

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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 THIRD SESSION OF
THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR
LATIN AMERICA

Havana, Cuba, 27 March - 2 April 1984

1. The Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America was held in Havana, Cuba, from 27 March to 2 April 1984 by the kind invitation of the Government of Cuba.
2. The session was attended by participants from the following 13 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. Observers were present from Canada and Spain and from the following international organizations: Caribbean Common Market Standards Council (CARICOM), International Standards Organizations (ISO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (For List of Participants see Appendix I).
3. The Minister/President of the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Cuba and Coordinator for Latin America, Ing. Ramón Darias Rodés opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Government of Cuba. He reviewed the development of Standardization Metrology and Quality Control in Cuba since 1959 and its relationship to the national economy. Quality specifications for foods corresponded in many cases to those in Food Standards and other documents published by Codex. The Minister emphasized that Cuba was willing to share experience gained in food standardization with other countries of the region and in this respect stressed the important role of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which is the principal inter-governmental organization concerned with world-wide food standardization. Increased membership of Codex, which now constituted three quarters of the members of the United Nations, demonstrated continuing involvement in its activities.
4. The Minister referred to the present economic and social crisis in the region and hoped that the Coordinating Committee for Latin America, through its efforts to harmonize food standards in the region and to establish Codex regional standards would encourage intra-regional trade and eliminate trade barriers.

5. He indicated the lines of action which the Coordinating Committee should follow to achieve these objectives and expressed his appreciation to the Pan American Health Organization for its technical and financial assistance in the organization of the first workshop in Latin America and the Caribbean on Food Standardization and Health which would contribute in large measure to the objectives of the present session of the Coordinating Committee. (The full text of the Minister's speech is attached as Appendix II).

6. Mr. J.R. Yarza, FAO Representative for Cuba, speaking on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, expressed his warm appreciation to the Government of Cuba for its generosity in hosting the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America in Havana. He reviewed the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission since its foundation in 1962 and pointed out the particular interest to the regions of the Codex Coordinating Committees. Their discussions and decisions were closely followed by FAO, not only because of their contribution to the work of the Commission but because they protected and benefitted millions of unknown consumers. Mr. Yarza expressed his appreciation to the Coordinator for his efforts to make the activities of Codex better known in the region since his appointment in July 1983 and wished the Coordinating Committee success in its work.

7. Dr. Mario Fernandez speaking on behalf of the Director-General of PAHO, thanked the Government of Cuba for hosting the present session and affirmed his organization's willingness to collaborate with the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme in obtaining greater protection for consumers in the region through food control and other food safety activities.

Adoption of the Agenda

8. The Agenda was adopted with the following additions:

Under Item 7 "Strengthening the Infrastructure for National Food Control Systems", an additional sub-item was added to make known the recommendations of the PAHO sponsored workshop on Food Standardization and Health which had been held immediately prior to the session.

Under Item 8 "Consideration of Topics of Current Interest" a further sub-item 8(d) was added entitled "Street Vending of Food-Health Consequences".

Title of the Committee

9. On the proposal of the Coordinator, the Committee unanimously agreed to request that the title of the Committee be changed to "The Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean" since this better reflected the membership of the region.

Election of Vice-Chairman

10. The Committee unanimously elected Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez Aguilar of Mexico to serve as Vice-Chairman during the session.

Agenda Item 3

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION AND OF OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

11. The Committee had before it CX/LA 84/2 on the above subject. It noted that the interval between sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America had been unusually protracted and so as a consequence, the Commission, the Executive

Committee and several other Committees had met twice during this period. The Third Session had been originally planned to take place in Montevideo, Uruguay, in December 1982, but was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and the Coordinator, Dr. E.M. Brivio of Uruguay, subsequently indicated that he did not wish to continue in office. At the Fifteenth Session of the Commission the Government of Cuba offered to host the Coordinating Committee and the Commission unanimously elected Ing. Ramon Darias Rodes, Minister-President of the Cuban State Committee for Standardization as Coordinator.

12. The Committee also noted that the regional activities of the Codex Committees for Africa and Asia concerning standardization and the discussions which took place at the Codex Committee on Cereal Products and at the Codex Committee on Food Labelling should be kept in mind when examining priorities for standardization in the Latin American Region later in the agenda. Similarly the discussions on pesticide residues referred to in the document could be taken in conjunction with the item dealing with activities on pesticide residues.

General

Amendment of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards

13. The Committee noted that, based on the recommendations of the Codex Committee on General Principles, the Commission had agreed on a Revised Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards both world-wide and regional. The major changes were as follows:

- Steps 1, 2 and 3 have been combined, whereby subsidiary bodies may decide on the elaboration of a standard and request Government comments on the proposed draft standard, pending the subsequent approval by the next session of the Commission. Where the timing of the sessions so requires, comments at Step 6 may be requested prior to the adoption of the relevant standard at Step 5 by the Commission. These amendments should eliminate undue delays arising from the timing of sessions.
- At Step 8 the Commission adopts the standards as Codex standards, the previous Steps 9-11 and 9-12 respectively were taken outside the Step Procedure. The Codex Alimentarius consists of the Codex standards and related texts and of a tabulation of acceptance.

14. These changes have been included in the 5th Edition of the Procedural Manual.

Publication of the Codex Alimentarius

15. The Codex Alimentarius, a collection of international food standards adopted within the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme which also contained provisions of an advisory nature in the form of codes of practice, guidelines and other recommended measures intended to assist in achieving the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius, had been published in loose-leaf form.

16. The Secretariat had distributed volumes II to XII of the Codex Alimentarius to Governments for acceptance. These volumes which contained the various Codex Commodity Standards and Volumes XIII, XIV and XV on pesticide residues, food additives and food irradiation, respectively, had been prepared for publication. Volume I was in preparation and would contain general information about a wide variety of aspects of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

17. The Secretariat was also in the process of assembling all codes of practice so far adopted by the Commission in separate volumes of the Codex Alimentarius. Codes of practice were not subject to acceptance by Governments.

Frequency of Sessions of the Commission

18. This subject was discussed at both the 29th and 30th Sessions of the Executive Committee. At the 29th Session, the Representative of the Region of North America pointed out that the interval between sessions of the Commission had now grown to two years. He thought that such a lengthy interval resulted in a slowing down of Codex work and preferred annual meetings, both to facilitate the decision making and budgeting, and to maintain the network of professional contacts which were important to Codex work. Other opinions expressed at the meeting of the Executive Committee did not share this view. At the 30th Session the Representative of the Region of Latin America indicated that for financial reasons and for reasons connected with the availability of personnel, several countries of the region favoured an interval of two years between the Commission sessions.

19. At its 15th Session, the Commission decided that for a number of practical reasons the present practice of holding sessions every twenty to twenty-four months should be maintained.

Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products

Change of Name and Terms of Reference

20. It was noted that the Commission had decided that the above Committee should be charged with the responsibility of developing standards for pulses. The name was therefore changed to "Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes" with new terms of reference to read as follows:

"to elaborate world-wide standards and/or codes of practice as may be appropriate for cereals, pulses, legumes and their products".

21. The re-named Committee held its Second Session with the new name and terms of reference.

Codex Committee on Food Hygiene

22. At its 18th Session the above Committee advanced the Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Processing of Frog Legs to Step 8 of the Procedure.

23. The Committee agreed with the observation of a delegate that because of lack of comments this type of document often progressed very slowly and recommended a more intensive involvement of Regional Coordinating Committees in the development of this kind of Code. The Committee recognized that this was a general problem which merited further consideration.

Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins

Advice on Vegetable Proteins

24. The Committee wished to remind countries, in particular developing countries, of its offer to establish a Working Group if requested, to provide advice on the technological, nutritional and safety aspects of developing vegetable proteins from indigenous sources. The Delegation of Egypt strongly supported the importance of this offer.

Agenda Item 4

REVIEW OF ACCEPTANCES OF INTERNATIONAL CODEX STANDARDS AND
CODEX MAXIMUM LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES BY COUNTRIES IN THE
CODEX REGION OF LATIN AMERICA

25 The Committee had before it document CX/LA 84/2, (paras 70-80) which dealt with the above topic. The Secretariat informed the Committee about the encouraging nature of the ongoing intersecretariat discussions with officials of the Commission of the European Economic Community in Brussels concerning acceptance of Codex Standards. The Committee was also informed that the Secretariat would be having discussions on the same subject with officials of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in Moscow. In discussions with both bodies, the need for more commitment to the Codex standards and MRLs was and would be stressed by the Secretariat in the interest of facilitating international trade. In particular the desire which had been expressed by developing countries of the Region to use the Codex Standards and Codex Maximum Limits for pesticide residues for trading purposes had been and would continue to be emphasized by the Secretariat. The Secretariat would also emphasize the point that the developing countries looked to those countries which had been active from the start in Codex Committee work to give a lead in this matter.

26 The Secretariat pointed out that as most countries export some food products and import others, every country was an importing country for some products. The Secretariat referred to the in-depth discussions on this topic which had been held at the First Session of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems, held in Petchburi, Thailand, from 24 to 27 February 1984. The Group had stressed the importance for importing countries to adopt a favourable stance vis-à-vis the Codex Maximum Limits for pesticide residues. In Volume XIII of the Codex Alimentarius (Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues) some 80 evaluated pesticides were listed for which maximum limits had been established in many hundreds of different food commodities. Volume XIII would be issued shortly. It would be timely, therefore, if all Members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission reviewed their stance with regard to the Codex maximum limits, now that Volume XIII was about to be issued. The Secretariat indicated that the approach which had been adopted by the Group which met in Thailand, which included a Resolution, would be reproduced in a Conference Room Document for the information of the Committee, which the Committee could look at later in the session.

27 The Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that, in order to strengthen Brazil's participation in Codex work, an Inter-Ministerial Committee had been set up. In the past 20 years the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission had played an important role from the point of view of public health and trade. Brazil had decided to increase its participation in Codex work. Several of the standards, maximum limits for pesticide residues and guidelines adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission were being used as a basis for food legislation. The Delegation of Brazil expressed the opinion that the level of acceptances would increase and looked forward with interest: to seeing the Resolution on Acceptances of Codex MRLs for Pesticide Residues adopted by the First Session of the Group of Developing Countries concerning Pesticide Residue Problems, at its meeting in Petchburi, Thailand, from 24 to 27 February 1984.

28 The Delegation of Argentina informed the Committee that Argentina had now sent 94 final decisions on Codex standards and codes of practice to the Codex Secretariat. More final decisions would be sent to the Codex Secretariat and it was expected that the number of final decisions would soon be more than 100. The decisions

covered 9 standards for sugars, 10 standards for edible fats and oils, 5 codes of Practice for Fish and fishery products, 6 standards for fish and fishery products, 3 standards for cocoa products and chocolate, 6 standards for processed meat products, and 5 standards for frozen products. In addition, final decisions had been sent concerning several methods of analysis and sampling and Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues. Argentina had given Acceptance with Specified Deviations to a number of Codex standards. The; Delegation of Argentina indicated that the deviations related mainly to food additives and labelling and that products would need to be in conformity with these deviations in order to be acceptable in Argentina.

29. The Delegation of Cuba indicated that Cuba had accepted 8 standards and had expressed its agreement with 5 codes of practice, and 4 lists of additives and contaminants. In a number of cases Acceptance with Specified Deviations had been given. The deviations related mainly to food additives and contaminants. Cuba agreed that where a country was unable to give formal acceptance of Codex standards it should give serious consideration to permitting entry of products in conformity with the Codex standards and lists of additives and contaminants, as this would meet one of the objectives of Codex work, namely the facilitation of international trade.

30. The Delegation of Venezuela stated that it considered the Codex standards and recommendations to be very important and useful. Venezuela had not, as yet, been able to accept any of the Codex standards, but was now in the process of making the necessary organizational arrangements so as to be better able to participate in Codex work and in time to accept Codex standards.

31. The Delegation of Mexico expressed interest in seeing the Resolution on Acceptance of Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues which had been adopted by the Group of Developing Countries which met in Petchburi, Thailand, in February 1984. (see also para 26).

Agenda Item 5

Report on Activities within FAO and WHO

Report on Joint FAO/WHO Activities

Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

32. The Committee was informed that both these expert bodies had met annually for more than 20 years and that they provided the expert advice for the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) and the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) respectively.

