

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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WORLD HEALTH
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Nineteenth Session

Rome, 1-10 July, 1991

**REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA
AND THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC
Honolulu, Hawaii, 30 April – 4 May, 1990**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The First Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific reached the following conclusions during its deliberations:

- Agreed to record the strong support of countries in the region for the current work being undertaken between the **Codex Alimentarius Commission and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade** (para. 24);
- agreed to forward suggestions concerning the improvement of **acceptances of Codex Standards and Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides** to the Commission (paras. 34, 38 and 94);
- agreed to support the use of **regional trade agreements** facilitate worldwide trade in foods when such agreements were based on international (i.e., Codex) standards (paras. 34 and 53);
- agreed to continue the examination of **information exchange systems** in the regions which relate to import/export certification and inspection with a view towards preventing non-tariff barriers to trade (paras. 60 and 62);
- agreed to support the use of the **Codex Code of Ethics in International Trade in Foods** by countries in the region (para. 68);
- agreed to endorse the use of the **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System** for food protection (para. 70);
- agreed to adopt recommendations for the establishment of **organic, natural, nutrition and health claim guidelines** (paras. 73, 76 and 79);
- recommended holding **pre-session food control workshops** to facilitate the attendance of developing Pacific island nations at Codex sessions (para. 83);
- agreed to recommend the convening of a joint FAO/WHO expert consultation to examine problems associated with the **inspection of fish and shellfish** (para. 85);
- agreed to recommend the **promotion of Codex activities** and made several specific suggestions for action (para. 93);
- agreed to examine the **priorities and infrastructure of Codex** with a view towards its improvement (paras. 95-96);
- agreed to recommend the need for the CCFAC to examine the **use of food additives** that been accepted and used in countries over long periods of time (para. 97); and
- - agreed to recommend the separation of **food additives and contaminants** into different Codex committees (para. 99).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The First Session of the Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific was held from 30 April - 4 May 1990 in Honolulu, Hawaii by courtesy of the Government of the United States of America. The Session was chaired by Dr. Lester Crawford, Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture. During the adoption of the report, the Session was chaired by Dr. Fred Shank, Director, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, United States Food and Drug Administration.

2. The Session was attended by representatives of the governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America, as well as an observer from the South Pacific Commission. A list of participants at the Session, including members of the Secretariat, is attached as Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (Agenda Item 1)

3. Dr. Lester Crawford formally opened the Session on behalf of the U.S. Department of State by noting the history and importance of events leading to the creation of the Committee. He expressed the hope that the Committee would play a leading role in the deliberations of the Commission, and would address many important issues concerning unique regional needs and standards. The importance of the current GATT Uruguay Round Multilateral Agriculture Trade Negotiations in relation to the work of Codex was also highlighted.

4. The Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Ing. Eduardo Mendez Rubello, stressed the importance of the Committee's deliberations in such areas as regional membership, acceptances of Codex work, food control activities, regional standards and the current GATT procedures, and noted that the establishment of the coordinating committee indicated the true worldwide participation of all countries in Codex work.

5. Mr. Eddie Kimbrell, member of the United States delegation and former Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, noted that the establishment of the Coordinating Committee showed the flexibility of the Commission in adapting to current needs and changes. The Committee was important in addressing issues within the region as well as providing support to the Commission and Secretariat in the publication of Session reports.

6. A member of the Secretariat, Dr. Gerald Moy, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO and stressed the importance of considering the needs of small countries in the South-West Pacific area, as these countries were large importers of various foodstuffs.

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA (Agenda Item 2)

7. The Committee agreed to adopt the Provisional Agenda (CX/NASWP 90/1) with the understanding that agenda item 10 would be divided into issues concerning organically produced foods, use of the term natural on food labels and nutrition and health claims. The Committee also noted that agenda item 13 (Monitoring of Food Safety Activities in the Region) was omitted as a working document was not available for consideration at this Session.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 3a)

8. The Secretariat presented a summary of issues of interest to the Committee arising from the 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CX/NASWP 90/2) as well as an oral report on matters arising from other Codex Committees. The Committee also had a document which outlined the Proposed Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade (Conference Room Document 1) for its information, (see para. 41).

9. Among other issues presented in the working paper or discussed under other agenda items, the Committee noted the following information:

- a) nine countries have joined the Codex Alimentarius Commission since its Seventeenth Session, including Papua New Guinea from the South-West Pacific Region, for a total of 138 member countries;
- b) "Guideline Levels for Radionuclides in Food following Accidental Nuclear Contamination for Use in International Trade" was adopted by the Commission and published as Supplement I to Codex Alimentarius Volume XVII (CAC/ Vol. XVII-Ed. I, Supplement I) in December 1989. The Commission also adopted a definition for guideline levels, agreed that the levels were applicable for one year following a nuclear accident and agreed that questions concerning the application of dilution factors and minor dietary components should remain under review, (paras. 90-102, ALINORM 89/40). The Coordinating Committee for Asia discussed the guideline levels and concluded they were too high, and also asked the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) to provide information on the application of guideline levels in years subsequent to the accident year, (para. 157, ALINORM 91/15). The CCFAC discussed this issue in detail and decided to seek the advice of the Executive Committee, (para. 26, ALINORM 91/12). The CCFAC also agreed to seek information on dilution factors and minor dietary components used in other countries legislation through a circular letter, and concluded that the establishment of permanent guideline levels would be considered at its next session;
- c) a paper discussed at the Commission (paras. 112-118, ALINORM 89/40) concerning " Implications of Biotechnology on International Standards and Codes of Practice" (ALINORM 89/39) has been circulated for comments (CL 1989/48-GEN). A Joint FAO/WHO Consultation is scheduled to convene in Geneva from 5-9 November 1990 to discuss this issue, (also see para. 42);
- d) the Commission adopted the Regional European Standard for Mayonnaise at Step 8, with the understanding that a paper will be prepared for discussion at the 19th Commission Session outlining the possibility of enlarging the territorial scope and application of Codex regional standards, (paras. 150-154 and 197, ALINORM 89/40);
- e) the Commission adopted common terms of reference applicable to all Regional Coordinating Committees, (paras. 198-200, ALINORM 89/40);

- f) the Commission adopted recommendations to strengthen its activities to coordinate food standards work undertaken by other international organizations;(para. 218, ALINORM 89/40);
- g) the CCFAC agreed that further examination of "Proposals for General Provisions for the Use of Food Additives in Standardized and Non-Standardized Foods"(CX/FAC 89/16) was required. The CCFAC is preparing studies on antioxidants and preservatives and grouping together the present Codex uses of these additives in the format proposed in the document. The studies would be circulated to request information on uses of these compounds in non-standardized foods for discussion at the next CCFAC session. The Commission would also be informed of the decision to undertake exploratory work in this area, (paras. 29-37, ALINORM 91/12).

