. The Commission had also decided that the subject should be discussed by the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables and the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products. The Commission had further decided that the Executive Committee at its June 1984 session should examine this question in the light of the views of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products and in the light of a paper which the Secretariat had been asked to prepare.

120. The Executive Committee took note of the views of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables and, in particular, that Committee's recommendation that the Coordinating Committee for Asia should identify standards which, in its opinion, would benefit from optional clauses and then forward recommendations on this matter to the Secretariat for discussion at the Sixteenth Session of the Commission. The Executive Committee further noted that in response to the recommendation of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, the Coordinating Committee for Asia, at its Fourth Session, had set up a Working Group composed of India, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, as well as the observer from Australia, to identify sections of the standards for processed fruits and vegetables which might be made optional. The Report of the Working Group which had been attached as Appendix II to the Report of the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, had also been attached to CX/EXEC 84/31/15.

121. The Executive Committee was also informed of the views which had been expressed on this subject at the 16th Session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP), Bergen, 7 to 11 May 1984. The Executive Committee noted that there was general agreement, in principle, in the CCFFP to keep the standards as simple as possible and that the Committee had associated itself with the views which had been expressed by the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables. The CCFFP had also encouraged member countries to study the matter further, to identify specific problems and to bring these to the notice of the Commission. The CCFFP thought that, in this respect, particular attention could be drawn to the need to look at the level of acceptance of Codex standards by member countries.

122. The Executive Committee also had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/16 (which is a reprint of document ALINORM 83/36, which had been prepared by India) and document CX/GP 81/2 November 1980 entitled "Review of Content and Layout of the Codex Standards and the Related Questions of General Acceptability of the Standards", which had been prepared by a consultant for the Codex Committee on General Principles. The Secretariat indicated that document CX/GP 81/2 was of particular interest in that it examined the kind and amount of detail in Codex standards; pointed out that some Codex standards were more detailed than others (the standards for (i) processed fruits and vegetables, (ii) quick frozen fruits and vegetables and (iii) fish and fishery products were considered to contain the most detail); discussed the pros and cons of providing for detailed provisions in standards on matters not health related e.g. styles, varietal types, form of pack, kind of packing media (water, juice, syrup, strength of syrups), and tolerances for defects; put forward possible solutions for consideration, whilst, at the same time, also pointing out the limitations of each solution and the difficulties that some countries might see in them.

123. The Secretariat concluded its introduction of this topic by indicating to the Executive Committee that document CX/GP 81/2 had underlined that it was mainly the standards developed by the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products and the Joint UNECE/Codex Group of Experts on Standardization of Quick Frozen Foods which contained a considerable amount of detail of the kind mentioned by the Coordinating Committee for Asia and by the delegation of India in document CX/EXEC 84/31/16 (a reprint of ALINORM 83/36).

124. The Representative of the Region of Latin America expressed the view that Codex standards could not be partly mandatory and partly optional. He considered that all parts of the standard had to be mandatory, but asked the Secretariat for its views on this. The Secretariat indicated that the provisions of Codex standards are almost exclusively mandatory, but some provisions are recommendatory, such as those recommending that certain codes of hygienic practice be followed. The Secretariat stated that the question of whether some parts of standards could be optional would be a policy matter for the Commission to decide upon.

125. After an exchange of views on this topic and having noted the steps being taken to evaluate the problem and to ensure a thorough discussion of the matter at the Sixteenth Session of the Commission, on the basis of a new paper to be prepared by India, the Executive Committee decided that it would not be appropriate for it to make a recommendation to the Commission at this time.

MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS (Agenda Item 17(a))

126. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/13. The document recalled that, at the Fifteenth Session of the Commission, the Chairman of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils had indicated that the Committee had completed the major items of its work programme. The outstanding items of work remaining to be completed had been listed in Appendix X of the Report of the Committee's Twelfth Session (ALINORM 83/17). The remaining items of work to be completed are as follows:

- (i) Consideration at Step 7 of Draft Standard for [Vanaspati/Mixed Vegetable Fats]
- (ii) Consideration at Step 7 of Draft Standard for [Mixed Vanaspati/ Substitute Ghee]
- (iii) Consideration at Step 7 of Draft Amendments to Codex Standard for Rapeseed Oil
- (iv) Processing Aids
- (v) Review of GLC Fatty Acid Ranges
- (vi) Review of Identity Characteristics based on Sterol ranges
- (vii) Consideration of methods of analysis
 - (a) Method for erythrodiol
 - (b) Work arising from comments of the Codex Committee on methods of analysis and sampling on review of methods undertaken by the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils.

127. The Executive Committee was informed that at the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, held in Petchburi, Thailand from 28 February to 5 March 1984, the delegation of Malaysia had stated that there was a need for an international code of practice for the storage, handling, and transport of edible oils in bulk. The proposal of the delegation of Malaysia had been supported by the Coordinating Committee. The delegation of Malaysia had prepared a first draft of the code. It had been agreed

that the question of how best to arrange to have the code developed should be discussed by the Executive Committee, within the context of how best to arrange for completion of the work still outstanding of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils. It had been agreed that the views of the Executive Committee would be made known to Malaysia through the Coordinator for Asia.

128. The Executive Committee also noted that the Commission at its Fifteenth Session had referred to the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils for consideration a proposal of India and Iraq that food colours and flavours should be deleted from the food additive provisions of the Codex General Standard on Fats and Oils.

129. Document CX/EXEC 84/31/13 contained suggestions from the United Kingdom Secretariat, as had been originally put before the Fifteenth Session of the Commission in document LIM.18(FO), as to how the remaining items of work on hand could be handled if the Committee adjourned *sine die*. The view of the Commission, however, had been that one more session of the Committee would enable the work to be completed. The Commission had expressed the view that it would not be advisable to hand over the work to different bodies to complete, as had been suggested in document LIM.18(FO), as, by doing this, it might take longer to complete the work to the satisfaction of the Commission. The Commission had concluded by expressing the hope that the Host Government (United Kingdom) would agree to its request for a further session to complete the work in hand.

130. The Executive Committee was informed that there had been discussions some months ago between the Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and the Chairman of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils concerning the possibility of holding a further session of the Committee in 1985. There had also been correspondence on the subject. The outcome had been that the United Kingdom was unable to offer to host another session of the Committee in 1985.

131. In conclusion the Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that it had very recently again approached the United Kingdom secretariat enquiring whether there would be any possibility of providing for a session of the Committee in 1986. The Secretariat had indicated to the UK Secretariat that if it was felt that the items to be discussed would not warrant a full meeting (here the Secretariat had mentioned the additional item which had been proposed by the Coordinating Committee for Asia, namely the development of a code of practice for storage, handling and transport of edible oils in bulk), then perhaps a joint meeting with the Codex Committee on Sugars might be considered to deal with some matters still outstanding from that Committee. The Secretariat indicated that as they had written only very recently to the UK Secretariat it would probably be some time before a reply was received.

132. The Executive Committee requested the United Kingdom authorities to consider sympathetically the holding of a meeting of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils or of a joint meeting of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils and the Codex Committee on Sugars, as might be appropriate, in 1986.

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING (Agenda Item 17 (b))

133. The Executive Committee had before it document ALINORM 85/22, containing the Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling held in Ottawa, Canada, from 12-21 October 1983. The particular attention of the Executive Committee was drawn to paragraphs 171-175 of the Report, in which a problem had been referred to the Executive Committee for consideration. The problem related to the question of the appropriateness or otherwise of making reference under the provisions of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, to the use of names of food prescribed in national legislation in cases where these foods were not the subject of Codex standards. Concluding its introduction of this topic, the Secretariat indicated that the Secretariat at the above-mentioned session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling had advised against putting too much emphasis on the use of national legislation in international Codex instruments. This advice had been supported by some delegations.