33. The fact that all Codex standards and MRLs may be considered to be safe was to a large degree the achievement of the work of these two Committees. JECFA, in addition to its work on food additives, had also considered certain food contaminants, such as lead, cadmium, mercury, arsenic, tin and two anabolic agents (trenbolone acetate and zeranol).

34. If, on the basis of the data submitted to these expert bodies, it could be concluded that there was no appreciable risk to health resulting from the intake of small, unavoidable amounts of pesticide residues or from the consumption of food additives, the expert bodies established the so-called "acceptable daily intake" (ADI). These toxicological guideline levels were prior conditions for the establishment of MRLs for

pesticide residues, on the basis of good agricultural practice, and of maximum levels for food additives, on the basis of good manufacturing practice.

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Residues in Food of Chemicals used in Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine (Veterinary Drugs)

35. In many meat and poultry producing countries, especially in those where intensive animal raising was practiced, as well as under modern fish farming conditions, the use of growth promoting agents was today common. Also, the application of prophylactic or curative drugs was widely practiced under these conditions in order to maximize meat, poultry and fish production. However, concern had been raised, that these chemical compounds might cause residues of public health significance in the edible tissues derived from these food animals. Several international meetings had already been held or were planned to address this problem. For this reason, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its 15th Session in July 1983, considered the need for Codex taking action in this field. The Commission was of the opinion that, in view of the complex scientific and technological aspects involved, the issue should first be examined by a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation and that the recommendations of this consultation might then be considered by the Commission and acted upon by, if appropriate, a newly established Codex Committee.

36. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the preparations for the expert consultation were well under way and that it was planned to hold it in the second part of 1984.

Food Irradiation

37. The Committee was informed that in 1980, a Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on the Wholesomeness of Irradiated Foods had concluded that the irradiation of any food commodity up to an overall average dose of 10 KGy (1 Mrad) would present no toxicological hazard and would not introduce special nutritional or microbiological problems (for details see WHO TRS No. 659).

38. The Committee was also informed that in 1982, FAO and WHO had asked the International Committee on Food Microbiology and Hygiene for a second opinion regarding the microbiological safety of low-dose (<10 KGy) food irradiation. This Committee concluded its deliberations, after having analyzed the scientific knowledge to-date, by saying that it was satisfied that there was no cause for concern. Food irradiation, on the contrary, was seen as an important addition to the methods of control of food-borne pathogens and did not present any additional hazards from shifts in the microflora or changes in the attributes of micro-organisms (for details see CX/FH 83/9).

39. Based on these conclusions, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its 15th Session in 1983, had adopted the Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods and the Recommended International Code of Practice for the Operation of Irradiation Facilities used for the Treatment of Food.

40. The Committee was also informed that the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, at its 17th Session in 1983, had considered the questions and problems connected with the labelling of irradiated food. Agreement was reached regarding the labelling of a food which had been irradiated that it should be labelled as follows: "treated by ionizing energy". However, no agreement was reached regarding labelling of composite foods where one or more of the ingredients had been irradiated and regarding single ingredient products where they were prepared from irradiated raw material.

41. The Committee was also informed that the Directors-General of FAO, IAEA and WHO, in their circular letter D 6.22 Circ. of 21/6/1983, had proposed to their Member States the establishment of an International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation. The functions of this Consultative Group would be:

- (a) to evaluate global developments in the field of food irradiation;
- (b) to provide a focal point of advice on the application of food irradiation to Member States and the Organizations; and
- (c) to furnish information as required, through the Organizations, to the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme

42 This programme, initiated in 1976, was one of the health related activities of the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS), established by UNEP to implement a recommendation of the UN Conference on Human Environment held in 1972. The Programme had the following objectives: (i) to collect data on levels of certain chemicals in individual foods and in total diet samples and to evaluate these data, review trends and produce and disseminate summaries, thus encouraging appropriate food control and resource management measures; (ii) to obtain estimates of the intake via food of specific chemicals with a view to correlating these data with those on intake from other sources, thus enabling the total intake of the contaminant to be estimated; (iii) to provide technical cooperation with the Governments of countries wishing to initiate or strengthen food contamination monitoring programmes; and (iv) to provide the Codex Alimentarius Commission with information on the level of contaminants in food to support and accelerate the work on international standards for contaminants in foods.

43. The Committee was informed that, at present, 22 Member States were collaborating in this programme, among them three from Latin America, namely Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico. One of the components of the programme dealt with Analytical Quality Assurance to help the laboratories to improve their analytical capabilities and thereby promote comparability and quality control data. A Technical Advisory Committee representing National Collaborating Centres looked after the technical aspect of Programme development. Some limited technical assistance was also available under the Programme. Guidelines for establishing or strengthening national food contamination monitoring programmes, and for the study of dietary intakes of chemical contaminants had been prepared.

PUBLICATIONS

44. FAO and WHO continued to develop several manuals and guidelines which dealt with policy, strategy and technical issues. Reference was invited to two publications - one on quality losses of food grains and the other, "Guidelines for Can Manufacturers and Food Processors on the Prevention of Lead and Tin Contamination of Canned Foods", the latter being an FAO/WHO publication. Both the publications should become available in 1984. A revised edition of the FAO/WHO Food Inspection Manual would also be issued in 1984 and the FAO/SIDA Laboratory Manual was being similarly revised.

Report on FAO Activities

45. Besides the various activities in food control referred to under Agenda Item 7, FAO was actively involved in the area of prevention and control of mycotoxins. Aflatoxin was receiving the highest priority.

46. Many developing countries were getting alarmed by the moves of several importing countries to prescribe very low limits of aflatoxins in regulations and these could cause serious non-tariff trade barriers. There was, therefore, an urgent need for collecting world-wide data on levels of aflatoxins found in food/feed such as maize, groundnut, copra, etc. under different environmental conditions so that the information could be utilized, at an appropriate time, by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, to make suitable recommendations on the subject.

47. The Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme was now collecting some data on aflatoxins in selected foods/feeds and the first review of the same would be possible sometime in 1985. However, this data-base was necessarily quite small and much more effort would be necessary in this direction in the future. The matter was not quite simple; firstly because aflatoxins were ubiquitous and secondly because most of the developing countries lacked the facilities and trained personnel to deal with the problem. FAO was cooperating with several Governments to set up monitoring programmes and was providing assistance through training and other means. Assistance was also being provided in preventive measures through improvements in post-harvest handling, drying and storage practices, and other means.

Standard Reference Materials

48. FAO was maintaining a supply of some standard reference analytical materials for organic chlorine pesticides, heavy metals and aflatoxins which were made available to the national authorities on request.

Audio-visual Training Materials

49. FAO was keeping some audio-visual materials in the form of films, slides, etc. covering various aspects of food quality control, hygiene, food inspection and so on. This material was given on loan to various projects and national authorities interested in the subject. It would be the endeavor of FAO to expand this library and also to develop other materials which would be suitable to the needs of developing countries.

Report on WHO Activities

Technical Discussions of 28th Meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO on Sanitary Control of Food

50. Technical discussions were held during the 28th meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO, in Washington from 25 to 26 September 1981 and the subject was "Food Sanitary Control". The regional representatives of the various Ministries of Health and their advisers were present. In this meeting problems of sanitary quality were studied and taken into consideration, such as:

- Food control and health for all by the year 2000.
- Purposes and objectives of food control.
- Laws and regulations, and standards.
- Financing of the control services.
- Structure and organization of the inspection services.
- Analytical services.
- Training in priority areas.
- Food peddling.

- Food losses.
51. The Technical Discussion agreed on a series of recommendations, i.e.:
- the developing of food safety services with adequate legal support;
 - to continue the training of food inspectors and specialists;
 - to stimulate the education of the communities with special emphasis on women and children;
 - to pursue securing funds nationally and internationally in order to guarantee the development of progress in food safety;
 - to strengthen participation of the health sector in the policy of food safety.

Elaboration of Guidelines/Publications

52. The Committee was informed that the following guidelines/publications had been or were in the process of being prepared by WHO:

- (i) Guidelines for drinking water quality.
- (ii) Slaughter techniques and meat hygiene under austere conditions.
- (iii) Paralytic shellfish poisoning.
- (iv) Salmonellas (prevention and control).
- (v) Microbiological criteria for foods.
- (vi) Inventory of audio-visual aids on food safety.
- (vii) Food virology.
- (viii) Mass catering.
- (ix) Training guidelines on safe food handling in hotels, restaurants and similar establishments.
- (x) Guidelines for the development of educational material on safe food, environmental and personal hygiene.
- (xi) Professional profile for the food inspector.
- (xii) Proceedings of the symposium on the health effects of heavy metals in infant formula and junior foods (available from the publishing house, Springer, Berlin/Heidelberg/New York).

Surveillance Programme for Control of Foodborne Infections and Intoxications

53. The Programme was coordinated by the European Office of WHO and several European countries participated. The objectives of the Programme were: (i) to provide infrastructure to serve as a basis for the control of foodborne diseases; (ii) to assist national authorities in identifying priorities for allocation of resources. Under this Programme, a Manual on surveillance of foodborne infections and intoxications had been prepared. It was hoped that this European Programme could serve as a model for similar programmes in other regions of the world.

International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS)

54. Several countries of Latin America were already actively participating or were interested in actively participating in the Joint ILO/UNEP/WHO Programme. The

development of methodology in toxicology and manpower development in the field of toxicology were the priorities of IPCS. Under this Programme, the Environmental Health Criteria documents were also being published, many of which dealt with chemicals of interest in food safety. (A copy of a list with the titles of all Environmental Health Criteria Documents already published and at an advanced or less advanced stage of preparation was made available to the delegates of the Coordinating Committee).

International Digest of Health Legislation

55. This quarterly journal, which was published in English and French, contained national and international legal texts dealing with all aspects of public health, including food safety and nutrition.

International Code of Marketing of Breast-mil Substitutes

56. The Code, in its operational paragraph 4, had requested the Codex Alimentarius Commission to give full consideration to the action it might take with regard to the standards for infant foods and to support and promote the implementation of the Code.

57. The Committee was informed that a consultant was, at present, reviewing all relevant Codex Standards in the light of the International Code. This review would be discussed at the next session of the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCFSDU).

Nutritional Value and Safety of Products specifically intended for Infant and Young Child Feeding - Resolution of the World Health Assembly WHA 34.23

58. This Resolution requested WHO to assess the changes in the quality and nutritional value of products during storage and transport in extreme climatic conditions.

59. The Committee was informed that a WHO Consultant had visited three countries (India, the Philippines, and Trinidad and Tobago) to study these problems. The report of the Consultant would be discussed at the next session of the CCFSDU.

60. In the discussion of the report on activities within FAO and WHO/PAHO complementing the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, several delegations complimented the two international organizations on their work.

Agenda Item 6

Report on Progress made in Adoption or Adaptation of the Model Food Law

61. In introducing the item, the Secretariat informed the Committee that the Draft Model Food Law (Appendix I Guidelines for Developing an Effective National Food Control System; FAO/WHO/UNEP, 1976) had been discussed by the Second Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America held in December 1980 and paragraphs 66-76 of the report referred to these discussions. The Committee had noted that the Model Food Law was in fact, a guideline and various aspects of food control could be fitted into the basic format. The Committee had also agreed that the subject should be kept on the agenda for consideration at the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee in order to determine what further progress was made by the countries in the adoption or adaptation of the Model Food Law.

62. The Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that there were no main discrepancies between the provisions of the Brazilian legislation and that of the Model Food Law. The Delegation proposed that special Commissions should be constituted and entrusted with dealing with specific topics such as reformulation of standards within the legislation. This would enable improved level of cooperation amongst various

authorities and a shift from isolated approaches. A comprehensive approach to quality control and inspection should also be pursued.

63. The Delegation of Cuba agreed that the Model Food Law was a very useful guideline for the countries of the Region and its principles were being utilized in furthering the food control activities.

64. The Delegation of Peru informed the Committee that multisectorial commissions had been established to up-date the current food code. This was a difficult task and every attempt was being made to adopt or adapt the principles of the Model Food Law. About 40% of the provisions had been covered and attempts made to follow the rest. The Guidelines for developing an Effective Food Control System and Model Food Law have provided useful information to the country in strengthening its food control system.