Activities of the South Pacific Commission

10. The representative of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) thanked the Directors-General of FAO and WHO for their invitation to attend the meeting, and noted that the SPC was established in 1947 as an agency to provide expert technical assistance and advice to twenty-two countries and areas of the South Pacific region.

11. The observer noted that policy and priorities for the SPC were established by the governments of the region and by the founding governments of Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The South Pacific Commission has close and well developed links with the people and countries of the region, and many of its professional and executive staffs are Pacific islanders. The SPC is a relatively small organization but its staff composition and structure allows for meaningful responsive actions addressing the real needs of South Pacific islanders.

12. The South Pacific Commission provides advice and assistance to its member countries in areas covered by Codex and has a cooperative and productive relationship with Codex as well as with Pacific island government departments, agencies and other metropolitan governments. Specifically, the SPC has professional staff working in Codex and FAO/WHO related areas such as food safety and hygiene, nutrition, food composition, epidemiology, health education, tropical agriculture, plant protection, fisheries, rural economics, and environmental science.

13. The SPC staff provide in-country, sub regional and regional training, as well as information in various publications and languages geared towards specific audiences. The SPC also publishes documents, posters, and videos translated into local languages. A good example of such work is the excellent nutrition information service provided by SPC. In addition, the SPC provides detailed professional assessments of country needs through a multi-disciplinary approach, as illustrated by the integrated rural development schemes organized by SPC.

14. The observer of the SPC indicated that the organization strongly supports the activities of Codex and the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific. However, it requested that the unique and different concerns of the smaller island nations be considered by the Committee as they tended to be over shadowed by concerns of larger nations in the region. In addition, both human and financial resources available to countries of the region are often very limited, which restricts their ability to control food quality, especially related to imported foods. Moreover, these countries have limited food product exports which are sensitive to

outside barriers to trade. For these reasons, Codex related matters are important to Pacific island countries, and the SPC will endeavor to make regional governments aware of the benefits of Codex involvement.

15. In conclusion, the observer of the South Pacific Commission expressed its gratitude for the attention given by the Committee to the particular problems of Pacific island countries, and it looks forward to active cooperation on Codex related matters in the future.

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE URUGUAY ROUND TRADE NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE: WORKING GROUP ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS AND BARRIERS (Agenda Item 3b)

16. The Secretariat introduced paper CX/NASWP 90/3 which summarized GATT Uruguay Round discussions of principal relevance to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex). Information was provided on the formation of the GATT Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Regulations and Barriers (WGSP) in 1988 and on progress made by the WGSP in its six meetings since September, 1988. The WGSP is one of several GATT subsidiary groups established during the Uruguay Round discussions. The WGSP reports to the GATT Negotiating Group on Agriculture (NGA).

17. The Secretariat drew particular attention to the April 1989 agreement in principle of the GATT NGA to promote harmonization of national sanitary and phytosanitary regulations on the basis of appropriate Codex standards and work of the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) on animal quarantine measures and the FAO administered International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for phytosanitary measures, along with other relevant international scientific expertise and judgment. The agreement of the NGA to emphasize use of sound scientific evidence in evaluating sanitary and phytosanitary regulations was mentioned, as well as the NGA call for assistance to developing countries to enable them to meet Codex standards.

18. Attention was called to the decision of the FAO Conference in November 1989 to promote continued strong FAO, Codex and IPPC support to GATT, and to strengthen the FAO and Codex work on sanitary barriers to trade. The Secretariat reported that good FAO/WHO/Codex relations existed with the GATT Secretariat and that the FAO Conference recommendations to strengthen this cooperation would be implemented as soon as some short term FAO funding support problems had been resolved.

19. CX/NASWP 90/3 contained a summary of current discussions, except for the April 1990 WGSP meeting deliberations. The Secretariat summarized the various proposals put forth by different countries and groups of countries in the WGSP meetings. It was pointed out that all GATT participants continued to give full support to use of Codex work in GATT. The Uruguay Round final discussions, scheduled for completion in December 1990, will continue to recognize the work of FAO, WHO and Codex as the basis for better harmonization of national regulations and as the basis for international trade.

20. In discussing this agenda item, the Delegation of Australia presented additional information on work of the Cairns Group in GATT WGSP discussions. An April 1990 Cairns Group paper (MTN. GNG/NG5/W/164) places emphasis on risk assessment and acceptable levels of risk and consideration of economic problems caused by national decisions on sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. It was pointed out that WGSP discussions included both food, trade and plant/animal quarantine issues and that careful consideration was needed with regard to the common aspects and differences

between these issues. The current Cairns Group proposal emphasizes broad harmonization of standards, methods of sampling and analysis and recognition of equivalence of systems used in different countries. Emphasis is also given to assistance to developing countries and to means of dispute settlement through informal and formal GATT procedures.

21. The Delegation of Australia also provided information of possible GATT implementation procedures which were currently under discussion. These could include use of the existing GATT code on Technical Barriers to Trade, production of a new code on sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to trade, or a policy document from GATT interpreting GATT rule 20(b) with regard to appropriate disciplines on the use of sanitary and phytosanitary measures based on work of international groups such as FAO, WHO and Codex. Information was also presented on possible dispute settlement procedures when GATT would utilize Codex and FAO/WHO recommended standards and scientific advice of experts nominated by Codex in resolving disputes brought to GATT by countries. The nominated experts would serve in their own capacity and not as representatives of Codex.