134. The Executive Committee noted that the difference between the text which had been under discussion by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (ALINORM 83/22),

Appendix V, Annex I, 4.1.1 (ii)) and the text finally adopted by the Committee (ALINORM 85/22, Appendix III, 4.1.1.2 and 4.1.1.3) did not appear to be very great. The Executive Committee saw no reason to disagree with the decision of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

VEGETABLE PROTEINS - SUBSTITUTION OF ORIGINAL PROTEIN WITH VEGETABLE PROTEIN PRODUCTS (VPP) (Agenda Item 17 (c))

135. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/14 containing an extract from the Report of the Third Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins, held in Ottawa, 6 - 10 February, 1984. The extract entitled "Uses of VPP in substitution for and extension of the original protein in foods" related to paragraphs 50 to 62 of the Report of that Committee (ALINORM 85/30). Also before the Executive Committee was an extract from Appendix II of ALINORM 85/30 entitled "Proposed Draft General Guidelines for the Utilization of Vegetable Protein Products (VPP) in Foods". The extract was section 7 of the Proposed Draft General Guidelines entitled "Uses of VPP in Partial or Complete Substitution of the Animal Protein in Foods". In addition the Executive Committee had before it, at the request of Dr. Ms. A. Brincker (Vice Chairman), an extract from the Report of the Sixth Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (ALINORM 79/35, paras. 54-64).

136. In introducing this topic, the Secretariat indicated that the point of principle which had been referred to the Executive Committee for its opinion was as follows. Where a name had been established for a food in a Codex standard, could that name be used as part of the name of a food where some of the protein content of the food had been replaced by vegetable protein.

137. The attention of the Executive Committee was drawn to a document (ALINORM 78/33) which had been prepared by a consultant, in liaison with the Secretariat, for consideration by the Twelfth Session of the Commission and which had been referred for consideration to the Codex Committee on General Principles at its Sixth Session in October 1979. Particular attention was drawn to paras. 47 and 87 of the consultant's paper. The opinion of the consultant had been that a name laid down in a Codex standard could be used to describe another product which was somewhat different from the product defined in the Codex standard, provided that the name was accompanied by appropriate qualifying words, with appropriate emphasis both on the name and on the qualifying words, so as to avoid any deception or misleading of the purchaser. The presentation of the product would have to be such that it could not, reasonably, be confused with the standardized product.

138. The attention of the Committee was drawn to decisions taken by the Codex Committee on Processed Meat and Poultry Products in connection with the elaboration of the Codex Standard for Canned Corned Beef. The negative passage in the scope section of the Standard for Canned Corned Beef was alluded to as suggesting that the use of names laid down in Codex Standards was admissible provided that the true nature of the non-standardized product is described and the consumer is not deceived.

139. After an exchange of views, the Executive Committee agreed with the thoughts expressed in para. 63 of the Report of the Sixth Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles, which, in substance, permitted the use of a name laid down in a Codex standard as part of the name of another similar product not covered by the standard, provided that (i) the name was appropriately qualified, (ii) the section entitled 'General Principles' in the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods was complied with, and (iii) the scope section of the standard was taken fully into account.

FLAVOURING SUBSTANCES - REQUEST OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES (CCFA) CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES FOR EVALUATION (Agenda Item 17 (d))

140. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/17 containing an extract, entitled "Priority Setting for Evaluation of Flavours", from the Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives, held at the Hague, 10 - 16 April 1984.

141. The Executive Committee noted that the Secretariat had offered, at the CCFA session, to look into the possibility of convening an appropriate group of experts to embark upon the screening of flavouring substances. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that it had not, as yet, had an opportunity to look into the various ramifications of this matter with the appropriate officers in FAO and WHO and that it would wish to do so before putting the matter before the Executive Committee.

142. The Executive Committee expressed its willingness to consider this matter at its next session, if it was thought necessary for it to do so.