65. The Delegation of Argentina indicated that the Model Food Law was an excellent contribution by FAO/WHO. The Food Law of Argentina covered the basic principles of the Model Food Law.

66. The Delegation of Mexico referred to the specific legislation of the country and stated that many of its provisions were common with those of the Model Food Law.

67. The Delegation of Venezuela stated that the Model Food Law had helped in improvements in national legislation and its implementation. Several codes of hygiene were currently being developed.

68. The Delegation of Colombia informed the Committee about the national food control system and the current decree 3171/1953 and the Resolution 917 of 1963. The Law 9a of 4 January 1979 had been elaborated which covered various aspects related to public health under twelve titles. A Committee has been set up to provide advice on the implementation of the law. Detailed information was provided on the time-table being followed to strengthen such implementation. A Central Reference Laboratory was being established in the Ministry of Health and standard methods on chemical and microbiological analysis of food had been published.

69. The Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago informed the Committee that the Public Health Law, Chapter 12 No. 5 which covered food hygiene, was being redrafted and it was hoped that it would follow the approach of an enabling Act as recommended by the Model Food Law. The Delegation also stressed the need for better dissemination of information on the considerable work done within the framework of Codex Alimentarius Commission and complementary to it, in FAO and WHO.

70. The Delegation of Ecuador referred to the Health Code 1971 which laid the responsibility for food control with the Ministry of Health. A multisectorial Commission was now engaged in reviewing various regulations and the Model Food Law provided useful guidance.

71. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic stated that the National Food Code implemented by the Ministry of Public Health was the main legislative instrument for food control in the country. The Code was currently being up-dated and the Model Food Law provided useful guidance. In the development of about 20 standards a multisectorial approach had been followed. The Delegation also stressed the need for technical assistance.

72. The Delegation of Guyana informed the Committee that the basic food law of the country was an enabling Act as suggested in the Model Food Law. A Food Advisory Committee representing various interests was engaged in the drafting of various

regulations. It was necessary to have a unified food control administration to avoid duplication of efforts at the national level.

73. The Committee noted with interest that considerable work was being done in several countries to up-date the food legislation and that the Model Food Law provided useful guidelines and framework for this purpose.

Agenda Item 7

Strengthening of Infrastructure for National Food Control Systems

FAO Activities

74. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that FAO placed strong emphasis in its work at country and regional levels in strengthening food control systems to ensure a safe and wholesome food supply and on the protection of the consumer against health hazards and commercial fraud. Technical cooperation with developing countries in this area consisted of advice on drafting or up-dating of comprehensive food law and regulations; assistance on improvement of food inspection and analysis programmes and facilities; training of various functionaries engaged in food control activities, i.e., food inspectorate, analysts and managerial staff; and in the promotion of food quality control in the food production and distribution chain. National, regional and international projects were carried out in various areas of food control and food contamination monitoring and control. Training was a high priority activity.

75. The Committee was provided with examples of several activities in food control, food contamination monitoring, etc. carried out in the region and special attention was drawn to the organization of national or sub-regional food control strategy workshops in Uruguay, Peru and the Caribbean, the last one jointly with CARICOM and PAHO. Such workshops considered the problems of food quality and safety and of food supplies and consumer protection at a policy level to determine approaches and strategies which would ensure development of better food quality control systems, voluntary and mandatory, which would cover the entire food production, processing and distribution chain. Appropriate follow-up actions were being pursued.

76. The Committee was informed that food control projects were being pursued as developmental activities and efforts were made to bring about a closer cooperation with various sectors, particularly the food and agriculture sector and the health sector. It is only under these conditions that a coherent national programme could be developed which would cover the needs of the consumer as well as the economy in terms of protection of food supplies and import and export trade. Similarly, efforts were made to utilize the existing facilities, for example, organization of a network of existing laboratories under various departments or institutions for monitoring of food contaminants. This ensured better cooperation at national level and also most efficient utilization of the existing resources. The need for training, particularly in field of food inspection, was almost universal. The Committee was informed of several publications on the various subjects.

77. Referring to the mechanism for seeking technical co-operation from international agencies, the Committee was reminded that the foremost criterion was the priority that the national government attached to the particular subject area. The resources for assistance at international level were limited and these were always directed towards those priority concerns of Member Governments that were expressed before the governing bodies of the international organizations concerned. The delegations were

therefore advised to brief their country representatives participating in the sessions of governing bodies accordingly.

Report on the Activities of the Panamerican Health Bureau (PAHO/WHO) on Food Protection/ Food Safety

78. The new PAHO administration with Dr. Carlyle Guerra de Macedo as its Director-General, had received from the governing bodies of the organization the express mandate of giving utmost priority to actions leading to nutrition and food protection, in order to attain the goal of Health for All by the Year 2000.

79. The new organizational structure of PAHO included 12 technical programmes. One, which dealt with Veterinary Health, should carry out all activities on Food Protection, Zoonosis, Foot-and-mouth Diseases, and others. This programme had the support of two Panamerican agencies, that on Foot-and-mouth Disease, located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and that on Zoonosis with headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was interesting to note that the Veterinary Public Health Programme was one of the largest in resources.

80. As in the future, Food Protection would be among the first priorities of the programme, followed by rabies and foot-and-mouth disease. There would be an increase from 5 to 12 professionals directly involved with food protection activities, who would have the support of about 50 professionals.

81. As was stated above, the Panamerican Zoonosis Laboratory also formed part of the programme. Since 1969 a Food Microbiological Laboratory which was created within its framework had increased its activities and today has become a Unit for Food Protection. The background papers for these activities were prepared and published in 1969 and 1970: they emphasized the need for creating in each and every country in the region programmes on Food Hygiene and Protection on the basis of its sanitary, economic and social importance. It was specially stressed that lack of food hygiene was one of the main causes of infant mortality due to diarrhoea.

82. The actions on food protection undertaken by the Veterinary Public Health Department could be grouped as follows:

- (a) Cooperation in the establishment and/or administration of programmes.
- (b) Cooperation in the preparation and revision of national food laws and regulations.
- (c) Collaboration in the development of inspection services.
- (d) Collaboration for the establishment or development of analytical services.
- (e) Cooperation in epidemiological activities and information on foodborne diseases.

In each of these aspects, direct technical cooperation and training had been offered and some studies and applied research had been undertaken.

83. Some of the specific activities undertaken by PAHO in the period covered by this report were:

- Five seminars or workshops on epidemiology or prevention of foodborne diseases: two in Mexico, in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de México with the attendance of participants from Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico. Two for veterinary surgeons from five countries held in the

headquarters of the Panamerican Zoonosis Centre and one held in Argentina for veterinary surgeons from the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

- An intensive three-week workshop on Microbiological Food Control and a week devoted to the study of staphylococcus enterotoxins in collaboration with the Laboratorio Nacional de Referencia of Mexico attended by Guatemala and Mexico.
- An intensive three-week workshop on Food Microbiology, which included techniques of antibiotic detection, identification of animal species in meat products, technical and microbiological control of canned food, detection of Campylobacter jejuni, Yersinia enterocolitica, and others, in collaboration with the Laboratorio Nacional de Referencia Animal (LANARA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health in Brazil with the attendance of participants from Mexico (2), Uruguay (3), Chile, Peru, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia and Brazil (18).
- Under the same auspices, these technicians attended an intensive workshop on biological tests applied to food microbiology, with special reference: to the detection and determination of botulinum toxin and saxitoxins. Tests of bound intestinal loops, suckling mice and tissue culture were also analyzed.
- An intensive workshop on Food Protection in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Hygiene Institute in Venezuela, in which issues dealing with programme administration, legislation, chemical and microbiological controls and food technology were examined (74 professionals from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Paraguay, and Venezuela attended).
- Four workshops on Food Protection for professionals from Buenos Aires, Argentina, were held.
- Educational collaboration with FAO dairy workshops and with the Latin American Programme of Dairy Graduates from the Centro Tecnológico de la Leche in Chile.
- Three workshops in Peru (on Food Protection, Hygiene and Microbiology) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health the School of Health and the Municipality of Lima.
- Collaboration with FAO in some of its activities by providing them with antigens, reactivities, vaccines and other materials.
- Collaboration with two countries, Brazil and Mexico, in the establishment of Programmes of Quality Control in Food Control Laboratories (LANARA and LNR).
- At the request of the Government involved in the establishment of the Commission on Veterinary Inspection of Meat in the Plata Basin (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), the Panamerican Centre on Zoonosis has become its Technical Secretariat.
- Collaboration in the organization of the 1st meeting of Experts on Methodology of Epidemiological Monitoring and Foodborne Disease outbreak research. (Ministry of Health, Brazil).

- Study and implementation of Hazard Analysis. Critical Control Points (ARPC-HACCP).
- Publication of information on several aspects of food protection.
- Organization, in collaboration with FAO, of a seminar on Food Protection in the Caribbean.

84. The Training Programme on Food Hygiene has undertaken several important activities. Twenty seminars for 510 participants have been held on specific topics such as meat, milk, fishery products, dairy products, etc. Workshops for non-professional food inspectors were also held.

These workshops have been held mainly in Medellin, Colombia, and other countries with participants from almost every country in the region.

In spite of all these efforts, requirements, estimated at 18 000 professionals and 200 000 auxiliaries for the next five years have not been covered.

85. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the representatives of FAO and PAHO and commended the organizations for their support towards strengthening national food control systems in the region.

86. All the Delegations present gave a brief account of their current activities, the steps being taken to strengthen these, and highlighted some of the priority needs for international cooperation.

87. The Delegations of Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina and Panama welcomed the general support provided by international agencies to food control and food contamination monitoring programmes and wished this to be further strengthened.

88. The Delegation of Ecuador referred to the need for assistance in reviewing food laws and regulations.

The Delegations of Guyana, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, Argentina and Colombia stressed the need for training of food inspectors and analysts, particularly in the field of residue analysis. A point was made that in many cases the persons so trained moved over to other jobs and this should be discouraged.

89. The Delegations of Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Argentina referred to the need for resources, particularly for laboratories. In this connection the Delegation of Mexico also stated that consideration be given to preferential financing. A point was made with regard to introducing a system of quality control in the laboratories so that the results obtained were comparable.

90. The Delegation of Argentina requested for greater support in the area of food contamination monitoring, while the Delegations of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago and Ecuador expressed the need for greater cooperation at regional or sub-regional level. Several delegations drew the attention of the Committee for greater cooperation amongst FAO and WHO/PAHO.

91. On the basis of the detailed discussions, the Committee agreed that the strengthening of national food control infrastructure and systems was a high priority concern in the region and the processes to improve the situation were necessarily rather slow. While the national authorities should continue increased efforts in this direction, the Committee strongly recommended that the support and cooperation from FAO and WHO/PAHO, as well as from UNDP and other donors should be strengthened in order to

achieve the desired objectives within a reasonable time frame. The Committee welcomed the cooperation between FAO and WHO/PAHO in this area and recommended that further closer coordination be maintained between the two agencies to derive the maximum benefit within the resources available.

92. The Committee also recommended that every effort should be made to develop and promote technical cooperation amongst developing countries of the region. The region had several well-developed institutions as well as expertise available in different countries. Greater use of these could be made for developments within the region and outside.

Agenda Item 7(c)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF PAHO WORKSHOP ON STANDARDIZATION OF FOOD AND ON HEALTH (24-26 March 1984)

93. The Committee wished to place on record its appreciation and thanks to PAHO for having organized and financed the above workshop which contributed to the successful organization of the Committee's Third Session and to the Cuban State Committee for Standardization for having hosted it. The Committee considered that the workshop had been extremely useful and beneficial for a better understanding of the aims and methods of working of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Committee also recognized the importance and usefulness of the workshop as a means of enabling countries of this region to exchange views about the needs of the region in the area of food standards, food control and related matters, both for the purpose of consumer protection and for the purpose of promoting food exports.

94. The Committee took note of the recommendations of the workshop and noted that they would be editorially finalized by PAHO and published, in due course, as part of the report of the workshop.

95. The Committee also wished to place on record its appreciation of the work of the Chief Moderator (Dr. Norah M. de Carranza, Argentina) and of the Chief Rapporteur (Dr. A. Castro Domínguez, Cuba) as well as of the work of the moderators and rapporteurs who participated in the workshop.