22. In response to questions from the Canadian delegation, the Secretariat provided information on the likely use of Codex standards in GATT proceedings and the effect this would have on more general utilization of Codex recommendations in international trade. While Codex would continue to promote formal acceptance of Codex internationally recommended standards, their recognition in GATT trade harmonization and dispute resolution procedures would give Codex work additional importance and effect. It was pointed out that current GATT WGSP discussions relate only to factors which are health risks, and do not extend to food quality or fraud/mislabelling issues.

23. The Delegation of the United States expressed strong support for Codex participation in the Gatt Uruguay Round discussions. It stated that recent trade disputes based on socioeconomic considerations could be more easily resolved through the use of Codex and FAO/WHO scientific evaluations in the expanded GATT procedures currently being discussed. The Delegation of New Zealand requested that the CCNASWP report indicate the strong support of attending countries for the current work being undertaken on sanitary and phytosanitary measures by all GATT contracting parties.

24. Noting the potential significance for the more widespread use of harmonized international standards, codes and guidelines prepared and adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific recorded its strong support for the work being undertaken on sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to trade by the contracting parties to GATT within the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations.

REVIEW OF ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND CODEX MAXIMUM LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES BY COUNTRIES IN THE REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC (Agenda Item 4)

25. The Committee had before it working paper CX/NASWP 90/4 when discussing this agenda item, which summarized matters of interest arising from the Commission concerning acceptances, as well as a review of acceptances of Codex standards and Codex maximum residue limits for pesticides (MRLPs) in the regions.

26. The Committee noted that the Commission (ALINORM 89/40) had adopted revised "Guidelines for the Acceptance of Codex Standards", (paras. 185-186) a

recommended text to allow for the acceptance of Codex standards by regional economic groupings (paras. 187-189) and revised acceptance types for maximum residue limits for pesticides and veterinary drugs (paras. 193-196 and 217).

27. The Committee also agreed to discuss and review the acceptance of Codex standards and maximum residue limits for pesticides as separate issues.

Acceptances of Codex Standards

28. After a presentation of a progress report on the acceptance of Codex standards in the region, individual delegations were requested to provide updated information.

29. The Delegation of Australia explained that food standards in that country are developed jointly by the Commonwealth States and Territories under the auspices of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Under this mechanism uniformity of food standards exists throughout Australia in about 95% of cases. In the formulation of food standards in Australia, Codex standards are always used as the first point of reference. However, in the current period of deregulation and its international trend towards standards of a more general nature, the acceptance of Codex standards in Australia is at times impeded by the complexity and detail of their quality provisions.

30. The Delegation of Canada reminded the Committee that the 16th session of the CAC had made a policy decision that "Codex standards should not include optional clauses providing for agreement between seller and buyer as regards quality factors of an aesthetic nature such as styles. Codex Committees should review their standards periodically to consider simplifying them by omitting some details about dimensions, defect tables, styles, etc." (paras. 103-107, ALINORM 85/47). The CCNASWP agreed that many Codex Standards contained such detail, which made acceptances difficult in both developed and less developed countries.

31. The Delegation of Australia also noted that it was coordinating efforts to achieve harmonization of food standards with New Zealand, wherever possible relying on Codex standards. The Delegation of New Zealand stated that the formal acceptance of Codex standards would be facilitated through harmonization efforts with Australia. The Delegation of Canada also supported the use of Codex Standards as a basis for regional trading agreements, (i.e. Canada/United States Free Trade Agreement) in order to establish international harmonization activities on a true worldwide scale.

32. The Delegation of the United States noted that it had indicated its acceptance position on 78 Codex standards and will continue a review of Codex standards in the future. The representative of the South Pacific Commission stated that when giving advice to member countries it recommended the use of Codex standards wherever possible, while the Secretariat indicated that a South-West Pacific Regional Food Safety Legislation Seminar would be held in August 1990 with the intent of drafting model food safety legislation based on Codex work.

33. The Secretariat agreed that overly detailed Codex standards could hamper their acceptance by individual member countries and indicated that more concise standards might be easier to accept by member governments. The Secretariat noted that the methods and types of acceptance of Codex standards would be examined at the proposed Food Standards Conference, along with approaches to developing more concise standards which contained only essential criteria. It was also noted that although individual countries may not accept Codex standards, their use in regional trade agreements would still facilitate international harmonization.

34. The Committee concluded that the use of Codex standards in regional trade agreements helped to facilitate international trade and also promoted the interest of other countries in Codex work, (also see paras. 49-53). The Committee recommended that the Commission and the Food Standards Conference review the need to incorporate detailed provisions concerning such aspects as quality styles and defect tables in Codex standards which hampered acceptance of these standards.

Acceptance of Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides

35. The Codex Secretariat presented a progress report on the acceptance of Codex maximum residue limits for pesticides in the region, and individual member delegations provided updated information.

36. The Delegation of New Zealand indicated that it has accepted all Codex MRLPs with regard to imported foods only in conformity with the principles of "free distribution". The Delegation of Australia noted that the Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council had reviewed MRLPs established in Australia and promoted the use of Codex MRLPs wherever possible. The Delegation also agreed to provide a detailed comparison between Codex and Australian MRLPs for a future meeting.

37. The Delegation of the United States, with support from the delegation of Canada, emphasized that the acceptance of Codex MRLPs was difficult due to differences in safety evaluations and other scientific criteria, and supported further debate on the establishment of ADIs. The Delegation of Canada felt that an established protocol for the review and evaluation of data for the determination of MRLPs would facilitate their acceptance by member countries and reminded the Committee that this issue will be discussed at the proposed Food Standards Conference.

38. The Committee requested a thorough review of safety and risk assessment and the establishment of ADIs by the Food Standards Conference and the Commission, (also see para.94).