APPROVAL TO AMENDMENT TO INTERNATIONAL CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR DESICCATED COCONUT (CAC/RCP 4/5 - 1971) - END PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS (Agenda Item 17 (e))

143. The Executive Committee was informed that the above Code of Hygienic Practice had been published some time ago and contained end product microbiological specifications which were of a general nature. There had since been reports that the product had been a source of foodborne diseases, particularly Salmonellosis, and, as a consequence, the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) had asked for government comments on the elaboration of microbiological specifications for desiccated coconut.

144. At its 19th Session the CCFH noted that the majority of countries which had replied included a test for Salmonella when controlling the product. Some delegations had expressed concern with regard to the problem of aflatoxin in desiccated coconut and the CCFH had agreed to include a general statement on public health hazards of mycotoxins, but not to include concrete limits in the end product specifications.

145. The CCFH had also agreed to a proposal made by the representative of the International Commission for Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF) to include in the end product specifications for desiccated coconut limits for Salmonellae.

146. The CCFH had decided that the Code should be amended as follows:

"SECTION V - END-PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Substitute the following text for Section B:

- (a) Salmonellae: Salmonellae organisms should not be recovered from any of the 25 grams samples examined when the test is carried out according to the method described (n = 10, c = 0, m = 0).
Appropriate method: ISO 3565 - 1975.
- (b) The product should not contain any substances originating from micro-organisms, particularly mycotoxins, in amounts which exceed the tolerances or criteria established by the official agency having jurisdiction."

147. The CCFH had advanced the above amendment to Step 3 of the Procedure subject to approval by the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Commission.

148. The Executive Committee agreed to the measures taken by the CCFH with regard to the amendment of the End Product Specifications in the Code of Hygienic Practice for Desiccated Coconut.

149. It noted the opinion of the Coordinator for Europe that more attention should be given to the problems of mycotoxins in Codex work.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 17 (f))

150. None.

REPORT CONCERNING CODEX AND UNECE WORK AND AVOIDANCE OF DUPLICATION (Agenda Item 18)

151. The Executive Committee had before it an extract from a UNECE document referenced as AGRI/WP.1/34. The extract was from the Report of the Thirty-Ninth Session of the UNECE Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce, held in Geneva from 18 to 21 October 1983. The extract contained Revised Proposals for the Coordination of the Programme of Work of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce with that of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. These Revised Working Proposals had been approved by the parent body of the Working Party namely the UNECE Committee on Agricultural Problems at its 35th Session, 12 to 16 March 1984 (document ECE/AGRI/73). The UNECE Committee on Agricultural Problems had requested that these proposals be transmitted to the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for approval.

152. The Secretariat briefly reviewed the revised proposals and indicated that they represented a very solid basis for cooperation and avoidance of duplication. The Executive Committee approved the revised proposals.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 20)

153. The Chairman of the Executive Committee pointed out that the future direction of the Codex Alimentarius Commission should take account of the following:

1. The ongoing publication of the Codex Alimentarius required intensified efforts toward the acceptance, implementation or utilization of Codex standards and other Codex recommendations by governments and the food industry.
2. The programme of action on a short, medium and longer term basis proposed by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean in a background paper presented to the Executive Committee.
3. A number of Codex Commodity Committees had adjourned sine die and a number of other Commodity Committees were approaching completion of their programme of work. The Regional Coordinating Committees were gradually changing the direction of their programmes to ensure greater service to developing countries in food safety, including food legislation and food control.
4. Proposals for new or additional Codex work had to take account of the fact of serious budgetary constraints facing the parent bodies.

154. In the discussion that followed, Dr. Montoya of the Monitoring Implementation and Effectiveness Branch of WHO informed the Executive Committee of possible activities in the framework of primary health care in which communities and primary health care workers could be active in reducing food contamination and in this way help to prevent foodborne disease. He suggested, inter alia, education of health workers, communities and professional food handlers for which Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice might be used as models. Dr. Dieterich, Director of the Environmental Health Division of WHO pointed out that food safety was a component of Primary Health Care since it contributed to disease prevention and health promotion. He was of the opinion that greater use should be made of the existing Codex mechanism to reinforce WHO's advocacy role in this aspect of primary health care.