96. The Committee expressed the wish to have the report of the workshop placed on the agenda of its next session.

97. In addition, the Delegation of Cuba expressed the view that it would be very desirable to have a similar workshop prior to the next session of the Coordinating Committee. The Delegation of Venezuela supported the Delegation of Cuba and suggested the following topics for inclusion in the agenda of the next workshop:

- (i) Analysis of the economic consequences of an inadequate food control system.
- (ii) Managerial analysis of food control systems.
- (iii) Food control and guarantee of quality of food analysis laboratories.
- (iv) Problems of food control and urbanization.
- (v) Questions related to pesticide residues in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (vi) Questions related to street vending of foods.

Agenda Item 8

Consideration of Topics of Current Interest

Agenda Item 8(a)

Report on Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Safety (Geneva, 30 May - 6 June 1983)

98. The Secretariat reminded the delegates that, in 1978, the International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata, USSR, had spelled out the essential elements of Primary Health Care, one of these being the promotion of ("inocuos") (Safe) food supply and proper nutrition. It was obvious to everybody that food has not only to be available but it has to be safe (inocuos), which implies that eating it should not give rise to foodborne disease. It was also obvious that improperly stored or prepared foods can cause illness. Less obvious, however, was the degree to which foodborne disease associated with the contamination of the food supply can harm a nation's health and even its economy.

99. The Expert Committee on Food Safety noted that in 1980 there were about 1 000 million episodes of acute diarrhoea in children aged under five in the developing world (excluding China). Nearly five million children died at a rate of ten diarrhoeal deaths every minute of every day of every year. A substantial number of these deaths are caused by food, directly by microbiological contamination and indirectly by reducing the nutritional status in marginally nourished children. When one adds to this total such non-diarrhoeic foodborne diseases as botulism typhoid and parasitism as well as the acute and chronic effects of chemical contamination of foods, the number of affected people and the consequent impact on human function and well-being is appalling. Equally important is the effect of such widespread acute and chronic debilitation on the economy and financial condition of the world community. The experts further noted that in the last 40 years many efforts and programmes had been initiated to deal with this issue, yet foodborne illness continues to be one of the great evils of mankind.

100. From the discussions of the experts, the Expert Committee had recommended a strategy which laid emphasis on several points. First, the solution to food contamination problems must be based on knowledge of culture and economic practice and on information concerning the incidence and causes of the disease. Second, both national and local interventions were needed. At the national level, well coordinated national legislation, and regulations, rigorously enforced by trained, incorruptable officials, was essential; at the local level, food safety must be an integral part of primary health care, and must be based on appropriate education and information of the public in general and of mothers in particular. The experts stressed further the need for development of simple technologies to reduce foodborne diseases and to apply more complex technologies (such as food irradiation) to solve specific food safety problems.

101. Illness and the lack of well-being leading to reduced economic productivity due to contaminated food constitute one of, perhaps, the most widespread health problems in the contemporary world. It was for this reason that the experts called upon Governments and international organizations to deal with this issue as a major priority item. In conclusion the Committee was informed that the report of this Expert Committee will be published during 1984 in the Technical Report Series of WHO and will be available upon request.

102. During the extensive discussion of this topic in the Coordinating Committee, several delegations expressed their appreciation for and agreement with the work of the Expert Committee on Food Safety.

103. The proposal was made by the Delegation of Venezuela to plan for a regional seminar on food safety, in order to give the topic more publicity. This Delegation also suggested the endorsement of the Expert Committee's recommendations by this Regional Coordinating Committee. The Committee agreed with both these proposals.

104. The Delegation of Cuba referred to his country's efforts to improve food quality and quantity within the overall target of Health for All by the Year 2000. The infant mortality rate had been greatly reduced during the last 25 years and was now 16.8/1 000. Enteritis and typhoid fever incidence was low. Nevertheless, the Delegation pointed out that microbiological and chemical contamination of food remained a problem which calls for further action, especially in the field of education. Referring to the Workshop on Food and Health Standardization in Latin America, which preceded this Third Session of the Coordinating Committee, the view was expressed that several of the recommendations elaborated by the workshop would be also relevant for better knowledge and control of these problems in the region.

105. The Delegation of Peru stated that in its country 30% - 40% of cases of communicable diseases as well as a third of hospitalization cases were foodborne. Peru had started a campaign to control and prevent infant diarrhoea which included education activities for the community. This campaign had been given the name "sanitation literacy" and made - inter alia - reference to safe food handling at the domestic level. Simple pamphlets, radio and TV spots were employed in the "sanitation literacy" campaign.

106. The Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago informed the Committee that its country, jointly with WHO/PAHO, had organized national workshops on primary health care and food and nutrition. In the latter one, consumers and industry representatives participated. The Delegation underlined the importance of information and education of the public. The public's demand for safe food was a strong motivation to improve the safety of the food supply.

Agenda Item 8(b)

Special Considerations regarding Food Control in connection with Urbanization

107. In introducing the background paper for this item (CX/LA 82/6), the Secretariat called attention to the particular importance of this topic to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Many of the major cities of the region have experienced extremely rapid growth which has overwhelmed the capacities of Government and industries to provide adequate levels of sanitary services or housing to newer urban residents. This situation has led to a wide range of problems, including problems of food quality and safety. The people living under sub-standard conditions with regard to water supply, sanitary services and housing often make up a significant percentage of the food-handlers in shops, markets, restaurants and larger-scale food processors, leading to greater possibilities of the spread of foodborne disease.

108. The Secretariat pointed out that rapidly growing urban populations place new demands on food transportation and distribution systems and often lead to shipment of foods over much longer distances, leading to problems of food spoilage, decomposition and contamination, both chemical and microbiological. Demographic projections made by the United Nations and by countries indicate that urban growth will continue at a rapid

rate, and that therefore Governments need to take urgent action to improve food quality and safety from the points of production or harvest, through the storage, transporting, processing and marketing stages of foods to protect all urban consumers from foodborne disease, and adulterated, decomposed, or contaminated foods.

109. In the absence of specific country or local information, the Secretariat paper presented an analysis of problems detected in foods shipped from Latin America and the Caribbean in international commerce to the United States. This analysis showed that the value of Latin America and the Caribbean food products detained by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at the point of import was about \$60,000,000 per year, and that problems of insect, bacterial, mold, pesticide residue and mycotoxin contamination were prevalent, as were problems of decomposition and labelling. On the basis of this analysis, it was postulated that similar problems existed with foods shipped to and consumed in large cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, although additional food control services and programmes were needed to specifically identify and control the problems in each country.

110. The Secretariat paper called attention to the need for Government food quality and safety officials to work closely with food processors and universities to develop and carry out control and education programmes designed to increase the level of protection of urban consumers from adulterated or contaminated foods. While rapid urbanization has caused a wide range of problems which needed to be solved, the Secretariat expressed the hope that food related problems could be given high priority in Government planning so that specific steps could be identified at the local, national, and international levels to resolve as quickly as possible food quality and safety problems related to rapidly growing city populations.

111. In discussing this agenda item, a number of delegations expressed the desire for further action in terms of the suggestions contained in part IV of the paper and to solve the problems of food quality and safety which are exacerbated by rapidly growing cities in the Region. The Delegation of Cuba expressed the view that these concentration phenomena were also founded on social problems, particularly of food distribution and that this reaction served as an outlet from serious rural problems in the absence of better living conditions at the rural level. All delegations which spoke on this agenda item agreed that food quality and safety problems caused by rapid urbanization should receive high priority, and mentioned specific problems such as control of food peddlers in urban areas; the need for additional food control laboratories and personnel to assess the prevalence of various problems and to rapidly control the more serious problems identified by regular surveillance; the need for Governments to assess the basic socio-economic problems which lead to rapid urbanization and to take steps to solve these socio-economic problems at the same time that specific steps are taken to solve food quality and safety problems. The view was expressed that the background paper for this agenda item was a good outline of food problems related to urbanization, and that it could be used by Member Countries as a guideline in reviewing national and local problems with a view towards defining further programmes to solve identified problems.

112. Several delegations briefly discussed actions taken in the countries to improve distribution systems, particularly for perishable products, to solve certain problems of urbanization. It was acknowledged that many problems remained to be solved and the Mexican Delegation and other delegations agreed that continued exchange of information and advice between countries, and between each country and international organizations would be of great value. Representatives of the Pan American Health Organization reinforced the views of the Secretariat paper and of Member Countries

intervening on this agenda topic, and called attention to problems of marketing systems such as excessive numbers of middlemen in food distribution chains which increase food prices and slow down distribution without any real increase in benefit to food producers or consumers; and problems in semi-urban slums which often contain shops, markets, and small food factories which are operating under poor sanitary conditions. PAHO reported that some countries or cities had already taken concrete steps to improve food quality and safety systems and mentioned programmes of the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo and of Mexico as good examples.

113. In view of the concerns expressed on urbanization, it was suggested that the Regional Codex Coordinating Committee retain this agenda item for the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee to enable further discussion of this problem and of programmes which have been initiated in Member Countries to reduce the impact of urbanization on food quality and safety. Mention was made of the 1983 FAO sponsored symposium held in Bogotá, Colombia, which discussed problems of urbanization and its impact on food supplies and nutrition status of people living under relatively poor conditions in urban areas. The hope was expressed that the international organizations could support further workshops and seminars to enable continued discussions of this important problem.

Agenda Item 8(c) - Improvement in Village Level Food Handling

114. The Secretariat in introducing the subject referred to document CX/LA 82/7. The paper had been prepared some time ago in the context of the problems in Asia and Africa. However, the subject matter was of universal significance and could be considered in the light of the situations prevailing in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

115. FAO had defined food handling as the sum of processes and treatments which food is subjected to from its production until its final consumption. The importance of food handling in this context, therefore, will ensure quality, safety and wholesomeness of food, thereby improving the nutritional status of people on the one hand and reducing food losses due to spoilage and losses of nutrients during processing, preservation and storage on the other hand.

116. The objectives of the food handling programme include conservation of food resources, maintenance or enhancement of nutritional value of food and to ensure that handling operations are safe and the food presented for consumption is wholesome. The situation regarding food handling at rural family, household, and community levels is complex and will be affected by cottage enterprises, nature and size of villages, the administration set-up and services, customs, habits and traditions of food usage at household level, economic and social groupings, and socio-economic status. It will also be affected by the ecosystem, water supply and environmental sanitation. The food handling practices will affect the nutritional and health status of the people.

117. As far as the maintenance and enhancement of the safety and nutritional qualities of food are concerned, the present efforts are mainly directed towards market economy and affect those foods which are brought and/or bought in the national and international markets. The entire subsistence sector, which in developing countries is significantly large, remains untouched. This is, however, the sector where safe, hygienic and nutritional food is necessary for consumption to minimize malnutrition and combat ill-health. It is extremely important that people be made aware of the benefits of good food handling practices. Efforts are therefore needed to make the masses aware of the usefulness, advantages and dividends of the safe and nutritious foods for consumption

through improved food handling practices. It was not only a technological problem but the one that had several socio-cultural implications and action will therefore have to be developed accordingly.

118. The Representatives of PAHO agreed that the subject matter was of considerable importance. Most of the foodborne diseases had their origin from the family kitchen and handling of food at that level. It was pointed out that the conditions in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean were different than those in Asia and Africa and there were variations even amongst the countries of the region. PAHO offered its cooperation to work with FAO towards improvements in food handling practices.

119. The point was made that in some countries excessive bureaucratic requirements overburdened small and medium size handlers of food which forced them to resort to illegal means. The same was in some cases true if the authorities required too high taxes or too expensive equipment to be used by street vendors and other small scale food handlers.

120. The Committee took note of the economic and socio-cultural issues involved in food handling within urban and rural areas and their relation to food safety. Rural areas in Latin America had greater facilities such as safe water supply, electricity and also the consumption of processed food was quite considerable. Food systems and sub-systems are inter-linked to form a complex, and hence action programmes should devise the means to integrate the activities of the various official agencies involved in several components of the food chain - from production, processing, marketing and distribution to consumption. A need for specific studies in the area of food handling was indicated.