REPORT ON FOOD SAFETY/FOOD QUALITY ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 5)

Joint FAO/WHO Activities

39. The Secretariat presented information on current Joint FAO/WHO and individual FAO and WHO activities on food quality and safety. The results of recent Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additive (JECFA) meetings and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) were presented in outline form. The frequency of JECFA meetings dealing with food additives, veterinary drug residues in food and industrial chemical and heavy metals has been increased so that three or four meetings can be held in each two year FAO/WHO biennial budget period (1990-91). The Committee was informed that extra-budgetary support was being provided by the Federal Republic of Germany for a fourth JECFA meeting in the 1990-91 biennium. Resolution of current FAO and WHO regular budget funding problems and additional extra-budgetary support would enable the continued acceleration of JECFA work. The JMPR is continuing its current schedules each biennium and is carrying out work to reevaluate compounds that were covered several years ago, as well as new pesticides that have been developed.

40. Information was also presented on the Joint FAO/WHO/UNEP Food Contamination Monitoring Programme and its work to collect food contaminant data on priority compounds and assess trends and identify areas where technical assistance could be useful. The Secretariat pointed out that check sample surveys carried out by this Programme had revealed quality assurance problems in several participating laboratories, which indicated a need for additional training and for more standardized quality assurance and analytical systems.

41. The Secretariat introduced Conference Room Document 1 entitled "Proposed Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food, and Food Trade". This paper was prepared jointly by FAO and WHO to provide background information on this Conference which had been requested by the July 1989 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Conference is proposed to be held in Rome in March 1991 and is intended to give FAO and WHO member countries an opportunity to carry out in-depth discussions of current and future Codex work; future work of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and related work on scientific evaluation of chemical substances in foods, food additives, pesticide residues and contaminants; and food quality and safety problems in international trade. The Delegation of the United States, as supported by other delegates at the meeting, thanked the Secretariat for its efforts towards preparations for the Conference and acknowledged the importance of the proceedings.

42. Information was also presented on a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Safety Assessment of Foods and Food Ingredients produced by Biotechnological Means, to be held in Geneva in November 1990, and on an FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition to be held in Rome in December 1992, (also see para. 9c).

FAO Activities

43. In discussing FAO activities related to Codex work, the Chief of the FAO Food Quality and Standards Service provided information on FAO food control assistance (review of national food quality control programmes and infrastructure, food legislation assistance, training of government and industry food quality personnel, strengthening of food inspection and analysis facilities); on food contaminants such as mycotoxins, pesticide residues and radionuclides and on a study of contaminants affecting international trade; on studies and control of problems related to sale of foods by itinerant vendors ("street foods"); and on FAO publications on chemical and microbiological analysis of foods, food sampling, and a manual in preparation on quality assurance for food control laboratories. Specific FAO project assistance in countries of the NASWP regions and related Asian countries was mentioned, including regional activities on food control and mycotoxin training.

WHO Activities

44. The food safety activities of WHO at the global, regional and national levels were summarized. The global activities undertaken by the Food Safety Unit at WHO Headquarters in Geneva included the publication of several documents, many of which resulted from meetings of experts convened to examine food safety issues of wide interest. One expert group convened by WHO in their report entitled "Surveillance and Management of Procedures for Food Handling Personnel" advises governments and industry to discontinue routine medical examinations of food handlers. Such examinations are still practiced in many countries and areas in the South-West Pacific. Another informal working group on foodborne listeriosis provided recommendations to

public health authorities and industry on how to best protect the consumer from this disease. To promote education of important target groups, WHO issued "Examples of Health Education Materials in Food Safety", "Safe Food Handling - a Training Guide for Managers in Food Service Establishments", "Food, Environment and Health-a Guide for Primary School Teachers" and a poster entitled "The WHO Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation".

45. To further promote consumer understanding of irradiation as a food processing method, WHO, in collaboration with FAO, issued a publication entitled "Food Irradiation - a Technique for Preserving and Improving the Safety of Food". In addition, with FAO, IAEA and ITC-UNCTAD/GATT, WHO cosponsored in December 1988 the International Conference on Acceptance, Control of and Trade in Irradiated Food which forged an international consensus on the further use of this important technology.

46. At the regional level, WHO food safety activities in the South-West Pacific are carried out under the auspices of the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) which is located in Manila. In addition, food safety is also one of the areas of responsibility of the World Health Organization's Western Pacific Regional Centre for the Promotion of Environmental Planning and Applied Studies (PEPAS) which serves as the technical arm of WPRO in the environmental health area. WHO is involved in three regional activities which are significant to the Committee. The first is the regional seminar on food safety legislation (see agenda item 4) which will be held 27-30 August 1990 at PEPAS. The following week from 3-7 September 1990 in Kuala Lumpur, WHO along with the Government of Malaysia, among others, is organizing the First Asian Conference on Food Safety which will gather experts from all over the world to discuss the challenges of the 90's in their respective fields. Finally, in November 1990, WHO in collaboration with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) will conduct a two-week training course in food safety for South Pacific island countries and areas which will be held in Suva, Fiji. While the course will cover all components of a food safety programme, emphasis will be given to food legislation and application of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) method. Finally, PEPAS serves as a regional focus for information and documents, including videotape materials, related to food safety issues.

47. At the national level, food safety activities are supported through the WHO regular budget as well as intercountry resources. Most countries and areas within the South West Pacific are allocated a proportion of the WHO regional budget which they can then designate for food safety activities. In addition, PEPAS, which is funded as an intercountry project, responds to requests for cooperation on an ad hoc basis from countries and areas. Countries and areas in which WHO has executed food safety activities during the past two years include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Palau, Solomon Islands, Western Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Such activities take the form of fellowships, technical services, training and occasionally, equipment and supplies.

48. Finally, WHO is undertaking applied studies and research related to food safety in the South West Pacific, including conducting a shellfish sanitation survey in Fiji, developing an expert system for the diagnosis of foodborne diseases by contract with an Australia company and compiling a compendium of rapid methods of analysis in collaboration with the Government Analyst in New Zealand.

THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS IN REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS (Agenda Item 6a)

49. The Committee had before it working paper CX/NASWP 90/5 when discussing this agenda item, as prepared by the Government of Canada. The paper summarized the use of Codex standards in the elaboration of regional trade agreements and outlined the concepts involved in the Canada/United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Delegation of Canada noted that the FTA establishes the principles and processes necessary to address the joint development of technical regulations which incorporate international standards wherever appropriate, harmonize technical regulatory requirements and inspection procedures, utilize equivalent inspection system accreditation procedures, cross-utilize personnel and training programs and establish common data and information requirements for submissions relating to the approval of new goods and processes. It also recognized that import or quarantine restrictions on diseases or pests should be applied on the regional boundaries rather than the country of the exporting party, where such diseases or pests are regional rather than national concerns.

50. The Delegation of Canada indicated that the FTA was consistent with Article XXIV of the GATT, which provides an international framework for the negotiation of free trade agreements. The delegate concluded that the use of worldwide Codex standards as a common basis for regional trade agreements required collaborative efforts between parties in order to result in the facilitation of international trade.

51. The Delegation of New Zealand noted that the Closer Economic Relations regional trade agreement with Australia involved continuing efforts towards the harmonization of standards. It also gave information on the quarantine protocol existing between the two countries.

52. The Delegation of the United States, while recognizing the facilitation of international trade through the use of regional trade agreements, noted the importance of harmonization efforts based on worldwide standards in order to prevent the creation of technical barriers to trade for countries outside of the particular region. The United States often initiates Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with individual trading partners in order to establish fair trading practices based on international standards.

53. The Committee concluded that the use of regional trade agreements, when based on scientifically established international standards, were a positive step towards the facilitation of international trade. However, the Committee also recognized the potential for such agreements which could result in the exclusion of outside parties. The Committee decided to forward this discussion to the Food Standards Conference and Commission for information, (also see paras. 31-34).

EXPORT/IMPORT CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION PROGRAMMES IN THE REGIONS (Agenda Item 6b)

54. The Committee had before it working paper CX/NASWP 90/6 which was prepared and introduced by the delegation of Australia. The paper outlined background issues and recommendations on the exchange of information on certification and inspection programs in the region. The Committee noted that this issue had received attention at the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Sixth and Seventh Sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Asia (para. 169-177, ALINORM 89/15 and para. 135-137, ALINORM 91/15, respectively) and at the Sixth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (para. 81-88, Alinorm 89/36). These

bodies established several recommendations for the exchange of information in the areas of inspection and certification which include the use of workshops and training programs, the development of information exchange systems, and development of responsibilities attributed to national governments and FAO. In addition, the Committee was also informed of discussions on the subject held at the Eighteenth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

55. The Delegation of Australia noted that the regions of North America and the South-West Pacific had unique needs in these areas which required the exchange of information between countries with special emphasis on the widespread concerns and problems in less developed areas. The use of export control certificates based on electronic information exchange systems was also felt to be an important aspect of recent developments in this area. The delegation of New Zealand agreed that the use of electronic systems was desirable and practical.

56. The Secretariat stated that FAO has conducted surveys in the South-West Pacific area (i.e., Tonga and Fiji) to identify food control needs to improve the quality and safety of imports, domestic foods, and key export food products. The use of export certificates by these countries was an area of particular focus in these regions.

57. The Delegation of Canada noted that electronic certification based on USA/Canada border inspection experience becomes a method of identification rather than certification, and stressed that these systems should contain compatible and coordinated requirements in such areas as security needs, equipment and software. The Delegation of the United States agreed that system specifications and infrastructures should be coordinated.

58. The Delegation of Australia also noted the importance of information exchange between parties in the areas of regulations and legislative initiatives. It was felt that pre-notification of prospective changes to food regulations could anticipate and avert potential trading conflicts and the system should include the identification of contact points. The Delegation of Canada, supported by the United States, pointed out that published national regulatory plans were shared at present between the U.S. and Canada to provide advance notice of new areas of work, and called for similar exchanges with other countries of the region. The meeting also agreed that various information sources (e.g., trade publications, GATT, OIE, IPPC) were sources of food control and valuable trade information.

59. The Secretariat stressed the information requirements of developing countries and noted that emergency notifications were also an important aspect of information exchange. The observer from the South Pacific Commission noted the importance of this subject to this organization as countries in the region have little import control and limited exports.

60. The Committee concluded and agreed that a paper concerning information exchange systems relating to export/import certification and inspection would be prepared by Canada for circulation and comment well before the Committee's next session. It was agreed that this document would consider existing, as well as potential systems of information exchange and would take discussions arising from other Codex committees into account (also see paras.61-62). It was also agreed that the Delegation of Australia would prepare a document on electronic information exchange systems for the next Committee session.

REGIONAL NON-TARIFF TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE IN FOODS (Agenda Item 7)

61. The Committee had before it document CX/NASWP 90/7 as prepared by the government of Australia. The Delegation of Australia noted that most aspects of the working paper were already subjects of discussion elsewhere by the Committee (see paras. 54-60), as well as by the GATT Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers. The document provided a summary of potential discriminatory practices (i.e. trade barriers) in such areas as product certification, regulatory standards, consumer resistance and quarantine controls. It also recommended the development of a harmonized approach to solving these problems through greater transparency of trade measures, identification of priorities, information exchanges and a framework for "fast-track" problem-solving. The Delegation noted that issues concerning quarantine were outside the terms of reference for Codex and were handled by other international bodies (OIE, IPPC).

62. At the suggestion of the Delegation of New Zealand, the Committee agreed that Canada should consider this paper as additional information when developing the document agreed to under Agenda Item 6B (Information Exchange Systems in the Areas of Export-Import Certification and Inspection Programmes). The proposed document would therefore consist of a discussion of information exchange systems that might prevent future non-tariff technical barriers to trade.

MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOODS AND THE MEANS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 8)

63. The Committee had for its discussion working paper CX/NASWP 90/8 as prepared by the Delegation of Australia. The Committee noted that the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food (CAC/RCP 20-1979, Rev. 1) was adopted by the Commission with a view towards member nations conducting trade on an ethical basis and on the principle that all consumers are entitled to safe, sound and wholesome food and to protection from unfair and deceptive trade practices. The Committee was also informed that the Eighteenth Session of the Commission had considered a progress report on the implementation of the Code (ALINORM 89/9) and reiterated the importance of establishing infrastructures for its implementation (paras.65-72, ALINORM 89/40).