155. During the discussion that followed it was pointed out that rural problems were largely due to extreme poverty and consequent lack of sanitary facilities and technically trained personnel, and that advice alone was not a remedy. Improvements in agriculture and processing of finished products was one way of increasing income. Nevertheless, the activities of the Commission should be kept under constant review so that necessary measures could be taken to improve the effectiveness of Codex work, particularly for the developing world, which constituted two-thirds of the Commission's membership, by planning workshops and training programmes, in the field of standardization and quality control. Future plans should include increased emphasis on cooperation with other standards organizations, so that more harmonization of standards could be achieved on an international scale.

156. Reference was made to the suggestions which had been put forward during the discussion of the Codex budget and also in the paper prepared by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. These suggestions had included proposals for increased representation at Codex meetings through workshops or seminars held immediately before sessions of the Regional Coordinating Committees. The need for ensuring greater awareness of the value of the Codex standards and codes of practice both within the United Nations system and in the food industry generally had also been stressed. The need for computerisation of data on food additives and pesticide residues would also have to be borne in mind.

157. The need to improve knowledge of Codex work and to improve internal cooperation within member countries was also mentioned as well as the fundamental importance for developing countries of further work in training of personnel in food quality control work, especially in the areas of microbiology and pesticide residues.

158. It was also noted that many of the concerns expressed were being dealt with by other sectors of FAO and WHO and were outside the immediate scope of work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. With regard to the question of how Codex could promote primary health care, it was agreed that the Secretariat of WHO should prepare a paper on the subject for discussion at the next session of the Executive Committee and of the 16th Session of the Commission. The paper should take account of what was already being done in this area by the Regional Coordinating Committees for Africa, Asia and Latin America. The paper should be specific in its suggestions regarding how Codex could help, bearing in mind the mandate and budget of the Codex programme.

159. With regard to the future direction of the programme, a long term plan was proposed in which the work of the Commission would be better publicised and in which the extent to which Codex standards were being utilized in member countries could be monitored on a continuing basis by an appropriate Codex Committee. This would be a particularly useful way of furthering the actual implementation of the standards.

160. The importance of the work of the Coordinating Committees was again emphasized as going well beyond food standards work. There was increasing emphasis being placed in the Coordinating Committees for Africa, Asia and Latin America on the strengthening of food control activities. Control of locally produced food, which constituted the diets of a large number of populations and which could be a source of foodborne diseases was being particularly emphasized in the Regional Coordinating Committees. WHO was already beginning to monitor Primary Health Care activities at the national level. Likewise Regional Coordinating Committees could also be fora for reporting progress in member countries of the regions in food safety, which was an essential element of primary health care.

161. The Executive Committee noted that in addition to the work on standards, the work on food additives and pesticide residues was considered to be of particular importance internationally. With regard to the suggestion that an appropriate Codex Committee undertake the task of promoting acceptance or implementation of the standards, it was noted that the Codex Committee on General Principles, which had developed the Acceptance Procedure, might be the appropriate body for this task.

162. It was also pointed out that Codex Codes of Practice and, in particular, the Codes of Hygienic Practice, were of great importance, and that their application would further the goal of protecting the health of the consumer. The Executive Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to obtain information on how the Codes of Practice were used in member countries.

163. The Executive Committee stressed the importance of publicising Codex activities and requested Members of the Executive Committee and WHO and FAO to make the work of the Commission better known in Member States and throughout the food industry.

164. As had been agreed during the discussions on the budget, efforts would be made to find funds outside the Codex budget to increase attendance by developing countries at Codex sessions.

165. The Executive Committee also noted that the Secretariat would prepare a paper assessing the current and likely future workloads of all Codex Committees.