Agenda Item 8(d)

Street Vending of Food-Health Consequences

121. The Secretariat, in introducing Conference Room Document CX/ASIA 84/9, drew attention to the fact that this paper had been written by Mr. CO. Baptist, Director, Food and Drug Administration and Laboratory Service Division, Ministry of Health, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria. It reflected essentially the situation in Nigeria, which may, however, be also applicable to some countries in Latin America.

122. The paper discussed the socio-economic changes which helped to boost street vending of food in a large city like Lagos. It touched on the health problems associated with this trade and its attendant adverse consequences. The paper also attempted to focus attention of health authorities on the importance of providing not only enough but safe food for achieving the social goal of Member States and WHO, namely Health for All by the Year 2000.

123. During the discussions of this topic in the Coordinating Committee, there was a general consensus that street vending of food was also an important public health problem in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Representative of PAHO reminded the Committee that during the Technical Discussions of the 28th meeting of the Directing Council of PAHO on Sanitary Control of Food (see para 50 of this report), this topic had also received considerable attention and that some proposals for corrective measures formed part of the final report of these Technical Discussions (for details please see PAHO Scientific Publication No. 421). He also drew the attention of the Committee to a recently published newspaper article where the public health authorities of one very large Latin American city were quoted to have stated that in their country 30 000 people died annually due to the consumption of contaminated foods sold by street vendors.

124. Several delegations reported to the Committee that they had also evidence that street vended food was an important source of foodborne disease outbreaks on a large scale.

125. There was a unanimous feeling among the delegates that special regional and national efforts need to be made in order to improve the hygienic quality of food sold by street vendors. For this reason the Committee recommended the holding of a regional seminar specifically devoted to the topic of street vending of food. In addition, studies should be undertaken at the national level to determine the social economic and biological factors responsible for the poor hygienic conditions of street vended food in order to design appropriate interventions. The Representatives of FAO, WHO and PAHO agreed to look into this matter.

126. Pending the development of specific proposals for intervention clearly designed to the conditions in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Committee endorsed the intervention proposals made during the Technical Discussions on Sanitary Control of Foods and by Mr. Baptist in this paper on this topic.

Agenda Item 9

COOPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC GROUPS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES IN THE REGION OF LATIN AMERICA ENGAGED IN FOOD STANDARDS WORK

127. At its previous session, the Committee had discussed the above topic based on a document (CX/LA 78/4) prepared for the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Latin America held in Mexico City in September 1978 (CX/LATIN AMERICA 78/12).

128. This document gave a detailed review of the activities of economic groups of the region which were interested in regional work on harmonization of food regulations and emphasized the necessity of a common approach to food legislation and to regional standardization and pointed out that this was generally recognized throughout the region. It proposed that these objectives could well be achieved by using as a basis for harmonization and coordination the International Food Standards already elaborated by Codex.

129. Although there was agreement in principle with this approach. The way in which existing work on food standardization by regional and sub-regional bodies could be reconciled to Codex International Standards was not examined. In the opinion of the Conference, the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America which was intergovernmental and covered the whole of the region including the Caribbean would be very competent to undertake harmonization of food standards and related matters in the region. Various regional international bodies were therefore asked to supply summaries of the current work on food standardization and to indicate the current status of their food standards.

130. At the 2nd Session of the Committee, replies from six international organizations were examined and as a result the Secretariat had suggested the following course of action. "A first task would be to examine regional and national standards, identify those for which Codex Standards already existed and arrange them in a common Codex format (see Procedural Manual of the Commission, 5th Edition, page 51 of the English edition and page 49 of the Spanish edition). This would already be an important step forward since apparent rather than real differences arising from a different approach to the layout of standards which could cause confusion and be an impediment to trade

would be eliminated. At the same time, examination of the limits and provisions established by Codex General Subject Committees could also lead to the updating of provisions for food additives, pesticide residues, hygiene and labelling requirements. Such an exercise would not preclude the Coordinating Committee from undertaking standardization work on any commodities of importance in international trade for which standardization was judged to be urgent and necessary. It could, however, be the means of bringing national and regional standards together, harmonizing their contents and setting them in an international format" (see also ALINORM 81/31, paras 105-107).

131. The delegations and regional organizations present at the Second Session had expressed their general agreement to these proposals and the Secretary-General of COPANT had agreed to the Committee's request to prepare a study of the differences between COPANT and Codex standards especially with regard to the feasibility of adjusting the regional COPANT standards to the corresponding world-wide CODEX Standards for consideration at the Third Session of the Committee. However, because of re-organization and re-structuring within COPANT it had not been possible to make such a study.

132. The Committee noted at its present session that there was still general agreement among the delegations present that the study was necessary as a first step in the exercise of harmonization food standardization work in the region with Codex Standards and that this was in line with Draft Recommendations of the Workshop on Food Standardization and Health in Latin America which had met just before the present session and was attended by Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

133. The Delegation of Cuba, recognizing the urgent need for the harmonization of food standards elaborated by regional and sub-regional organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean proposed that the Secretariat of the Coordinator, prepare, in consultation with the Codex Secretariat, a document which could allow discussions to begin on the examination of these standards at the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee.

134. The Committee agreed to this line of action and that ISO, CARICOM and other regional organizations including eventually COPANT could contribute usefully to such a study. Attention was also drawn to the CCI/UNCTAD/GATT project with Latin American countries on a System of Technical Information for International Trade in Latin America and the Resolutions 180 and 92 of the Cartagena Agreement concerning harmonization and coordinating of standards and food hygiene of the Andean Group, The Hipolito Unanue Agreement of the Andean Group was also indicated as a source of useful information.

135. The Committee thanked the Delegation of Cuba for having proposed to undertake the study.

Agenda Item 10

CONSIDERATION OF NEED FOR DEVELOPING CODEX STANDARDS FOR TROPICAL FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

136. The Committee had before it document CX/LA 84/6, which contained an extract from the Report of the Fifteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on this subject. The document also drew attention to the fact that the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce of the United Nations Economic Commission for

Europe (UNECE), Geneva, had decided to undertake the development of European standards for certain exotic fresh fruits and vegetables, taking into account the decision of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its Fifteenth Session, not to develop Codex standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables at the present time. The document also mentioned that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris, was considering a proposal for a standard for fresh mangoes. The Secretariat, in introducing this topic, outlined the main features of the paper (ALINOMR 83/7) which had been prepared by a consultant and presented to the Fifteenth Session of the Commission.

137. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Coordinating Committee for Asia at its 1984 session had decided that there was no need for international Codex standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables. The reasons for this decision by the Coordinating Committee for Asia were made known to the Committee. The Coordinating Committee for Africa had given preliminary consideration to this topic, but would be re-examining it at its 1985 session, which would be held before the Sixteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Committee noted that the views of the Coordinating Committees would be considered by the Executive Committee at its Thirty-First Session to be held in Geneva in June 1984 and by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its Sixteenth Session to be held in Geneva in July 1985.

138 The Committee noted that the kind of international standards recommended by the consultant for fresh tropical fruits and vegetables, if the Commission should decide to embark upon this work, were so-called trading standards with different quality grades, e.g., Extra Class, Class I, Class II. The Committee also noted the view of the UNECE's Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce that Joint UNECE/Codex working arrangements, similar to those for fruit juices, might be envisaged, if the Commission decided to *start* work in this area. The Committee also noted that it would probably be necessary to consult the Codex Committee on General Principles, if it were the intention to apply the standards only to produce moving in international trade, but not to produce on the domestic market.

139. The Delegation of Brazil recalled the position it had taken at the Fifteenth Session of the Commission on this subject. Brazil was in favour of developing international Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, which, it believed, would assist the trade and make for better marketing of exports which in Brazil amounted to about 40 millions US dollars. The Delegation of Colombia considered that it was necessary to develop international Codex standards for these products rather than regional standards. Colombia considered that the acceptance of international standards would help to increase trade in these products. Colombia also considered that the absence of Codex Standards made it easier for some importing countries to erect technical barriers to trade.

140. The Delegation of Mexico stated that Mexico wished to see international Codex standards developed for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables, because it; considered that such standards would be beneficial for equitable commercial practices.

141. The Delegation of Venezuela indicated that it was in favour of the development of Codex standards for these products.

142. The Delegation of Cuba also favoured the development of Codex standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables and stated that there was a consensus in the region of Latin America in favour of establishing Codex standards for these products.

143. The Committee noted that the above views would be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee and of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Agenda Item 11

CONSIDERATION OF WORK PRIORITIES FOR THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA

144. The Committee had before it document CX/LA 82/9 on the above subject, and document CX/LA 84/2 containing relevant excerpts from the reports of other regional Coordinating Committees and the Codex Committees on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes and on Food Labelling. A further document LIM. 1 entitled "Matters of Interest in the Latin American and Caribbean Countries visited by the Delegations of the Regional Codex Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean" also contained comments and proposals by Member Countries for regional standardization work.

145. The Committee had at its second session identified several foods for which standardization might be required and had agreed to further consider whether regional or world-wide standards should be developed at the present session.

Barley and their Products

146. The Committee noted that at its First Session, the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes had decided that the present trade in the above foods did not warrant standardization of grains but decided to ask whether there was enough regional consumption to justify the regional standardization of milled oats since they had good nutritional value.

147. Several delegations indicated that oats were mostly used for fodder in the region and that barley was almost exclusively used in the brewing trade. The Committee agreed that there was no justification for elaborating regional standards for barley and oat grains or their products.

Other Cereals

Rice:

148. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes had decided not to elaborate a standard for Milled Rice at present and that this was in line with a recommendation by the Coordinating Committee for Asia that such a standard not be developed until such time as the ISO standard for rice had been finalized and examined by countries of the region.

Sorghum:

149. The Committee noted that the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa was developing a Regional Standard for Sorghum grains for human consumption.

150. The Delegation of Mexico stated that Mexico was interested in the development of a world-wide standard for this commodity. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat that Argentina had sent a previous written communication to the Coordinator for Africa on this subject. The view of Argentina was that if there was a need for a Standard for Sorghum Grains for human consumption, it should be developed as a world-wide standard and not as a regional standard.

151. The Committee agreed to bring these views to the attention of the Commission.

Coffee and Coffee Products

152. The Committee noted that the subject of standardization of Coffee had been discussed by the Commission on several occasions, most recently at its 12th Session following a request from the Coordinating Committee for Africa to reconsider the matter of establishing a Codex Committee on Coffee and Coffee Products.

153. Several delegations, among which were those of Brazil and Colombia drew the attention of the Commission to the work on standardization of such bodies as the International Coffee Agreement and ISO and the existence of adequate national legislation in defence of this commodity. The Commission had decided not to establish a Codex Committee on Coffee and Coffee Products without prejudice to future consideration of the matter.

154. The Committee noted that at its Second Session there had been opinions expressed both for and against the elaboration of a standard for coffee beans and that in view of the absence of many coffee producing countries of the region, it had deferred further consideration of standardization to its Third Session.

155. At the present session the Delegations of Brazil and Colombia supported by the Delegations of Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela reaffirmed their views that for the reasons already expressed (see para 153) there was no need to embark on the standardization of coffee and coffee products at the present time.

156. The Representative of ISO informed the Committee of its collaboration with the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the field of methods of analysis and sampling and the development of specifications for some products such as rice, wheat grains and spices which were not covered by Codex standards. With regard to Coffee and Coffee Products the Representative informed the Committee that ISO work on Specifications was in progress in ISO Technical Committee 34/Sub-committee 15 (ISO TC 34/SC 15).

157. The Committee noted the opinions expressed by delegations, and recognizing that certain aspects of the standardization of coffee were covered by ISO, decided not to pursue additional work on standardization at the present time.

Non-alcoholic Beverages (Soft Drinks)

158. The Committee noted that INCAP had given high priority to the elaboration of a standard for soft drinks but because of lack of information on the subject had deferred discussion on the matter. It also noted that the matter had been discussed at previous sessions of the Commission which had decided that international standards for these products were not necessary.

159. The Committee was informed that there was in existence a Codex Advisory List of additives for use in soft drinks and recently published WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water.

In the opinion of several delegates these two texts if followed, adequately covered the two points of greatest concern with regard to the quality of soft drinks, that is, the use of colours and flavours and the hygienic quality of the water used in their manufacture. It was also recognized that the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene was elaborating guidelines for the Collecting, Processing and Marketing of Natural Mineral Waters.