64. The Delegation of Australia indicated that it had proposed this issue for discussion by the Committee with particular regard to the experience and interest of developing countries within the region. The paper recommended providing assistance to countries in applying the provisions of the Code by strengthening their food legislation and food control infrastructures and by providing the necessary documentation and instructions.

65. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of the Code for all Codex member governments and noted that technical and economic assistance in food quality can only be provided when countries give high priority to this topic. The continued development of the Codex documentation dissemination system through the use of retail sales or free distribution outlets was also highlighted, as was the support of the FAO Conference towards individual country training and assistance projects.

66. The Delegation of the United States expressed its strong support for the concept of ethical food trade and noted that its industry and government continue to operate within the principles of the Code. The Delegation of the United States encouraged other

countries to implement the Code and agreed to work with FAO and WHO in providing technical assistance and training towards this end. The Delegation of Australia noted that the implementation of the Code in developing countries would also provide a practical tool in the prevention of product dumping and other import problem areas.

67. The observer of the SPC agreed that it was advisable for countries in the region to implement the Code to protect their interests and offered to provide assistance by identifying specific regional problems, stimulating country support and by attending each other's meetings. The Secretariat indicated that developing countries in the area were very interested in adopting Codex work as a basis for providing guidance and expertise in food and health areas.

68. The Committee agreed to forward this discussion to the Executive Committee and Commission with a view towards stimulating ideas for specific initiatives in implementing the Code.

THE HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT (HACCP) SYSTEM (Agenda Item 9)

69. The Delegation of the United States introduced document CX/NASWP 90/9 and provided an overview of the HACCP concept. The Government of Australia also provided written comments (Conference Room Document 2) describing how HACCP is applied within Australia. The United States indicated that HACCP is a simple, logical but highly specialized system for food protection. The system can be used to control or monitor any point in food production where a hazardous and/or critical situation could result, whether it be from contamination with pathogenic microorganisms, chemical residues, or physical objects; economic adulteration; problems resulting from raw materials, use directions for consumers, storage conditions, or the distribution system.

70. The Coordinating Committee strongly endorsed the HACCP concept for food protection as an excellent means of ensuring that food producers carry out their responsibilities in applying food quality control schemes. The Committee recognized the current work of FAO and WHO and encouraged this organization to continue to help developing countries apply HACCP regulatory programs. The Coordinating Committee further encouraged the work of the Food Hygiene Committee as it develops guidelines for applying HACCP to Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice and suggested that the Committee on Meat Hygiene study the HACCP implementation process with the intent of providing guidance to other countries wishing to adopt HACCP inspection programs. New Zealand, as host government of the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene, stated that the concept of HACCP would be an important element in the revision of that Committee's four codes of practice.

CONSIDERATION OF LABELLING AND OTHER ISSUES IN RELATION TO ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOODS (Agenda Item 10a)

71. The Committee had before it working paper CX/NASWP 90/10, as prepared by the delegation of Australia. The document provided a background of current regulatory initiatives in the area of organic foods (i.e., United Kingdom, European Economic Community), current definitions, problems associated with consumer confusion and Codex deliberations in this area by the Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO) and Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL). The Committee noted that a circular letter identifying key issues had been distributed (CL 1990/1-EURO) for comment and discussion at the CCEURO meeting in June. The CCFL also discussed this issue at its 20th Session (para. 76, ALINORM 89/22) while revising the Codex General Guidelines

on Claims. The document concluded with recommendations concerning the development of worldwide provisions for organic produce by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, as well as the establishment of a working group consisting of CCNASWP, CCEURO and other interested international organizations in developing such requirements.

72. The Delegation of New Zealand agreed to the importance of organic food guidelines, although the formation of a working group was felt to be premature. The Delegation of Canada, as secretariat of the CCFL, also agreed to the establishment of guidelines and suggested their consideration by the CCFL in its current revision of the Codex General Guidelines on Claims. The Delegation of the United States noted that consumers of organic foods must have access to accurate information in order to make informed choices, which should include the establishment of basic principles, definitions and labeling requirements. The Delegation of Canada also stressed the need to address certification requirements for these foods which were outside the purview of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling. The Delegation of Australia supported this view.

73. The Committee agreed to the importance of establishing guidelines for organic foods under the guidance of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling. It also decided that the formation of a working group was premature, although it was recognized that important inputs were necessary from other Codex Committees. The Committee decided to forward this proposal to the CCEURO and CCEXEC.

THE USE OF THE TERM NATURAL IN FOOD PRODUCT LABELLING (Agenda Item 10b)

74. The Committee had for its consideration working paper CX/NASWP 90/10 - Add. 1 as prepared by the United States, which summarized U.S. labelling requirements for natural foods, current market trends and issues for consideration. The Delegation of the United States recommended the establishment of guidelines for natural food labeling claims through the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

75. The Delegation of Australia agreed to the misleading potential of labelling foods as "natural", as it may convey a sense of superior quality product to consumers. Although guidelines used in Canada, the United States and Australia require that foods described as natural must be produced without the use of food additives and subject to minimal processing only where appropriate, it was difficult to define the term "minimally processed". The concept of not altering the physical or biological state of a food was also thought to be a reasonable alternative. The Delegations of Canada and New Zealand agreed to the need for establishing such labelling guidelines.

76. The Committee agreed to the need for the establishment of labelling guidelines for products labelled as "natural" through the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, and decided to forward this proposal to the CCEXEC.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION CLAIMS ON FOOD LABELS AND IN ADVERTISING (Agenda Item 10c)

77. The Committee noted that the working paper prepared by Australia (CX/NASWP 90/10 -Add.2) was divided into two major subject areas, namely, nutrition claims and health claims on labels and in advertising. The Committee noted that the CCFL was currently developing revised General Guidelines on Claims which addressed the use of misleading health claims. The Committee was informed that when adopting these Guidelines at Step 5, the Commission had reiterated the opinion of the FAO Legal Counsel that the authority of Codex did not extend to the issue of advertising, (para.