166. The Executive Committee agreed that these points should be brought to the notice of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and that provision should be made in the agenda of the 16th Session for discussion of the future direction of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. It was also agreed that a circular letter should be issued asking governments for their views on this subject, in order to provide a broader basis for discussion at the Commission's session.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 21)

167. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 84/31/9 containing a Draft Provisional Agenda for the Sixteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee agreed on the following changes:

- (i) The item on the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food should be brought forward and placed immediately before the item on Codex Committee on Food Labelling;
- (ii) The item on Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean should be brought forward and placed immediately before the item on Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. The Commission would consider the Reports of the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (iii) The item Codex Committee on Cocoa Products and Chocolate should be brought forward and placed immediately after the item on Vegetable Proteins. This item should include consideration of the draft Standard for White Chocolate/Cocoa Butter Confectionery at Step 8.

168. Concerning the item on Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe, the Executive Committee was informed that the draft European Regional Standard for Mayonnaise had been returned to Step 3 and would, therefore, not be on the Commission's agenda. The draft European Regional Standard for Vinegar had been advanced to Step 8, and a draft amendment to the European Regional Standard for Natural Mineral Waters had been advanced to Step 5.

169. Item 13(b) should read "Vice-Chairmen". The item on Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins should include consideration of Step 5 of Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Utilization of Vegetable Protein Products (VPP) in Foods and the Annex - Proposed Draft Guidelines for Testing Safety and Nutritional Quality of Vegetable Protein Products.

170. The Executive Committee also agreed that the item on Future Direction of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and Future Work should be taken together and brought forward in the agenda to a point where maximum attendance at the session might be assured.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 22)

ISLAMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

171. In introducing document CX/EXEC 84/31/20 the Secretariat reminded the Executive Committee that this topic had first been raised at the 2nd session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (Manila, 1979; for further details see ALINORM 79/15, paras 118-124). The delegation of Malaysia had pointed out that the concept of consumer protection should not be confined to health and technical factors but must also include the protection of cultural values, traditions and attitudes of the consumer. This view had been supported by several delegations.

172. During this session in Manila, the Delegation of Saudi Arabia had, in principle, agreed to host an ad hoc Working Group, composed of qualified (technically and religiously) experts from different Muslim countries, to discuss matters relating to labelling all food which contains meat and meat products. For the preparation for such a meeting, the Secretariat had requested the Joint FAO/WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Food Hygiene at Berlin (West) to undertake the necessary preparatory work, since a well-known Muslim scholar, Professor Mohamed Abdussalam, was at that time serving as Director for Scientific and International Cooperation on its staff.

173. Professor Abdussalam had, in the meantime, consulted with several leading Muslim scholars, among them the Mufti of Egypt and Professor Khayat, Dean, Faculty of Islamic Law, University of Amman, Jordan.

174. It was now intended to hold a meeting of an international group of widely recognized Muslim scholars, in cooperation with the Muslim World League and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. This meeting was scheduled to be held in December 1984 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and was expected to cover:

- (i) requirements concerning slaughter of common food animals;
- (ii) judgement of meat;
- (iii) requirements for aquatic food;
- (iv) requirements for products entering international trade;
- (v) requirements regarding the consumption of food of animal origin by Muslims living in (or visiting) predominantly non-Muslim countries.

175. The Executive Committee decided that the Executive Committee and the Commission should be kept informed of developments on this subject.

AMENDMENT OF NAME OF CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA

175. The Executive Committee was informed of the wish of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America, at its Third Session, to have the Committee's name changed to the more accurate name "Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean". The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that it had informally obtained legal opinion in FAO and WHO on the proposed amendment. The legal officers saw no difficulty in the proposed amendment and advised that it would be open to the Executive Committee to authorize the change of name, subject to confirmation by the Commission at its Sixteenth Session.

176. The Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Commission, agreed that the name of the Committee should be changed to "Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean".

177. The Executive Committee noted that there would need to be a consequential change in the title of the Representative of this Region.