160. The Committee agreed with the point of view expressed by delegates and decided not to begin work on the standardization of non-alcoholic beverages. It noted at the same time the observations of the Delegation of Peru with regard to the difficulties entailed in quality control of soft drink powders.

Alcoholic Beverages

161. The Committee was informed that at its 10th Session the Commission had had extensive discussion on whether to begin work on the standardization of wines and spirits and after listening to the opinions of delegates, and the Representative of WHO and the OIV had decided not to proceed further with the matter.

162. The Committee noted that in the opinion of several delegations the nature of alcoholic beverages was so diverse from country to country that it would be extremely difficult to draw up comprehensive international or regional standards.

163. It also noted the views of the Representative of WHO that such products had low priority for standardization.

164. The Committee agreed that it was better to cover these products by national legislation and decided not to begin work on regional standards for wines and spirits. However, the Delegation of Cuba pointed out its own interest to initiate studies to prepare standards for alcoholic beverages.

Other Products

General

165. The Committee noted the views of the Delegation of Brazil that when examining the need for regional standards for products moving in inter-regional trade it should be borne in mind that such standards should not contain any provisions that were stricter than those in international standards: otherwise there was a danger of creating non-tariff obstacles to trade.

166. The Delegation of Argentina pointed out that care should be taken to avoid duplication with existing regional or sub-regional standardization work and adequate information on production, trade and consumption of food proposed for standardization work should be available before decisions were taken.

Fish, Molluscs and Fishery Products

167. The Delegation of Cuba pointed out that fish-farming techniques were being used on an increased scale throughout the world and proposed with the support of the Delegations of Ecuador and Peru that the need for the elaboration of a Code of Practice for Aquaculture should be studied. It also proposed that the elaboration of a Codex standard for Molluscan Shellfish should be examined. The standard would complement the already existing Code of Hygienic Practice for Molluscan Shellfish (CAC/RCP 18-1978).

168. The Committee noted that the examination of drug residues in aquacultured fish and fishery products would be part of the terms of reference of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food which would meet in Rome later this year. The Expert Committee would submit a report to the Codex Alimentarius Commission setting forth the views and recommendations concerning the control of anaboles, antibiotics and other products used in animal husbandry.

169. It was agreed that the above proposals should be forwarded for consideration by the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products at its next session.

170. The Delegation of Cuba also proposed that the Committee should consider a Standard for Shark Fins as an item for regional standardization.

It was agreed that Cuba would prepare a document on the production, trade and consumption of shark fins for consideration at the next session of the Committee.

Sugar

171. The Delegation of Cuba pointed out that it had accepted with specific deviations the Codex Standard for White Sugar and took the opportunity to propose the elaboration of a regional standard for raw sugar since this would benefit intra-regional trade and would discuss this proposition with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Sugar Export Countries (GLACSEC). The Delegation agreed to provide the required data so that the feasibility of elaborating a regional standard for raw sugar could be examined by the Committee at its next session.

172. The Delegation of Cuba was of the opinion that the ICUMSA methods for sugar analysis in the Codex Sugar Standards should also be used by Members of this Coordinating Committee with the aim of encouraging inter-change among the countries of the region and consolidating their influence internationally. It was agreed that ICUMSA would be contacted directly on this point.

Grated Coconut

173. The Delegation of Mexico proposed that regional standardization of grated and/or glazed coconut should be investigated. The Committee noted that there was already a Code of Hygienic Practice for Desiccated Coconut (CAC/RCP 4-1971) which was under revision to include end-product specifications for Salmonella.

It was agreed not to undertake work on these products at the present time.

Agenda Item 12

Report on Proposal to amend the Codex Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food

174. The Committee was reminded that the Codex Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food had been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 13th Session 1979. The Code of Ethics contained some provisions which permitted the advertising, promotion and the provision of information for breast-milk substitutes, weaning foods and generally all foods for infants and children. On the other hand, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes had been adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 1981, and contained some provisions which did not permit advertising and promotion of breast-milk substitutes and regulated the provision of information on the contents of these products. To this extent, there was a conflict between these two international codes, which needed to be resolved.

175. Accordingly, the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission requested the Secretariat, at its 29th Session in 1982, to prepare a paper on the question of amendments to the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food for consideration by the Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission at their next session in 1983 (see ALINORM 83/3, para 38). The Secretariat prepared a paper entitled "Proposal to amend the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food" (ALINORM 83/38, Part II) which was considered by the Executive Committee at its 30th Session in 1983.

176. During this session the then Vice-Chairman, Mr. Kimbrell submitted another proposal to amend the Code of Ethics. He proposed the following version for paragraph 5.9 of the Code of Ethics: "5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission". The rest of para 5.9 should be deleted. As a consequential amendment,

para 5.10 (b) of the Code of Ethics should read as follows: "(b) information concerning the nutritional value of food should not mislead the public" and the rest of this sub-para should be deleted.

177. Mr. Kimbrell explained that in his view it was not necessary to repeat in one international code what was already clearly stated in another.

178. The Executive Committee, after thorough discussion, agreed with this view, namely that it was not necessary to repeat in one international code what was already stated in another. However, it felt that there was a need for the addition of a new preambular paragraph which should read as follows; "(g) The International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes sets forth the principles for the protection and promotion of breast feeding, which is an important aspect of primary health care". Finally, the Executive Committee agreed to refer the question to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for consideration in the light of the discussion that took place in the session of the Executive Committee. (For details see ALINORM 83/4, paras 6-16).

179. During the discussion of this topic by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its 15th Session in 1983, several delegations spoke, but there was no unanimous opinion. The Delegation of India finally stressed the need for more time to study the new proposal by the Executive Committee. It was for this reason that the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission proposed to defer the final decision on the amendment of the Code of Ethics to the next (16th) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in asking (i) Governments to submit written statements regarding their position; and (ii) Regional Coordinating Committees to discuss the issue during their forthcoming sessions. (For details, see ALINORM 83/43, paras 524-527).

180. The Coordinating Committee was finally informed that this topic had been discussed during the recently held 4th Session of the Codex Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia and that the Asian Committee had agreed with the Executive Committee's proposal to amend the Code of Ethics in the following way:

(i) Preamble:

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

(ii) Paragraph 5.9:

"5.9 Foods for infants, children and other vulnerable groups should be in accordance with standards elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission".

(iii) Paragraph 5.10(b)

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

181. During the discussion of this topic at the Third Session of the Codex Regional Coordinating Committee for Latin America, there was unanimous agreement on the need to amend the Code of Ethics as expressed in document CX/LA 84/8. Regarding the examination of the Code of Ethics and of the Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, the Committee considered whether it would be convenient to include this item on the agenda of the Fourth Session since at this time it did not have at its disposition all the elements necessary for a full examination of the topic. The majority of the delegations favoured the proposal made by the Executive Committee as reproduced

in para 178. The Delegation of Argentina stated its agreement with the principle that it was not necessary to repeat in one international Code what had already been stated in another. Two delegations, on the other hand, thought that it would be useful to maintain in the Code of Ethics a recommendation prohibiting advertizing, as contained in the Secretariat paper ALINORM 83/38, Part II. The Delegation of Venezuela, while supporting the amendment proposal as contained in ALINORM 83/38, Part II, stated that the amendment proposal made by the Executive Committee would also be acceptable to it if in the interest of international harmonization, a decision of this kind were made.

182. The Chairman, in summing up the discussion, once more invited Governments to submit their written comments to the Secretariat in order to enable the Codex Alimentarius Commission, at its forthcoming 16th Session, to make a final decision.

Agenda Item 13

ACTIVITIES REGARDING PESTICIDES AND THEIR RESIDUES IN FOODS

183. The Committee had before it document CX/LA 84/7, attached to which were the revised Recommendations of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and its Working Group on Pesticide Residue Problems in Developing Countries (ALINORM 85/24), Appendix IV). Document CX/LA 84/7 also provided some information about the Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides currently being developed by FAO, with the assistance of other international bodies. In addition the document provided information on developments in FAO on the subject of pesticide registration requirements.

184. In introducing document CX/LA 84/7, the Secretariat briefly reviewed those Recommendations which were specifically addressed to developing countries. The Committee was informed that the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa, at its Sixth Session, held in Nairobi from 31 October to 5 November 1983 had unanimously endorsed the Recommendations and had agreed that the organization of seminars would be useful in increasing the understanding of available information and assistance on pesticides. The Coordinating Committee for Africa had also strongly supported the development of the Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (ALINORM 85/28, paras 137-146).

185. The Secretariat also informed the Committee of the outcome of the meeting of the First Session of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems, which had been held in Petchburi, Thailand, from 24 to 27 February 1984. The recommendations of that meeting were communicated orally to the Committee. The Committee noted that the meeting of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia had strongly supported the development of the Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. That meeting had also made recommendations concerning (i) the generation of residue data from supervised trials; (ii) technical assistance from industry; and (iii) strengthening the infrastructure in developing countries to enable them to apply Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues (MRLs). All these recommendations had subsequently been endorsed by the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia, at its Fourth Session, held in Petchburi, Thailand, from 28 February to 5 March 1984. The meeting of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia had expressed satisfaction that FAO and MHO had already taken action regarding some of the Recommendations of the CCPR and its Working Group on Pesticide Residue Problems in Developing Countries, as had also a number of countries of the region. The Group had expressed the opinion that the recommendations needed to be up-dated periodically. The Group had also recommended that meetings of the Group of

Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems should be held regularly alongside meetings of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, in order to ensure maximum attendance and better participation.

186. Copies of the Resolution concerning Acceptance of Codex MRLs and ERLs by Governments, which had been adopted by the First Session of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems, were made available to the Committee, as were also copies of the relevant section of the Report of the Group (see also para 26). The need for all Members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to make greater efforts to put into effect the recommendations of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues in the interest of facilitating trade, as well as to protect consumers, had been stressed in the Resolution. In this connection, the Secretariat brought to the attention of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America an extract from the text of a Resolution which had been passed at the XVII FAO Latin American Regional Conference held in 1982 by the assembled Ministers of Agriculture of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Resolution (LARC 7/82) had stressed the need for coordination of technical and health requirements between the countries of the region, in order to facilitate intra-regional trade. The Resolution recognized that differing requirements can constitute non-tariff obstacles to trade. The Committee was informed that the Resolution reflected the concern in many countries of the region about the trend by importing countries to lower the permissible thresholds for pathogens and chemical contaminants particularly pesticide residues.

187. Following the introduction of this topic by the Secretariat, several delegations indicated their views. The Delegations of Argentina, Colombia and Mexico outlined the situation in their countries concerning the production, distribution and sale of pesticides and the relevant legislative position. Laboratory facilities were also described by the different delegations, as were also actions taken or contemplated in order to make the best use of Codex MRLs, including the setting up in some countries of national Codex Sub-committees on pesticide residues. The Representatives of PAHO and FAO briefly informed the Committee about ongoing activities in the area of technical assistance, including training facilities, as well as in the area of information available.

The Delegation of Colombia gave information on the administrative and legal system which had put into effect the control of agricultural pesticides by manufacturers, distributors and users. Concerning pesticide residues, the Delegation mentioned that a document had been published which contained methodology for establishing MRLs in crops and another on the application of such methodology for aldrin and dimethoate in potato culture. This methodology was along Codex and JMPR lines and was at the disposal of interested countries.

188. The Committee concluded as follows:

- (i) The Committee agreed on the importance and usefulness of the Recommendations of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and its Working Group on Pesticide Residue Problems in Developing Countries. The Committee agreed that every country in the region should examine them and see what could be done to implement them.
- (ii) The Committee recognized the importance and value of the work of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues in recommending international maximum limits, for the purpose of protecting the health of consumers and facilitating international trade. The Committee recognized the value of these recommendations as a basis, subject to examination, for national legislation.

As regards the Resolution on Acceptance of Codex MRLs and ERLs which had been adopted by the First Session of the Group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems, the Committee agreed that Member Countries should study it carefully, with a view to forming an opinion on the approach of the Group to the question of acceptance of the MRLs - if possible before the next session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, which would be held in the Hague from 28 May to 4 June 1984.