256-258, ALINORM 89/40). The Commission also agreed with the opinion of the Executive Committee that the primary responsibility for the elaboration of a Standard for Labelling of and Claims for Low-Energy and Reduced-Energy Foods (i.e., nutrition claims) rests with the CCFL (para. 269, ALINORM 89/40).

78. The Delegation of Canada recognized the problem of regulating health claims and indicated that in most cases they were prohibited for use in Canada although general guidelines have been elaborated. The Delegation of the United States agreed that guidance was required through the CCFL in both health and nutrition claim related areas. The Delegation of Australia also stressed the importance of specific quantitative measurements and standardized terms for nutrient claims on food labels. The Secretariat indicated that these subjects were scheduled for discussion at the forthcoming Food Standards Conference, and that a simple approach through nutrition education was also a part of any nutrition labelling program.

79. The Committee agreed to recommend the elaboration of Codex General Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims for Labelling through the CCFL. This recommendation will be forwarded to the CCEXEC.

INCREASING REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP (Agenda Item 11)

80. A paper (CX/NASWP 90/11) prepared by New Zealand called the Committee's attention to countries of the region which were not presently members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In introducing this paper, the Delegation of New Zealand called for action by the Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO, the SPC, and larger nations of the region to interest those island countries which qualify to join the Commission.

81. In order to encourage Codex requests for membership, it was agreed that the Secretariat will provide Codex membership applications to all countries and observers attending the First CCNASWP session, and to write to all countries of the region which are not yet members to urge their enrollment. The Secretariat reported on recent visits to some of the non-Codex member countries, and stated that these countries have now shown increased interest in Codex membership.

82. The Session also discussed including other Pacific Rim nations or close trading partners as members of the Coordinating Committee. The Secretariat informed the Committee that France and the United Kingdom had received invitations to the First CCNASWP session in view of their territories in the region, and that France had responded by stating its interest in attending future sessions. With regard to Pacific Rim countries which are members of other Codex regions, all had received a copy of the CCNASWP invitation which indicated that they could attend the session as observers if they wished. After lengthy discussion, the Committee decided to continue the present practice of promoting greater membership of CCNASWP for the countries within the regions, and to invite other countries to attend as observers.

83. To promote increased attendance at CCNASWP sessions, the Committee agreed with a Secretariat proposal that pre-session workshops should be held so that key attendees from the smaller island countries could discuss critical food control problems immediately prior to Codex sessions. This would increase the awareness and priority of food control in all countries of the NASWP regions, and would enable increased attendance at Coordinating Committee meetings. The countries attending the First CCNASWP session, FAO, WHO and the SPC agreed to endeavour to identify appropriate extra-budgetary resources to fund workshops of this type.

INSPECTION PROCEDURES FOR FISH AND SHELLFISH (Agenda Item 12)

84. The Delegation of the United States introduced its paper (CX/NASWP 90/12) which called attention to problems related to fishery resources and aquaculture. In the area of aquaculture rapid growth was taking place which required consideration of the consumer safety and health aspects of aquaculture, plus resource, habitat/environmental and quarantine concerns. The paper recommended that the CCNASWP request FAO, WHO, OIE, and other related bodies to consider a study on issues not directly related to consumer protection but which could present barriers to trade, and to develop a fish inspection and control guidance document that would include information on the multiple concerns (health, decomposition, resource, habitat/environment, quarantine) involved.

85. In discussing this item, the Committee noted that a paper on a "Code of Hygienic Practice for Aquaculture" had been prepared by the FAO Fisheries Department for the June 1990 session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CX/FFP 90/9). It was also noted that various units of FAO, such as the Fisheries Department, the Food Quality and Standards Service (including Codex), the WHO Veterinary Public Health Unit, and the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) all had roles to play in different aspects of the problems raised in the U.S. paper. The Committee recommended that FAO and the Codex Secretariat take steps to arrange an Expert Consultation in cooperation with WHO and OIE to consider these problems and to prepare the study and guidance document requested in the U.S. paper as a working document for the Expert Consultation. The Secretariat agreed to discuss the matter with other FAO units, WHO and OIE and make initial arrangements for this work. The Secretariat pointed out that this activity had technical and funding resource implications that would have to be considered in establishing a schedule for meeting the CCNASWP request, and that reports of progress would be given to the Codex Executive Committee, Commission, Fish and Fishery Products Committee, and to future CCNASWP sessions.

NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 14)

86. The Secretariat introduced paper CX/NASWP 90/14 which summarized Codex rules for the nomination of Regional Coordinators. The Committee nominated Mr. Digby Gascoine of Australia to serve as Coordinator for the Regions of North America and South-West Pacific for the period from the end of the 19th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission until the end of the 20th Session of the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 15)

Food Irradiation

87. The Delegation of the United States informed the meeting of a 1 May 1990 approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of the irradiation of poultry up to 3 kilo Gray of radiation to eliminate pathogenic microorganisms which can be present in poultry products. Labeling requirements are included which require a standardized logo and statement that the product has been treated with radiation. It was pointed out that some test marketing of irradiated products (fruits) had met with success and that consumers in general seemed to be willing to consider buying irradiated products. Some poultry processing firms were interested in setting up poultry irradiation facilities although there is some consumer organization resistance to establishing such facilities.

88. The Delegation of Canada pointed out that consumer and retail level resistance to irradiated products in Canada was creating concern among processors as to whether

investments in establishing irradiation processing plants should be made. The Delegation of Australia informed the meeting of a three-year moratorium on food irradiation approvals contingent upon the development of methods to show whether or not a food has been irradiated. The Delegation of New Zealand reported that food irradiation applications required specific ministerial approval, but that consumer resistance to food irradiation facilities was likely to mean that the process would not be used in New Zealand for food in the immediate future.

89. The Delegation of the United States reported on other work on food irradiation to develop test methods to show whether a product has been irradiated and on additional studies of consumer attitudes and ways to increase consumer acceptance of irradiated foods. The Secretariat informed the meeting of recent discussions on food irradiation at the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia, (para. 116, ALINORM 91/15).