- (iii) The Committee expressed its appreciation of the efforts of FAO, WHO and PAHO in the areas of practical assistance in the provision of laboratory facilities, training facilities, etc., and stressed the importance of intensifying these efforts.
- (iv) The Committee recognized that there was a considerable amount of information available from bodies such as FAO, WHO, PAHO and others, on the subject of pesticides, efficacy, specifications, toxicological data and evaluations, maximum residue limits, etc. The Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Coordinating Committee for Africa that FAO/WHO be requested to consider preparing a manual which would pull together in one publication all the information that was available on pesticides, including the recommendations of international organizations, sources of technical assistance, etc. The Committee was informed that a publication had been issued by the Swedish National Food Administration, Uppsala, entitled "Control of Pesticide Residues in Food - a Directory of National Authorities and International Organizations". One copy of this publication had been sent to Codex Contact Points by the Codex Secretariat. Interested countries were invited to send up-dated information to Sweden.
- (v) The Committee considered that pesticides and pesticide residues would be a very appropriate topic for discussion at a workshop and expressed the hope that it would be possible to organize another workshop before the next session of the Committee.
- (vi) The Committee thought that developments concerning the Code of Conduction the Distribution and Use of Pesticides being developed by FAO should be brought to its attention at its next session. The Committee also thought that the implications of the Code for Latin America would be one of a number of items suitable for discussion at the proposed next workshop under the general heading of pesticides and pesticide residues. The Committee noted, however, that consideration of the actual text of the code would take place in another forum in the light of Government comments.

189. One delegation (Cuba), indicated that there was a need to establish Codex MRLs for tropical products for which it proposed the elaboration of a co-ordinate programme in the region to collect data which would be communicated to the CCPR. The Delegation of Cuba referred to one of the recommendations of the workshop which had been held immediately before the Committee's session, namely that it would be highly desirable for a consultant to advise on pesticide residue problems in the region.

190. Another delegation (Brazil) thought that a document for use by developing countries, should be prepared which would analyse the problems which can impede the progress of national programmes in the area of control over the safe use of pesticides,

such as education of rural workers responsibility in the case of accidents arising from unsafe use, and the sensational way in which the subject was treated.

191. The Observer from Spain wished to place on record his appreciation of the high level of the discussions in the Committee, which he considered to be very useful. He indicated to the Committee verbally and in a note given to the Secretariat: that it was important to comment on the serious problem which may arise from the general evaluation of levels of pesticides in whole fruits whose skin or peel are not edible. It was necessary to engage in an in-depth research of this matter which may have important consequences with negative impact on international trade. Therefore, the Observer from Spain wished to call attention to this matter in the sense that in this type of fruit with inedible skin, pulp should be analyzed, taking into account necessary nuances as to consumer habits and specific destination of the product analyzed. This approach had not been recognized by the CCPR, which had followed the criterion of relating the maximum limits to the whole fruit. In cases where this is not based on strict studies, it may become an important hindrance to international trade and may work against the spirit of the Codex.

192. The Secretariat indicated that, in fact, the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, was developing more and more international maximum limits applicable to the edible portion of food commodities.

Agenda Item 14

Implementation of the Resolution of the Latin American Food Standards Conference, 1978

193. The Resolution passed by the Regional Conference held in Mexico City, in 1978, appeared as Appendix IV of the Conference Report (CX/Latin America 78/12). The Secretariat drew attention of the Committee to three operative sections of the Resolution, one each dealing with national authorities in the region; regional co-operation and machinery for assistance in food control; and international activities.

194. In so far as the recommendations addressed to national authorities are concerned, discussions under agenda items 6 and 7 (paragraphs 61-97) had provided enough information to indicate that Governments were indeed giving food control and food contamination monitoring and control activities a high priority within their national programmes.

195. Similarly, the information provided by the countries and representatives of FAO and WHO/PAHO under agenda item 7 (paragraphs 74-99) indicated that regional cooperation particularly in fields of exchange of information and training was a continuing process and further steps should be taken for its promotion. The Regional Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America had been giving consideration to a special approach in establishment of standards for foods of special interest moving in trade in the region and in this connection a reference was invited to the discussions held under agenda item 11 (paragraphs 144-123).

196. In the case of the recommendations referring to international activities, the Committee was informed of the developments within the Codex Alimentarius Commission which continued to give special emphasis to the needs of developing countries. Particular attention was drawn to the amendments in the Procedural Manual enabling member countries, if they so desired, to submit economic impact statements for consideration by the Codex Committee concerned or the Commission, as appropriate, prior to the adoption of the international standard.

197. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and expressed its general satisfaction with the progress made towards the implementation of the Resolution.

198. The Delegations of Colombia and Cuba provided additional information on the developments in their countries. The Delegation of Colombia informed the Committee that there were Food Hygiene Training Centres in Colombia which were at the disposal of requesting countries for training purposes.

199. The Committee reiterated the need for continuing efforts for the development of national and regional programmes in the light of the Resolution.

Agenda Item 15

Other Matters

Spanish Translation and Interpretation in Codex Committees

200. The Vice-chairman of the Commission, Dr. E.R. Méndez (Mexico) brought to the attention of the Committee the concern expressed by countries of the region that no simultaneous interpretation into Spanish was provided in some Codex Committees. It was the general opinion that it should be the practice throughout Codex Committees to provide such facilities.

201. Several delegations pointed out that greater participation at Codex Meetings could be encouraged if Governments hosting Codex Committees would assure that both simultaneous interpretation and adequate and timely translation of working documents into Spanish were provided at Committee sessions.

202. In addition, the Observer of Spain and the Delegation of Panama expressed the opinion that even though it was necessary to urge more Codex Committees to provide simultaneous interpretation facilities in Spanish, it was also of the utmost importance that in those Committees which had already established such facilities there should be efforts to provide working documents translated into Spanish in good time and in a proper form sufficiently in advance of Committee meetings.

203. The Committee noted that participants at the Session unanimously supported both points of view.

204. The Secretariat indicated that the situation had improved with regard to the provision of simultaneous interpretation in Spanish over the past few years and that in some cases there were constraints on the timely translation of documents because of the late arrival of comments and other background material for Codex Sessions.

205. The Secretariat was requested to bring the views of the Committee to the attention of the Committees concerned and of the Commission.

Agenda Item 16

Date and Place of Next Meeting

206. The Committee agreed that to re-establish the rhythm of sessions it should meet again before the 16th Session of the Commission which would take place in July 1985. It was also agreed to request PAHO to hold, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and other international organizations, especially FAO and WHO, a workshop on a topic or topics recommended at the present meeting immediately before the fourth session of the Coordinating Committee.

207. It was decided that the Fourth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee should take place in mid-April 1985. The exact date and arrangements would be agreed in discussions between the Cuban Government and the Codex Secretariat.

208. The Committee agreed unanimously to place on record its appreciation of the excellent arrangements made by the Cuban authorities for the organization of the sessions and its thanks for the very warm hospitality extended by the Cuban authorities, the organizers and the Cuban participants.

ALINORM 85/36
APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

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OPENING STATEMENT (27.3.84)

by

Eng. Ramón Darías Rodes
Minister-President

Cuban State Committee for Standardization
and Regional Coordinator of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
for Latin America and the Caribbean

Esteemed,

Dr. Eddie Kimbrell, Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Dr. Mario Fernandez, Representative of Dr. Carlyly Guerra de Macedo, Director-General of the Pan-American Health Organization and Coordinator of its Veterinary Public Health Programme, Mr. José Ramón Yarza, Permanent Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Dr. Luis Ernesto Giraldo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the PAHO in Cuba,

Dr. Eduardo Méndez, Vice-Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission,

Mr. Henry McNally, FAO Joint Secretary of Codex Alimentarius Commission, Dr. Friedrich Käferstein, WHO Joint Secretary of Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. Raj Kumar Malik, Senior Officer, FAO Food Policy and Nutrition Division.

Lic. Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz, Minister of Foreign Trade of Cuba, Lic. José R. Viera Linares, Minister a.e. for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba,

Ambassadors and Missions Chiefs accredited in Cuba,

Distinguished representatives of Member States, personalities and guests, who honour us with your presence.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cuba, and, in our capacity as Codex Alimentarius Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, to express to you our satisfaction of meeting in this historical Convention Centre, and for having Havana as its Seat.

We assure you that we are going to make all our best efforts in order that the objectives of this meeting be attained, and that it contributes to the strengthening of the links of cooperation among our countries, to the development of Food Standardization in the Region and, in particular, of Codex activities trying, during your stay in Cuba, to make you feel as if you were in your own countries.

When we resolved to become the Seat of the Regional Coordinating Committee in the Area, we took into account, among other factors, the modest contribution that Cuba could make to Regional Standardization and, specially, to those activities linked with food. Therefore, I would like to explain to you briefly the development attained by Standardization activities in our country, as well as by those ones concerned with Metrology and Quality Control, these being - as you know - indissolubly linked with the former ones.

With the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, our country inherited an economically deformed structure, with a backward agricultural basis and a low industrial development, this having been centered mainly upon the sugar industry.

All this resulted in the economic policy of the Revolution beginning to be aimed at reorganizing the economy, with the purpose of eliminating its structural deformation, developing the national industry, diversifying and increasing agricultural and cattle raising production, increasing exportable goods and widening the exports, substituting imports, and increasing progressively the living conditions of the people.

Trying to attain this goal, the Revolution had to be devoted however during a good part of these years and, specially during the first years of the revolutionary power, to eliminating the emerging obstacles and to solving unsustainable and sometimes dramatic tasks in the revolutionary process, to put forward the main activity of those years: the survival of the revolutionary power and the keeping of the conquests attained by the people's struggle.

After those times of constant action for maintaining the triumph achieved, the country could devote, to a greater extent, its possibilities for the advancement of the economy, and for the analysis of those activities allowing its development.

Many were the efforts made by the different state bodies and, particularly, by the industrial sector of the country, to achieve the progress of the Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control activities, which were limited for many years to the aspect concerning its development, due to the non-existence of those mechanisms which could have integrated them to the group of economy management, to the absence of a technical tradition in the pre-revolutionary stage, and to the almost lacking availability of cadres skilled in such disciplines.

Being aware of this and owing to the importance that these activities have for the economical progress of the country, within the context of the Economic Directives of its Programme Platform, the I Congress of our Party, held in December 1975, resolved that it was necessary to develop and implement a National System for Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control which ensured the technological discipline and the quality of production, not only of intermediate goods being incorporated to the productive process, but also of those intended to people consumption and of the ones constituting national exportable funds.

The II Congress of the Party ratified these principles and, through different guidelines, it continued drawing its attention towards the process of implementation and improvement of the National System of Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control, as one chain in the link of the Economy Management and Planning System. As a result of the efforts made during all these years, we presently count upon a State Standards Fund which exceeds the figure of 17 000 technical and standardizing documents of different categories, 4 500 of which are product quality specification standards.

Given the planned character of our economy, the Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control activities are part of the Plan for the National Economic and Social Development, the tasks concerned with these activities and intended to accomplish the first five-year plan which will be concluded in 1985, being satisfactorily performed. In this same direction, we have undertaken some modest work to provide Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control with a Development Strategy up to the year 2 000.

Special importance has been given to Quality Certification of products, which, after having attained a minimal methodological, managerial, and technical basis, has

been undergoing a test and analysis process since the second semester of 1981, this having allowed us to count today upon more than 400 certified products, 290 of them having already the State Quality Mark.

A considerable number of actions have been taken to create a minimal material basis which progressively ensures the measurement means verification. Today we count upon an Institute for Metrology Researches, and three Territorial Metrology Centres. These and more than 65 Metrological Laboratories credited in different bodies and enterprises comprise a national network allowing the verification of approximately one million measurement means annually. Today the verifications exceed almost 30 times those of 1977. Being aware of the limitations still faced by our country, a programme of investments has already been approved and implemented in order to attain the suitable metrological assurance of national economy, and from which we expect to *achieve* concrete results for the next five years.

A decree-law on the implementation of the International Units System (SI) has been approved by the State, and the National Standards concerned with two Measurement Units have been certified.

Besides, in these years work has been undertaken towards the organization and performance of state inspection, which has enabled the compilation of some elements regarding the quality of production and the main causes affecting it, these actions being considered to be contributing to strengthening its discipline and sustained development.

It is worthy of note that the effort directed to the qualification of managing and technical cadres involved in these activities; in this sense training specialization and increase of the qualification in such disciplines have been directed towards the most urgent needs of the country, and towards the creation of the basis for its further development.

In the last few years, more than 2 600 short courses, seminars, and conferences on these disciplines have been carried out. The qualification of medium-level technicians specialized in metrology has been organized in six technological centres of the country. Subjects concerning standardization, metrology and quality control have been introduced in the Specialized medium-level and higher educational centres.

This activity has been carried out in close link with some Ministries and Institutions, as well as with different manufacturing and services enterprises, in which organizational units that have been created are engaged in the management and development of such activities, with which we work together.

Nearly 700 products linked with the food branch are backed by quality specification standards, 135 of them being in compliance with Codex Standards, and other documents published by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Today, food standardization, as well as the constant concern about their quality, are shown to be making progress, since the figure of 160 products exhibit the State Quality Mark.

In the Health sphere, there exist up to the moment about 600 products of the Pharmaceutical Industry that have been standardized, our aim being counting upon the standardization of the whole pharmaceutical products, that is, more than 900 items for the end of the next year.

Esteemed guests and delegates,

The little experience we may have accumulated as regards these activities is available to all the countries of the Area who consider it to be useful and suitable to some extent to their concrete conditions, being sure, by making such an exchange, we shall also learn from your own experiences, which will contribute in short to the strengthening of cooperation and will serve as a positive factor for the development of our countries.

On the basis of these principles, and taking into consideration the importance of strengthening the links between the countries of the Region, we assume the responsibility of the Codex Regional Coordination, being aware of the need all of us have for increasing the participation in the work of the Commission.

For all of us who, in one way or another, are taking part in the international food standardization tasks that have been undertaken by the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme through the Codex Commission, the importance of such activities for the international economy becomes evident, and in particular, for the economies of developing countries.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the most important food standardization organization of inter-governmental character and, in fact, it is carrying out the most outstanding work in this sphere.

Consisting of 122 countries of every world latitudes, and linked in one way or another with 77 international organizations, governmental or otherwise, Codes - as we use to call it frequently - is undertaking a particularly important work for consumer's protection; it is also promoting international trade through the harmonization of standards and through the elimination of technical barriers; it constitutes a way of technology transfer and serves the industrialization and agricultural development goals of its Member States, and even of those countries who are not officially registered in its participants list.

Codex is, moreover, an important inter-governmental forum for the analysis of the problems concerned not only with quality specifications and standards for food products, but also with those aspects linked in general with food like pesticide residues, metallic contaminants, additives, hygiene, labelling, and others constituting, in summary, a tribune from which to defend outstanding economic, commercial and technical interests in this sense, and to contribute to the dialogue and to the mutual understanding of relevant questions for international economy.

The ever-growing increase in the participation in Codex, which already groups three fourths of United Nations Members, clearly shows the consistent concern all the world over in the work of such organization and, at the same time it points out - among other things - the world-wide role it is playing as leading institution in the food standards sector and its related work.

The work of Codex has been spreading out to every region, Regional Coordinating Committees having played a determinant role in such activity.

As regards the Regional Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, we believe that we have not attained all the goals we have to aim at.

Although this is one of the Regions that since an early date was concerned with the food standardization and legislation work, and that intensively felt the necessity and the usefulness of having common, or at least harmonized, food standards - this being

subscribed to in various treaties and agreements -, remarkable progress has not been achieved in this sense.

As a reflection of this situation, we could cite, among others, the limited participation of our countries in the drawing-up of Codex International Standards; their acceptance level; the lack of regional standards or at least, some studies showing the convenience or not of having regional standards; the drawing-up of world standards of concern for Latin American and Caribbean countries where there is an accentuation of differences that put an obstacle to the attainment of the goals concerned with the economic integration schemes existing in the Region.

All of us know that the causes are multiple and complex, but we are also aware of the need we have for viewing the problems with a Regional criterion, without ignoring the peculiarities of each situation.

In summary, in our opinion we should and can increasingly take advantage of the possibilities we are provided with by the activities carried out by the Commission.

Esteemed colleagues,

Before the Latin American and Caribbean Coordinating Committee, various and important tasks linked with the economic and commercial work of the Region, are presented today.

Our projections could not stop however taking into account the economic situation of the Region and, particularly, the food situation existing in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The World is crossing over one of the worst economic crises of its history, and our region, as a part of the international community, becomes affected by this crisis due mainly to the fact of being, as a whole, developing or underdeveloped countries, if we want to be more precise.

In fact, Latin America and the Caribbean are facing the most serious and deep economic and social crisis, showing singular, unprecedented features.

1983 was qualified by ECLA as the worst of the last 50 years, a decrease of nearly 3,3% being recorded for the Latin American countries as a whole.

Some manifestations of that crisis are the big and increasingly higher external debt of the countries belonging to the Region, which means more than one third of the total debt of developing countries, high rates of inflation and unemployment, high interest rates, deterioration in terms of exchange, sharp fluctuations as regards exchange rates, uncertainty in the financial market, and a marked protectionism in the goods market.

The so-called world food crisis of the 70's has contributed to the worsening of the food situation in Latin America. In our Region, it can be noted that the great Latin American and Caribbean majorities, compared with some areas of the developed world, have a daily per capita of calories and proteins, which is considered to be low. The Latin American self-supply of basic foods has been markedly decreasing in the last few years.

Before the economic crisis, and specially before the food crisis, our countries have assumed the attitude of facing such problems in the spirit of solving them by strengthening the economic integration, and the cooperation among our peoples.

Different international and regional bodies, such as FAO, PAHO, ECLA, SELA, and the like, have pronounced themselves in this sense and the most recent example is

the Economic Conference held in Quito, Ecuador, whose Final Declaration is an exponent of the criteria above-mentioned.

The increase in the inter-regional economic and commercial cooperation, the need of unity and firm cohesion for carrying on the attacks on the crisis, the development of technological and financial cooperation with developed countries under right and fair conditions, jointly with the strengthening of regional organizations that contribute to the Latin American economic integration are, among others, some of the actions that the countries of our region have proposed themselves to put into practice in order to face such a situation.

In relation to the food problem, it has been pointed out that it has acquired particular relevance and it is also ratified the purpose of supporting, among other aspects, those actions aimed at achieving and maintaining regional food safety.

Likewise, all the International, Regional and Sub-regional Bodies involved in those Latin American problems linked with foods have been requested to coordinate in an effective way their efforts and programmes in order to strengthen the cited regional food safety system.

Outstanding priority is being given to food exchange through the actions considered by the Conference as regards inter-regional market promotion, including the elimination of technical barriers in this commercial exchange.

We consider that the Codex Alimentarius Regional Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean can also contribute to find some positive solutions for our countries.

We must get involved at once in the most important problems to be solved and, at the same time, we must look perceptively which are to be the tasks to be performed in the short, medium or long term with respect to the Codex Alimentarius work in the Region.

In our opinion, the basic lines of the Coordinating Committee activity must be towards the following directions:

1. Drafting an Action Plan which allows us to take advantage of the international food standardization actions taken by the Codex Commission in favour of the interests of the Region.
2. Defining accurately the problems and needs of the Area as regards food standards, food control and inspection, this allowing us to work in this sense with a higher certitude and accuracy.
3. Taking actions aimed at strengthening cooperation among regional organizations linked with food standardization in order to get a true harmonization of the work carried out.
4. Analyzing carefully the whole interest of the Region that could be exposed at the international level before the Commission, in order to request the establishment of international standards on products of interest to the region, specially those ones that, according to the Committee, have an international potential market for the future.
5. Promoting the attainment of financial resources, through suitable mechanisms allowing to concretize the reinforcement of national infrastructures for food inspection and control.

6. Studying the problem of regional standardization, proposing the drawing-up of standards for products being commercialized within the Region, as a way of facilitating their internal exchange.
7. Assisting national standards harmonization by promoting the acceptance of Codex Standards and other Codex documents that are able to be complied with the former, as a way of taking advantage of the work undertaken by the Organization, as well as coordinating the national standardization efforts to promote commercial links with the countries of the Region, and others outside it, thus achieving an increased quality of food products of high human consumption and intended for exportation, which contribute to strengthening our economies.
8. Increasing the contacts and meetings among Our countries through Workshop Meetings, Symposiums Seminars, Training Courses and other modalities allowing cadres qualifications, as well as the exchange of criteria in order to solve our own problems and to take advantage of national experiences.
9. Promoting the joint activity of the Region which enables the assumption of attitudes with respect to the common interests of the countries composing it, in order that it will be possible to increase the ability of a joint action of and the negotiation among Latin American and Caribbean countries in the framework of the Organization at a world level.
10. Strengthening the activities of Codex National Committees.
11. Increasing the exchange of specialized technical and scientific information by promoting the creation of a mechanism which makes this exchange effective in the most rational, active and productive way, as possible.
12. Stimulating the technical assistance, and the qualification of specialists in these fields, taking advantage of the activity performed by other regional organizations concerned with Codex work.

These basic ideas, as well as other aspects taken into consideration by the countries of the Region could constitute our working goals for the years to come and in such sense, Cuba reiterates its availability to work for achieving them and advancing therefore the Coordinating Committee activities.

Consequently, it will be necessary to count upon the support of all the countries of the Region, to take joint actions, and to search for the contribution of regional organizations, specially those having the main responsibilities within Codex activities.

During the months that have passed since we took this important responsibility, we have found out that there is a will on the part of our countries to contribute to advancing Codex activities, this having been evidenced by the direct contacts established with eleven of the total number of countries we were able to visit and, moreover, that there exists an understanding within the framework of those international and regional organizations linked with our work.

We must emphasize in this sense the contributions made by FAO, WHO, and - particularly the Pan American Health Organization which, through its authority and prestige within the Region, has made demonstrated efforts of technical, organizational and financial character towards the success of this meeting, its best concrete example being the Workshop Meeting on Food and Health Standardization that was concluded yesterday and that, owing to the fact of holding such a Meeting for the first time in Latin

America and the Caribbean, we are sure that it will contribute to the good progress of this III Meeting of the Coordinating Committee.

It is our desire that this Meeting be a new departure point as to the purposes we have resolved to achieve, and likewise we think that some of its main objectives should be to envisage a group of pending aspects since the Committee held its last meeting in 1980, that is, to analyze these problems so that we can find solutions allowing us to advance towards the achievement of new goals.

Esteemed guests and delegates,

Before the proposed tasks, we count upon a Latin America and a Caribbean that are facing some problems of different kinds, as well as some hard obstacles, but this is not a reason why we are unable to solve them. Our America is strong enough to overcome successfully these obstacles, taking the right place within the work of international food standardization.

In order to advance in the tasks we have imposed upon ourselves to perform, we count upon the disposition of our countries, the intellectual, technical and organizational potentiality of our Region, as well as upon its ability to respond to it, and all these factors should enable us to advance Codex activities for the benefit: of Latin American and Caribbean economies.

We must put forward the debates of the III Meeting, being aware that it is necessary to look inside Latin America and the Caribbean to find out - through our mutual relations, our economic and technical concert, and our common actions and tasks - the way of advancing these activities within the framework of a renewed involvement in trying to establish an order which renders imperative equality and cooperation.

We must also examine our problems in an open and fraternal environment, so as to attain the best results in favour of national and regional food standardization activity. When fighting for achieving these goals, we are sure that we will count upon the support of many countries, as well as upon that of international and regional organizations like FAO, WHO, PAHO, SELA and UNDP, among others.

The international community can take for granted that we are convinced that if Latin America and the Caribbean recover the path of their economic development, they are going to be again a dynamic element in the necessary and healthy reactivation of the world economy, being at the same time aware that peace and development problems have an essential link, since without peace development cannot be achieved, and without development peace shall always be precarious.

In that spirit and on the basis of such ideas, we put the emphasis in the confidence that this event, its analysis and debates, will allow us to make objective statements favourable to the progress of food standardization in the Region and to the increase of our participation in the work undertaken by Codex Alimentarius.

Thanking you for your attendance at this III Meeting of the Coordinating Committee and reiterating to you that we are going to make our best efforts so that you feel during these days as if you were in your own countries, we exhort you to view your own ideas, to have wide and exhaustive discussions, and to try to achieve those agreements that become beneficial to our peoples.

We are sure that the task imposed on this III Meeting and on the Codex Alimentarius Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean will be successfully carried out.

Thank you very much.