Codex Promotion Activities

90. The Committee also discussed ways and means of improving knowledge about Codex with government officials, food industry personnel and consumers in general. The Delegation of Australia called attention to the need for countries to prepare and disseminate accurate, informative and pertinent information on food safety to develop a more informed populace. It pointed out the need for specific information to suit local needs, but that the international trade implications and benefits of Codex work should be included in such materials.

91. The Delegation of Canada called for greater efforts to promote Codex work in university graduate or undergraduate programmes to obtain greater awareness of Codex and other FAO/WHO technical work among food technologists and other food quality personnel. It also called for further efforts to increase the effectiveness of Codex document distribution in developing countries in particular. The Delegation of New Zealand called for the preparation of additional Codex promotional materials and suggested food quality and standards as an FAO World Food Day theme.

92. The Delegation of the United States drew attention to efforts of the Institute of Food Technologists to better promote Codex to food professionals. The United States also provided a copy of a recent Food and Drug Administration article on Codex to the Delegates for information. The observer from the South Pacific Commission called attention to the large volume of Codex documentation and requested the development of better ways to use such documentation.

93. The Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission called for a recommendation of CCNASWP to FAO, WHO and Codex member countries to increase efforts to promote Codex work and its relationship to GATT, international trade and better consumer protection. The Committee recommended:

- a) that the Secretariat explore options for assisting Codex member countries in promoting better knowledge of Codex and its importance to both developed and developing countries. Development of informational materials including videos, slides and consumer publications to more accurately reflect the control mechanisms in place to assure food quality and safety. Special attention should be given to the areas of food additives, pesticide residues and other areas of consumer concern.
- b) that all food professionals, including industry representatives, should be involved in supporting and promoting the work of the Codex Commission.

The use of professional expertise and marketing should be considered in developing effective publicity efforts.

- c) that all member countries take immediate steps to publicize the work of the Commission, to exchange information between member countries on successful work and to report on efforts undertaken.
- d) countries should identify to other countries of the region offices responsible for promoting Codex and food quality and safety, share information between countries, and report to the Committee from time to time.

Pesticides

94. The Coordinating agreed to explore ways to promote increased acceptance of Codex MRLPs by countries of the Region and report to the Commission with recommendations. The working paper will be prepared for the next session of the Committee by the United States and should include recommendations on ways in which the scientific evaluation of ADIs and MRLPs could be improved to allow increased confidence in and acceptance of Codex MRLPs by countries in the Region, (also see paras. 37-38).

Codex Priorities and Organizational Structure

95. The Delegation of the United States stated that a study should be made of Codex work and the budget available for such work. As there are increasing demands on the Secretariat the importance of maintaining the highest quality working papers is required. The Committee agreed to review the need for increased publicity of Codex in the region, the demands of the Committee for support by the Secretariat, and alternative means of support.

96. In addition, the infrastructure of Codex needs to be examined to ascertain whether the procedures need to be amended to speed up the work of the Commission in preparation for new responsibilities as a result of GATT negotiations. The Delegation of the United States agreed to prepare a document along these lines for consideration at the Committee's next session.

Food Additives

97. The Delegation of the United States requested the FAO Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee and the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) the need to examine the problem of food additives that have been deemed acceptable for use in food products after long and continued use in some countries. In this regard, CCFAC might wish to request that JECFA examine in an expedited manner this large group of approved additives or other ingredients which have been generally recognized as safe so that provisions for use can be included in the approved Codex list.

98. The Committee agreed with the United States' proposal. This recommendation will be forwarded to the CCEXEC.

Contaminants

99. The Delegation of the United States called attention to the increasing extent to which contaminants are becoming barriers to international trade and of concern to domestic regulatory authorities which dictates that the Commission and its Executive Committee examine how it can provide expedited international guidance on

contaminants. The Committee recommended that the Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission consider the possible separation of food additives and contaminants into separate Codex committees, along with expediting the expert evaluation of contaminants in appropriate FAO/WHO bodies.

FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 16)

100. The Committee agreed that the Agenda for its next session should include the following items:

- Matters of Interest Arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other Codex Committees;
- Matters of Interest Arising from International Organizations;
- Report on the GATT Uruguay Round Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers;
- Report on the Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade;
- Review of Acceptances of Codex Standards and Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues by Countries in the Regions;
- Information Exchange Systems in the Areas of Export/Import Certification and Inspection Programmes;
- Report on the Development of Electronic Information Exchange Systems;
- Progress Report on Implementing the Codex Code of Ethics in International Trade in Foods in the Regions of North America and the South-West Pacific;
- Progress Report on Increasing Regional Membership;
- Progress Report on Inspection Procedures for Fish and Shellfish;
- Progress Report on the Promotion of Codex Activities;
- Promotion of Acceptances of Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides;
- Study of Codex Priorities and Infrastructure;
- Progress Report on the Monitoring of Food Safety Activities in the Region.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 17)

101. The Committee agreed with the proposal of the Chairman to hold biennial sessions with the understanding that the Chairman and host country would change for each session. It was proposed that the second session of the Committee be held in late November or early December 1991 in Australia, subject to approval by the Commission.

**CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA
AND THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC**

Summary Status of Work

Subject Matter	For Action By:	Document Reference
Status Report on GATT Uruguay Round Trade Negotiations on Agriculture	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 16-24
Review of Acceptances of Codex Standards and MRLPs by Countries in the Region	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 25-38
Report on the Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, para. 41
Regional Food Export/Import Certification and Inspection Information Exchange Systems	Canada Governments 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 60 and 62
Electronic Information Exchange Systems	Australia 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, para. 60
Progress Report on Implementing the Codex Code of Ethics in International Trade in Foods in the Region	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 63-68
Progress Report on Increasing Regional Membership	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 80-83
Progress Report on Inspection Procedures for Fish and Shellfish	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 84-85
Progress Report on Promotion of Codex Activities	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 90-93
Promotion of Acceptances of Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides	United States 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 38 and 94
Codex Priorities and Infrastructures	United States 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, paras. 95-96
Progress Report on the Monitoring of Food Safety Activities in the Region	Secretariat 2nd CC/NASWP	ALINORM 91/32, para. 100

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